Dementia and successful cognitive ageing in centenarians: An international consortium

Summary

The “oldest-old” age group (variously described as 85, 90, 95 or 100 years and above) is the fastest growing age group in most parts of the world (1). Although more individuals are living to very old ages, for many those extra years are not dementia-free presenting an enormous public health challenge. Others, who remain cognitively intact into very late life, provide a model for understanding what factors might protect brains from dementia.

Published studies examining centenarians and near centenarians are limited by methodological and epidemiological challenges and by relatively small sample sizes. The Dementia Harmonisation Project of the International Centenarian Consortium (ICC-Dementia) will address these challenges by harmonising the methodology and by combining data from several studies from different countries.

This study will be the first multinational approach to investigate dementia in this exceptional group of individuals. This unique group of collaborators will develop robust estimates of the prevalence and incidence of dementia across different countries and ethnic groups and identify risk and protective factors for dementia and healthy exceptional brain ageing across different geographical regions internationally.

To date, agreement has been confirmed from nine studies and data have been received from six of these groups. Collaborations with a further four studies are being negotiated.

ICC-Dementia is an internationally unique study of centenarians, near-centenarians and super-centenarians and the extraordinary response we have had from collaborators around the world, underscores the significance of this work. The consortium is ready for the next phase of development, harnessing and then harmonising data.

References