

Ageing as a Process of Adaptation and Evolution

Friday, September 12, 2025 3:30 PM (1h 30m)

Ageing is a complex phenomenon involving physical, social, and cognitive changes. While much of the literature has focused on cognitive decline—often seen as a progressive impairment to be addressed through targeted training—we propose a broader and more dynamic perspective. Rather than viewing ageing as a process of deterioration, we consider it an evolution and adaptation to new life challenges. One important but often overlooked area of change is personality. Contrary to the long-held belief that personality traits remain stable after a certain age, ageing can bring qualitative shifts in the organization of personality. These changes may reflect the individual's adjustment to the evolving demands of later life. Moreover, the relationship between personality and cognition also transforms with age, emphasizing the need for an integrated approach to understanding ageing. The predominant focus on cognitive impairment may also be shaped by societal stereotypes about

older adults. This aspect will be explored in the symposium, particularly by examining differences in perception between familiar and unfamiliar older individuals. Importantly, what is often labeled as cognitive decline can be mitigated by factors such as cognitive and motor reserves, highlighting the plasticity of ageing. These constructs will also be addressed during the symposium. In sum, we argue that ageing is a vital phase of psychological transformation, characterized by reorganization rather than decline. This symposium will explore ageing through the lenses of personality development, cognitive reorganization, modifiable protective factors, and the influence of age-related stereotypes.

If you're submitting a symposium talk, what's the symposium title?

If you're submitting a symposium, or a talk that is part of a symposium, is this a junior symposium?

No

Primary author: GOBBO, Silvia (University of Milan-Bicocca)

Presenter: GOBBO, Silvia (University of Milan-Bicocca)

Session Classification: Ageing as a Process of Adaptation and Evolution