

# Research Strategy 2023-2027 for the Geriatric Research Unit

A growing elderly population will impact everyone's - not just the elderly - welfare and living conditions in the future, as it will place new demands on healthcare services. This challenges the organization of health interventions targeted at a heterogeneous population group, which includes healthy elderly people with a high quality of life and no special limitations in daily life, elderly individuals living with chronic diseases with or without limitations in their daily activities, and vulnerable elderly individuals with poor functional levels, many illnesses, hospitalizations, loneliness, and diminished quality of life. The focus of the Geriatric Research Unit is to create knowledge about innovative and evidence-based healthcare interventions that ensure the highest possible health and well-being for the elderly.

## Vision

Through research, we aim to be the best at ensuring and paving the way for evidence-based professionalism in the prevention, treatment, and care of the elderly person.

## Mission

The demographic challenges of the coming decades reinforce the need for research and innovative solutions for the prevention, treatment, and care of the elderly person with a loss of functional capacity.

## Core Values

The research unit provides a supportive and inclusive working environment. It is essential to integrate research into interdisciplinary and intersectoral practices."

## Objective

- Conduct geriatric research and research within geriatrics-related areas at a high international professional standard.
- The unit's research should pave the way for the implementation of the latest research findings for the benefit of current and future complex, multimorbid elderly patients.
- The research unit at OUH aims to become the country's leading geriatric research unit, measured by the number of affiliated active researchers and annual publications.

In alignment with the University of Southern Denmark's strategy, we aim to create value for and with society through our research by working with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The research strategy aims to generate new knowledge that contributes to:

- Greater equity in healthcare
- Sustainable solutions
- Engagement and involvement of stakeholders in research.
- Interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration.
- Career development.

## Scope of Research

The research field in the Geriatric Research Unit focuses on the holistic perspective of aging. The following core elements are used as a basis to guide the research:

- Mind
- Mobility
- Medication
- Multicomplexity
- What matters most

## Focus Areas

The foundation of the Geriatric Research Unit's strategy is based on the 5 focus areas outlined in the Research Strategy for Odense University Hospital and the Clinical Institute at the University of Southern Denmark for 2021-2025.

- For and with Patients/Family Members
  - To ensure the value of the unit's research for patients and family members, as well as to reduce disparities in treatment and care, a research advisory group is established, consisting of patients, family members, interest organizations, municipalities, and general practitioners. In addition, smaller ad hoc groups are formed for specific research projects.
- Evidence-Based Medicine/Practice
  - Older patients with multimorbidity and complex medication are often excluded from clinical trials and not included in clinical guidelines. The unit's ambition is to provide new knowledge of the highest evidence in all research disciplines in the ongoing research projects.
- Excellent Collaboration
  - The goal is for all research projects, where relevant, to establish cross-sectoral collaboration and aim to involve national/international partners. The unit works towards becoming the Principal Investigator (PI) in clinical projects. By the end of the strategy period, the goal is to establish the basis for an excellence center in aging.
- Professionalize Research Culture
  - To further develop the unit's professionalism, electronic boards and other visual aids should become a permanent part of the culture. Additionally, efforts are made to secure permanent research support, including hiring fundraisers and statisticians.
- Career Paths
  - Our ambition is to expand research activities in the Geriatric Department across all related fields, for both younger and senior researchers from our department, both locally and internationally. This aims to create a robust research environment. The ambition is also to establish the opportunity for a research career path for all professional groups, where the affiliation with the department begins as early as during studies, continues through a Ph.D. program with the potential for post-doc affiliation or other career-promoting positions up to lecturer and professorial appointments.