# Programme Grant Elderly: The sensory cognitive communication factor: Preserving social interaction and health in aging

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**Country**

Sweden

**Title of project or programme**

Programme Grant Elderly: The sensory cognitive communication factor: Preserving social interaction and health in aging

**Source of funding information**

Forte, the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare

**Total sum awarded (Euro)**

€ 1,305,767

**Start date of award**

01/01/2013

**Total duration of award in years**

6.0

**The project/programme is most relevant to:**

Alzheimer's disease & other dementias

**Keywords**
**Research Abstract**

Age-related sensory (hearing, vision) and cognitive declines increase with age. Connections have been established between sensory and cognitive aging. However, much more needs to be

learned about how they are connected and how these connections affect the social participation and health of older people. A provocative finding is that hearing loss is predictive of incident dementia. Importantly, sensory and cognitive declines may reduce the ability of older adults to communicate in everyday life, thereby increasing risk for social isolation. Lost opportunities for communication and active participation in social interactions may accelerate the onset and progress of dementia. Communication problems and social withdrawal likely also diminish the participation by older adults in the prevention and management of other chronic health conditions. We argue that communication function is an often overlooked but critical factor that mediates these connections. The proposed research builds on our strong established programs of inter-disciplinary research concerning disability, the longitudinal study of aging, and our focus on the interface between sensory and cognitive functioning during communication. Specifically, we will extend our research using longitudinal data from the Swedish Betula Study, augmented by in-depth experimental data, to gain a better understanding of the direction and timing of the critical connections between sensory and cognitive aging, communication function, social participation and health. Using this new knowledge, we will then design, implement and evaluate new health promotion and rehabilitative interventions for those with both sensory and mild cognitive impairments. Our results will guide the development of policies regarding how the sensory-cognitive-communication factor can be integrated into a comprehensive positive lifestyle approach to preserving social interaction and health as people age and preventing or slowing the onset of dementia.

**Lay Summary**
**Further information available at:**

**Types:**
Investments > €500k

**Member States:**
Sweden

**Diseases:**
Alzheimer's disease & other dementias

**Years:**
2016

**Database Categories:**
N/A

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