

Social and economic consequences of a super-aged society

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Premise

- Complex changes in human demography are transforming the planet
- The population aged 65 and over is expected to increase from 10% currently to 16% by 2050. Additionally, the population aged over 80 is expected to triple in the next 30 years
- There is the need to provide elder care and sustain social cohesion in an aging population as their birth rates and working-age populations decline rapidly
- Who will provide such care? Two main problems:
- Limitations of family-based care provision
- Serious shortage of care workers

Key issues

- Which overall set-up might be needed to respond to the challenges that the aging of the population represents for older people and their families and for the national Long Term Care (LTC) system?
- Population ageing, increased morbidity (senile dementia, etc.), changes in families' composition, entail high economic and social costs
- Investments are needed in new infrastructures for home care and for diversified residential care for the multiple types of clients and assistance intensity

Economic and social factors

- Economic and social inequalities are determinants of health
- Two dimensions of the social and economic determinants of health: 1) improvement in social factors that determine health 2) equal distribution of those factors
- Among the social determinants, the most important are
 - *Education and literacy*
 - *Social supports and coping skills*
- Among the economic determinants of health the most important are :
 - *Income and social status*
 - *Employment and working conditions*

The role of investment in technologies and infrastructures

- The introduction of innovative technologies in the social and health sector represents an important source of public demand and offers great potential for development if coordinated with the research sector and the production sector
- Investing in care produces large employment effects, while helping , among other things, to reduce various inequalities in employment (gender, ethnicity)
- Examples from the robot industry. They can enable a better quality of life for older people with significant cost-savings in health and social care, but also they can help help creating a strong industrial basis in an ageing society

Health workers

- Health workers play a central role in health systems
- There will be an estimated shortfall of 10 million healthcare workers worldwide by 2030, primarily in low- and middle-income countries
- This inequitable distribution is aggravated as physicians are increasingly migrating to higher-income countries in search of improved working conditions and better career opportunities
- As health workers arrive in high-income countries they face problems: antisocial hours, shift patterns that are antithetical to family life and high levels of stress
- Many health workers suffer from a lack of job satisfaction and 'moral injury' as frustration builds at being constrained and unable to care for patients holistically

Dynamics of the migration pathways of health workers

- Continued role that immigration plays in addressing workforce shortages necessitates that we understand the complexity of the migration cycle, the range of agreements, codes and conventions that relate to the migration of such workers
- In many countries, health and care workers still fall outside of labour codes and protections
- Migrant health and care workers may start off or be integrated within the health sector directly; however, many migrant care workers may work in the domestic sector
- While some migrant care workers remain in the informal (domestic) sector, those who can transition to the health sector may require additional bridge training

Age-friendly communities

- Cities and communities have a key role in enabling people to live longer and healthier lives while fostering fairer and more sustainable societies
- Age-friendly cities should have accessible and safe road and transport infrastructure, barrier-free access to buildings and houses, and public seating and sanitary facilities
- Age-friendly cities and communities enable people to stay active, stay connected and contribute to their community's economic, social, and cultural life.
- An age-friendly community can foster solidarity among generations, facilitating social relationships between residents of all ages

Conclusion

- S7 Document recommendations
- Build a new social support system that promotes successful lives and proactive social participation by older people through the use of a wide range of community-based programs and advanced technologies
- Improve the socio-economic status and well-being of formal and informal caregivers and increase the efficiency and quality of care through technological innovation and adequate support system