

Aging research in Berlin proceeds

German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) to support the second Berlin Aging Study with 6.3 million Euro.

After the success of the first Berlin Aging Study (BASE-I), the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) has decided to support the continuation of this research project. In BASE-II, scientists will aim for a better understanding of core mechanisms of successful, normal, and pathological aging. Prof. Steinhagen-Thiessen from Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin will chair the multidisciplinary Steering Committee.

The funding covers a period of three years. Within this period, 2.200 adult Berlin residents will be thoroughly examined, integrating information on their physical well-being with genetic, immunological, psychological, and socio-economic data.

BASE-II grew out of the multidisciplinary team of BASE-I, and involves some of the same researchers. As Prof. Steinhagen-Thiessen noted, *“The results of BASE-I already hinted at many modifiable risk factors for disease in old age. We are now in a much better position to identify, understand, and eventually manipulate these risk factors, using more sophisticated methods than those that were available for BASE-I.”* Data from BASE-I, which started in 1990–2009, were used in many different fields of research and have been instrumental in changing the perception of aging and the elderly.

Compared to BASE-I, the addition of a group of younger controls in BASE-II means that the researchers will also be able to follow the development of age-associated alterations presaging disease in middle age. The inclusion of genetic and immunological data is completely novel in this respect. In this way, the researchers hope to gain a better understanding of the trajectories of aging and disease seen in different individuals.

BASE-II will be coordinated by a multidisciplinary Steering Committee. Along with Elisabeth Steinhagen-Thiessen, Ulman Lindenberger of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Gert G. Wagner of the German Federal Institute for Economic Research, Lars Bertram of the Max-Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics (all Berlin), and Graham Pawelec of the Center for Medical Research, University of Tübingen, are its members.