Neurodegeneration in the ageing society

Why do we get old? What factors are involved in "healthy" ageing and what failure determine disease? Ageing has been long considered a stochastic process shaped by environmental and stressful conditions. However, recent work has highlighted the role of complex genetic traits in the determination of the lifespan. The unwanted consequences of a long life span: age-related diseases. A rise in life span over the past century. This will soon have profound economical and social implications and it is already becoming a burden for health-care systems. Paradoxically, although it is well-recognized that age is a risk factor for neurodegeneration, the mechanisms involved are practically unknown.

DZNE scientists are investigating the missing link between age and neurodegenerative diseases. The implications of these studies can be anticipated to shed more light on both healthy and unhealthy ageing and help developing life-long strategies to prevent the onset of neurodegenerative diseases.

While research on disease mechanisms will lead to long-term benefits for society. The creation of a national registry for neurodegenerative diseases and age-related diseases. A direct telephone line to link experts (scientists and clinicians) with the public is being implemented in collaboration with academic (Alzheimer's Gesellschaft) organizations. Ultimately, links between scientists, clinicians, nursing homes and families will lead to improved health care in the upcoming few years.