SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF AGEING:
ASSOCIATIONS WITH HEALTH-ENHANCING BEHAVIOURS AND HEALTH AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND INTERPERSONAL LEVEL

Due to population ageing, the number of people experiencing physical health conditions and cognitive impairment is increasing. Because health conditions and cognitive impairment have a detrimental impact on individuals, their families, healthcare systems, and the economy, promotion of health maintenance in older age is a global public health priority. Negative self-perceptions of ageing (e.g., believing that ageing equals poor health) may be a modifiable risk factor for health conditions and cognitive impairment as they cause people to abandon or ignore health-enhancing behaviours.

In this talk we will first provide an overview of literature linking self-perceptions of ageing with health-enhancing behaviours and indicators of mental, physical, and cognitive health at the individual level. We will then introduce the rationale for exploring self-perceptions of ageing, health-related behaviours, and health at the interpersonal level with a specific focus on couples (i.e., spouses or cohabiting partners). In this regard we will present preliminary evidence from the Socio-Economic Innovation Sample SOEP-IS, the Couples and Healthy Ageing Project, and a recent pilot study on how positive and negative perceptions of ageing, health (including cognitive functioning), and health-related behaviors relate to each other.

Wednesday July 12th at 12:00h

Campus Mundet
Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychobiology