POPULATION AGEING:
IMPLICATIONS OF AN AGEING SOCIETY
&
WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

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WHAT IS POPULATION AGEING

Population is considered:

- An ageing population when proportion of older people >65 years is increasing and is greater than 7% of the total population
- An aged population when 14% or older

Causes:

- Increasing longevity
- Falling fertility
- Lower inward migration
THE GREYING OF SINGAPORE – 2000-2022
SINGAPORE HAS BEEN AN AGED SOCIETY SINCE 2019

Median age      : 34.8
% people >65     : 7.2%

YEAR 2000

Median age      : 42.1
% people >65     : 18.4% in 2022

YEAR 2022

Source: DOS, 2022
SINGAPORE IS ONE OF THE FASTEST AGEING COUNTRIES

NUMBER OF YEARS TO TRANSIT FROM ‘AGEING’ TO ‘AGED’*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: population.sg, National Population and Talent Division, Strategy Group, Prime Minister’s Office.
* Countries make the transition from “ageing” to “aged” when the proportion of people aged 65 and older increases from 7 to 14 per cent.
ECONOMIES WITH THE LARGEST INCREASE IN OLDER PERSONS – 2019-2050

MOST ARE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SINGAPORE→

DECLINING OLD-AGE SUPPORT RATIO
FROM 8.4 TO 3.3 BETWEEN 2000 AND 2022

Source: DOS, 2022
SINGAPORE: ONE OF THE LOWEST DEPENDENCY RATIOS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

RATIO OF PEOPLE AGED 15-64 TO PEOPLE AGED OVER 65 YEARS, 2020 AND 2050
# Growing Ranks of Grey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
<th>Age 75+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>102,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>352,000</td>
<td>134,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>488,000</td>
<td>186,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>517,000</td>
<td>195,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>653,000</td>
<td>234,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030* (Projected)</td>
<td>960,000</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Falling Fertility
40-Plus Yrs of >2 Children

Meanwhile, the total fertility rate – or the average number of children born to a woman of child-bearing age – has plunged to one of the lowest in the world.

Replacement rate is 2.1

1957: Six births
1965: **4.6 births**
1977: **2.1 births**
1986: 1.4 births
2015: 1.2 births
2017: **1.16 births**
2022: 1.2 births

Source: DOS, 2022
MORE SENIORS LIVING ALONE

Chart 3: Number of citizen elderly (aged 65 years and above) living alone

Source: DOS, 2022
LIVING LONGER – BURDEN OR OPPORTUNITY

BOX 1-1
Myths About Aging

Myth 1: “Old age begins at 65 years.”
Myth 2: “A person’s chronological age tells you a lot about him or her.”
Myth 3: “Older people can’t learn anything new.”
Myth 4: “Older employees are less productive.”
Myth 5: “Older people don’t want to have anything to do with modern technology.”
Myth 6: “Older people are taking jobs away from young people.”
Myth 7: “Economies with an aging population are doomed to zero growth.”
Myth 8: “Older employees have to be protected by special regulations.”
Myth 9: “Higher average life expectancy means more sickness and more need for care.”
Myth 10: “Prevention and rehabilitation are useless in old age.”
Myth 11: “Aging reduces mobility.”
Myth 12: “Older people are a burden to their relatives.”
Myth 13: “A clash of generations is imminent.”
Myth 14: “Our society has to adapt to demographic change by establishing policies for seniors.”
Myth 15: “Aging societies are incapable of reform.”

SOURCE: Backes-Gellner et al., 2010.
LIVING LONGER – BURDEN OR OPPORTUNITY?

Concerns:

- Rising health care cost
- Sufficient old age financial security
- Shrinking workforce, older workers, decreasing productivity, negative impact on the economy
- Strain on family for care giving
- Fracture of intergenerational solidarity
- Social isolation and loneliness
WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Good news based on recent international study is that healthy longevity is achievable, and outlook of population ageing is optimistic, but needs actions now.
Concerns:
- Rising health care cost
- Sufficient old age financial security
- Shrinking workforce, older workers, decreasing productivity, negative impact on the economy
- Strain on family for care giving
- Fracture of intergenerational solidarity
- Social isolation and loneliness

Opportunities:
- Avoid disease and disability
- Strengthen social security at policy and individual levels
- Working beyond 65 and innovating job design and use of technology at workplaces
- Strengthen services to enable optimal independence and ageing in place and support family caregiving/caregivers
- Promote social networks and engagement across generations
- Activate community civic actions
PREPARING FOR LONGEVITY
THE FUTURE IS HOW WE MAKE IT

• Avoiding Disease and Disability
• Maintaining Mental Fitness
• Maintaining Physical Fitness
• Having Strong Social Networks and Healthy Relationships
• Be Financially Prepared
INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL AGEING

1. Avoiding Disease and Disability

Genetics less important than behavior as one grows older

- Healthy lifestyle
- Regular health checks for early detection of health issues and early interventions
- Immunizations!
HEALTHY AGEING

- Major issue around “ageing as burden” is poor health and disability resulting from chronic diseases

- Chronic diseases (like high blood pressure and diabetes) and related conditions (like heart attack and stroke) are preventable by lifestyle and regular health care

- People also biologically age later and slower
SINGAPORE IS GETTING HEALTHIER!
WE HAVE ONE OF THE
HIGHEST HEALTH-ADJUSTED LIFE EXPECTANCY

2019
Singapore  Life span of 84.9 and health span of 73.9  
9 years of poorer health
Switzerland  Life span of 84.0 and health span of 71.7  
12 years of poorer health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>LE at birth</th>
<th>HALE at birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>84.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>84.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Global Burden of Disease Report, 2019, Ministry of Health, 2020
FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL AGEING

2. Maintaining Mental Fitness

- Importance of having meaning and purpose
- Guided Autobiography
- Life-long learning

https://ilovelibraries.org/article/why-libraries-are-lifeline-seniors-during-covid/
FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL AGEING

3. Maintaining Physical Fitness

- Physical activities/exercise is one of the best investments we can make that have multiple benefits
- Best to include elements of stretching, strength training, balance and endurance (aerobic) in exercise routine
- Exercises - such as chi gong, baduanjing, yoga/chair yoga, pilates, aqua exercise – are good for seniors
- Depending on ability, 10,000 steps a day have proven to decrease mortality
FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL AGEING

4. Having Strong Social Networks and Healthy Relationships

Harvard study – best predictor of longer, healthier and happier live in American men are those with strong positives social networks and relationships at age 55.
5. Being Financially Prepared

Most older people wish to work beyond 65

1. Red Panic Button App
2. Cara SG App
3. Outside App
4. Singpass
5. ActiveSG
6. Health Hub/Health Buddy
7. Vintage Radio App (Singapore)

RESOURCES

C3A National Silver Academy
• Short courses, exam-free modules and ad-hoc learning programs for Singaporeans and PRs aged 50 and up.
• Up to 50% course subsidies
• SkillsFuture claimable
• M: 6478 5029
• E: nsa@c3a.org.sg

Learning Room @ ComSA
• Provides comprehensive life skills courses as well as longevity preparation and training to assist older adults in achieving mastery in self-care and successful ageing.
• M: 8733 0194 (SMS or Whatsapp only)
• E: learningroom_comsa@tsaofoundation.org
Thank You!