

Research Directions

Office of Research Services

Forever Young?



Dr Brett Neilson from the Centre for Cultural Research is exploring the trans-national dimensions of anti-ageing medicine and its implications for the governance of later life. This ARC Discovery project is being carried out in collaboration with the Italian National Research Centre on Ageing (INRCA) and will bring together cultural research with biomedical and socioeconomic expertise.

Anti-ageing therapies are wide-ranging and include pharmaceutical goods, substances such as human growth hormone, complementary medicines, cosmetic and lifestyle products, including fitness and dietary programs and cutting edge biotechnological interventions.

Dr Neilson says 'previous studies of anti-ageing products have focused on the technical issue of whether it is possible to counter the ageing process or the ethical question of whether it is morally desirable to do so. This project asks rather *why* anti-ageing medicine is currently experiencing such pre-eminence in Australia and beyond.'

Individuals 55 years and over will be interviewed to ascertain what is shaping their demand for these products and services. Although the focus is on Australia, the project will also consider how the spread of anti-ageing technologies reflects the changed conditions for ageing in the era of globalisation. In particular, the effect of global strategies on the rapid growth of anti-ageing medicine.

The researchers will also explore the tensions and synergies between the philosophies and practices of anti-ageing medicine and those who shape policy agendas of "healthy", "positive" or "successful" ageing.

Dr Neilson explained 'By understanding the social and cultural mechanisms by which anti-ageing medicine has achieved its current prominence, we hope to form a bridge between globalisation studies, cultural research on medicine and what we know about the changed conditions of ageing in consumer society.'

Project Title: *Anti-Ageing Devices: On the Cultural Politics of Staying Young in a Globalised World*

Funding has been set at: \$187,539.00

Contact Details

b.neilson@uws.edu.au

Web Site:

<http://www.uws.edu.au/research/researchcentres/ccr>

January 2006.