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Social Health And Reserve in the Dementia patient journey

The role of social health in onset, disease course and prognosis of dementia remains underexplored. Social health has been conceptualized as the influence of social resources in finding a balance between capacities and limitations. Moreover, social health affects and is affected by biological processes that underlie the dementia syndrome. This bidirectional link between social health and cognitive health acts across the entire trajectory from cognitive health to severe dementia and manifests itself differently during various phases of disease.

This mixed methods project aims to unravel the interplay between social health and biological and psychological factors on the trajectory through dementia and to develop a framework for developing health and social care interventions. There will be a specific focus on the bidirectional link before and after dementia develops, the biological substrate on imaging, and the modifying role of brain and cognitive reserve.

We bring together >40 studies totalling nearly 150,000 individuals that together capture the whole life course and the entire population from cognitively healthy to severe dementia, and that have longitudinal data available on social, cognitive and brain reserve, brain imaging, environmental, clinical, physical and mental factors, and cognitive decline and onset of dementia. We will perform qualitative studies to probe additional relevant social factors and relations with cognitive reserve and function. Further, we will perform quantitative analyses that will leverage the vast amount of data available in these studies, including repeated and multi-level measurements. Knowledge generated across these various disciplines and work packages will be integrated into a system dynamics model on the role of social health during the entire patient journey. In turn, this will inform about modifiable pathways and targets for preventive interventions at both the population and individual level.

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