

Active aging—a multidisciplinary approach to the third and fourth age

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Looking forward

The European Group for Research into Elderly and Physical Activity (EGREPA) is looking forward to its 14th conference since its foundation in 1992 and its first conference held in Oeiras, Portugal, in 1993. The 2014 EGREPA Conference is held in collaboration with the 2014 Wingate Congress from June 12 to 15, 2014 at the Zinman College in Netanya, Israel. The topic of the EGREPA conference will be “Active Aging—A multidisciplinary Approach to the Third and Fourth Age”. This topic reflects the mission statements and the aims of both EGREPA and its official journal European Review of Aging and Physical Activity (EURAPA).

Looking back

Looking back, we are proud of the number of conferences, but we are all the more proud to celebrate the 10th Birthday of EURAPA. EURAPA was launched as the official journal of the “European Group for Research into Elderly and Physical Activity” in 2004. Since 2006, it has been published by Springer Publishers. When compared to human life, the journal is young with its 10 years—just “growing out of its children’s shoes.” It has survived, is in good shape, and is fit for future growth. We have a continuously growing submission rate on a broad international basis; our impact factor has reached 0.947 covered by 16 Abstracting and Indexing services. The number of full text downloads is growing as do the subscribers to table of contents alerts. EURAPA has reached a quality and visibility that we did not expect 10 years ago. This

makes us proud and optimistic for our future development. We share satisfaction and gratitude with the members of EGREPA, our authors, and subscribers supporting the journal. Special credit goes to our reviewers and our editorial board. Their service to EURAPA is entirely voluntary and mostly without substantial recognition.

As usual, in the first issue of the year, I would like to acknowledge particularly the reviewers of the last year:

Jens Bucksch, Germany
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Ulrike S. Trampisch, Germany
Tracey Tsang, Australia
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Let me take this opportunity to thank those who helped at different stages: First of all, I thank my co-founding editor and first Editor in Chief (Biomedical Sciences) Michael Sagiv and to the editorial board members for supporting us from the early beginning in launching this journal. Thanks go to the

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members of the EGREPA board, Yael Netz and Rolf Ehram, for accompanying and supporting the progress of EURAPA. Even two editors in chief would not be able to run a journal alone. We have been helped by several others. From my side, I would like to accent, and I am sure that Michael Sagiv will approve it, my former co-worker and our later Associate Editor of EURAPA PD Dr. Michael Brach. My particular thanks go also to my acting co-editor Wiebren Zijlstra for the smooth transition following Michael Sagiv in the position of Editor in Chief (Biomedical Sciences) in 2012.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the staff members of Springer Publishers who have been working with the Editors in Chief and the Associate Editor, namely William F. Curtis (Executive Vice President—Medicine, Biomedicine, Life Sciences) for bringing EURAPA to Springer Publishers and Gabriele Schroeder, Fiona Shipperlee, Ross Hildrew, and Ben Bishop as Associate Editors.

Present and future development of EURAPA

The board of EGREPA and the Editors in Chief of EURAPA are convinced that the title of our journal and especially the main issues “Physical Activity and Aging” will become increasingly important in the course of the twenty-first century. Due to our mission statements, these issues are interdisciplinary fields of research. We will keep up this interdisciplinary ambition including a wide range of scientific disciplines with their specific methods as experimental, multilevel analysis, or observational methods. Besides this, we will not lose track of our objectives contributing to public well-being, functional independence, and life expectancy by promoting a healthy and physically active image of aging and older persons.

EURAPA in the light of science development

The editors are well aware of the highly dynamic development of science. Science spreads and deepens, becomes increasingly specialized, and it expands into new directions on different levels. This will lead to knowledge and publication explosions. At the peak of demands, science is fueled by few disciplines as informational technology, technology, molecular biology, and genetics. We will have to consider how scholarly reviews on positions, paradigms, and results in these areas will help to open new perspectives in Physical Activity and Aging research—still emphasizing the application of knowledge to enhance the practice of Physical Activity for the elderly. High-quality (controlled experimental) work and applied (observational) work are not mutually exclusive entities but rather complementary. As a consequence for the further development of EURAPA, we must strive for an adequate relation of original articles, practice contributions, and excellent scholarly

review papers. Following the tradition of special issues will also contribute to finding and going into new directions.

These considerations have already led to plans for the further development of EURAPA. We plan to refresh the editorial board by adding underrepresented disciplines and specializations and young excellent researchers. The future editorial board will be given the chance to present new ideas about the editorial policy.

The primary responsibility of any journal editor and of the editorial board members is to fulfill the editorial mission of the journal. A new editorial board will have the chance to revise and clarify the editorial mission statement. This will include the clarification of the focus of EURAPA by widening the scope and, moreover, to clarify the target audience beyond EGREPA members. Settling the relation to other journals in the field could be a further important initiative.

Primary mission of EURAPA

When launching EURAPA, we had the view that the primary mission of the journal was to stimulate and communicate the theory and research in physical activity and aging with peer-reviewed publications of quality research. We started in the truest sense of the word as a “Review Journal” with comprehensive reviews. Later, original research papers were accepted. Original papers could deal with high-quality experimental and applied research even if there is some middle ground. The subscribers and readers were moreover encouraged to submit short communications, discussing opposing viewpoints and letters to the editors.

We would like to substantiate and reinforce the primary mission. This cannot and will not change. Despite the enjoyable development of EURAPA, there are some tasks for the still present and the future editorial board to deal with. A faster turnaround of manuscripts submitted must be achieved, and the question how to expand the readership and address the interests of different disciplines must be answered. The socio-economic, socio-political, and clinical background of physical activity and aging must be considered for publications, as well as the growing necessity of cross- and multicultural research in our field.

Changes

After the EGREPA elections in 2012, Yael Netz became president elect; as past president, I will surrender the position of president to Yael Netz on occasion of our 2014 EGREPA Conference in Netanya, Israel. For personal reasons, I will also resign from my position as Editor in Chief (Behavioral Sciences). The board of EGREPA and EURAPA decided that Yael Netz will follow me in this position.

Being Editor in Chief is a fun and great responsibility. It is also educational. I learned much about authors especially on complying with the formal requirements when submitting or revising manuscripts, on keeping deadlines, and following precisely the reviewers' comment or even about our colleagues reading their "anonymous" reviews. Some of them respect works by their colleagues, and they are quick, friendly, and objective, others take months to agree or to refuse and to write a review; at times, they show arrogance and subjectivity—fortunately, there are editors to correct.

Serving as editor of a scientific journal for over 10 years is a long, long tenure. EURAPA has become a respected journal in the field of aging and physical activity and as official journal of EGREPA. I have enjoyed watching it grow from the early beginning, but now, the time has come to step down and give way to the already appointed new editor and for a hopefully flourishing future.

Who accepts to say good-bye, resumes one's liberty—in this spirit, let me say good-bye!

Heinz Mechling