

**IMPLICATIONS OF POPULATION AGEING IN SRI LANKA
FOR ITS HEALTH CARE**

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka as a whole is experiencing a rapid demographic transition towards older population structures. Within this broader region-wide trend, there is considerable heterogeneity, with different countries at different stages of the demographic transition. This research on “Implications of Population Ageing in Sri Lanka for its Healthcare” describes the health issues of the aged and draws out the country’s socioeconomic implications of the aged population.

Sri Lanka has enjoyed exceptional health outcomes, with strong maternal and child health and low prevalence of infectious diseases at low cost in the past two decades. However, there are visible gaps or disparities in health outcomes with regard to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and elderly care. Empirical data shows that the country needs sufficient investment in health, especially given the emerging burden due to NCDs and ageing population (i.e., elderly care needs). These needs have to be addressed soon to avoid the resultant socio-economic consequences, such as a withdrawal from the workforce early due to ill health in the case of NCDs, and the rising fiscal costs for pensions and long-term care in the case of the ageing population.

In the 21st century, health is determined and contributes to broad social trends. Economies are globalizing; more and more people live and work in cities; family patterns are changing; and technology is evolving rapidly. In Sri Lanka one of the biggest social transformations is population ageing. Soon, the world will have older people than children and more people of very old age than ever before. Between 2000 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will double from about 11% to 22%. The absolute number of people aged 60 years and over is expected to increase from 605 million to 2 billion over the same period.