

POPULATION AGEING CLOSER LOOK AT FACTS AND TRENDS

Sustained and rapid fertility reduction shifted the concerns of Thailand's population policy from rapid population growth to rapid population ageing.

Population aging is the shift in the distribution of a country's population toward older ages. An increase in the population's mean or median age, a decline in the fraction of the population composed of children, or a rise in the fraction of the population that is elderly are all aspects of population aging.

Population aging is occurring in most of the world, but is most advanced in the richest countries.



Among the countries currently classified by the United Nations as more developed, the median age of the population rose as following:

- 29.0 in 1950
- 37.3 in 2000
- 45.5 by 2050 (forecast)

The corresponding figures for the world as a whole are:

- 23.9 for 1950
- 26.8 for 2000
- 37.8 by 2050 (forecast)

In Japan, one of the fastest aging countries in the world, there were 9.3 people younger than 20 for every person older than 65 in 1950. By the year 2025, the ratio is forecast to be 0.59 people younger than 20 for every person older than 65. [United Nations report, 2004]

The sources of population aging lie in two demographic phenomena:

- rising life expectancy
- declining fertility

An increase in longevity raises the average age of the population, a decline in fertility increases the average age of the population by changing the balance of people born recently (the young) to people born further in the past (the old). Of these two forces, it is declining fertility that is the dominant contributor to population aging in the world today. More specifically, it is the large decline in the total fertility rate over the last half century that is primarily responsible for the population aging that is taking place in the world's most developed countries. Because many developing countries are going through faster fertility transitions, they will experience even faster population aging than the currently developed countries in the future.



THE IMPACT OF AN AGEING POPULATION ON THE ECONOMY

An ageing population means there is smaller number of younger people supporting a greater number of older people:

- Increase in the dependency ratio. This means that there will be more people claiming benefits such as state pensions and less people working and paying income taxes.

- Increased government spending on health care and pensions.
- Those in work will have to pay higher taxes. This could create disincentives to work and for firms to invest, therefore there could be a fall in productivity growth.
- Shortage of workers. This shortage of workers could push up wages causing wage inflation. Alternatively, firms may have to respond by encouraging more people to enter the workforce, through offering flexible working practices.
- Changing sectors within the economy

The economic effects of an ageing population are considerable. Older people often have higher accumulated savings per head than younger people, but spending less on consumer goods at the same time. The whole industries will be affected by falling consumer demand.

HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY AND HEALTH PROBLEMS ARE ON THE RISE INDEFINITELY

Population ageing will increase some categories of expenditure, including some met from public finances. The largest area of expenditure in many countries is now HEALTH CARE, **whose cost is likely to increase dramatically as the population ages.**



In USA the number of medical visits increased 26% between 1996 and 2006, significantly higher than the 11% population growth during same period. Half of all trips to doctors' offices were made by people with chronic medical conditions. High blood pressure was the most common ailment, followed by arthritis, high cholesterol, diabetes and depression. *[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, USA]*

The World Health Organisation (WHO) warns that the health impact of population ageing could be enormous. It predicts a big rise in cancers, coronary heart disease, diabetes, dementia and other illnesses related to ageing.

Health-related problems, as well as health care industry are expected to be on the sharp rise indefinitely.

About authors

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By combining together knowledge of ancient European, Thai, Chinese and Indian medicines with modern knowledge of nutrients, we position COMPLETE-PHARMA among the most unique producers in the world.

Here, in COMPLETE-PHARMA, we believe that word "health" is a part of our life, not just a word of self-promotion. We do our business with honesty and believe in responsibility towards our customers who need our assistance and help. We do not over-state our products and rely on modern scientific approach, remembering the words of Hippocrates "Let your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food".