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Definition of health of older people and health determinants in older age

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ABSTRACT

Presented work is based on the literature and databases overview aimed at identification of definitions of healthy and successful ageing that are used in epidemiological, gerontological and public health research, identification of main healthy ageing determinants presented in the literature and overview of databases available for the research on healthy ageing determinants. Medline and PubMed databases were used for identification of the for appropriate studies. Overall, 92 operational definitions of health status have been identified in the literature of the subject and summarized adequately to their main components, presenting evolution of the healthy ageing definition from the medical to the multidimensional, psycho-socio-medical definition. The literature points to the existence of social gradient in health status in older age. Main determinants of variations in the healthy ageing follow the material, behavioural and psycho-social patterns, with the domination of studies concentrated on behavioural determinants of health in older age and growing importance of psycho-social perspective in the research. Additionally, 11 databases containing information on health status in European countries have been overviewed and information on health determinants in each of them has been identified. Presented analysis is a background for further empirical studies on determinants of healthy ageing in selected European countries.