

The multidimensional well-being of Asian senior citizens: a systematic review.

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Dr. Dil B. Rahut and Ms. Alessia Destefanis (2021)



Regional Conference on Health and Socioeconomic Well-Being of Older Persons in Developing Asia: Role of Individual and Household Data.

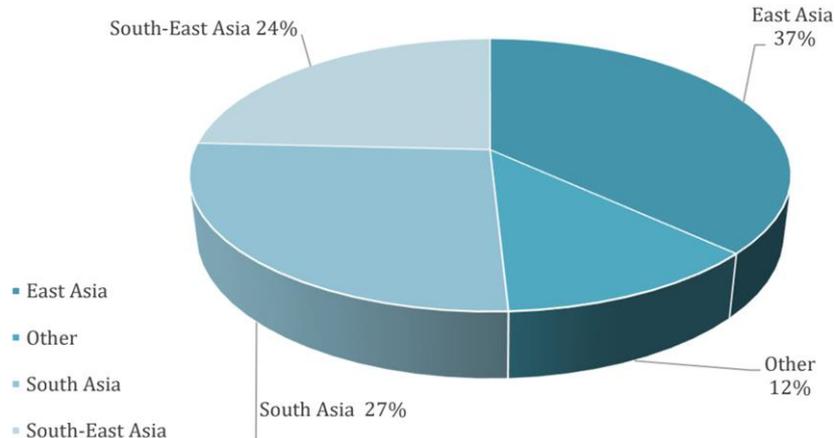
September 8th, 2021



THE PAPER

❖ **Systematic review** on elderly's well-being in developing Asia

- Aims at **identifying**, **selecting**, and critically **analysing** all relevant research related to a specific topic
- Not answering structured questions of causality through econometric methods



Empirical and theoretical papers gathered by geographical region

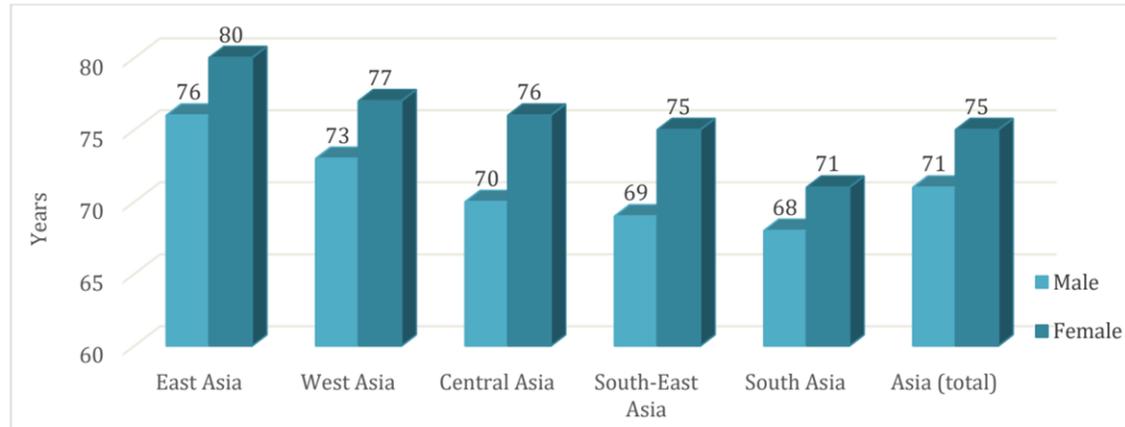
AN AGING WORLD



- ❖ Since the 1960s, decline in both fertility and mortality rates
 - **Rapidly aging global population** (Bloom et al., 2010)
- ❖ Aged population is currently at its highest level in human history (United Nations, 2015)
- ❖ Yet, the situation is expected to keep **worsening** in the next decades (United Nations, 2019)
 - In 2019, 703 million persons aged 65 years or over in the world
 - In 2050, the number of older persons is projected to double to 1.5 billion

WHAT ABOUT ASIA?

- ❖ Increase in life expectancy in Asia-Pacific countries
 - Live up to more than 70 years (Statista Research Department, 2021)
- ❖ Decrease in average fertility (OECD and WHO, 2020)
- ❖ Significant **challenge** for Asian developing economies



Source: Population Reference Bureau. (2020).



IMPACTS and CHALLENGES

An increase in the share of elderly population is seen as:

- ❖ **Harmful** for potential economic growth (Otsu and Shibayama, 2016)
 - Elderly are economically less productive or unproductive
- ❖ **Threatening** public social safety nets systems
 - Aging bodies suffer from limited regenerative biological activities, age-related diseases and disabilities (He and Tang, 2021)
 - Significant socio-economic facet marked by retirement, relocation to new living arrangements, as well as deaths of some beloved ones (Kadariya et al., 2019)



Unexpected challenges for those countries where old-age support systems are weaker

SITUATION IN ASIA

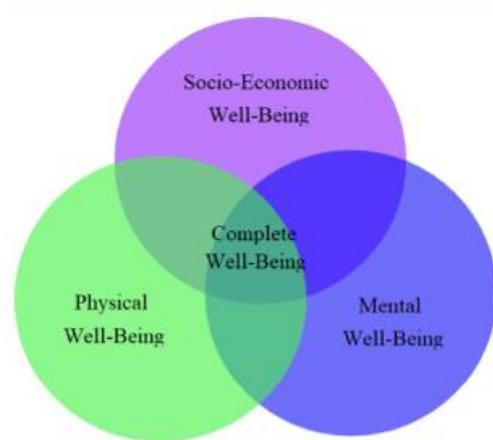
- ❖ Previously, intergenerational support and coresidence (Huda, 2020; Teerawichitchainan et al., 2015)
- ❖ Industrialization and internationalization → substantial **change in family values** and role of filial piety (Silverstein et al., 2006)
 - Disruption of traditional family norms
 - Empathization of new values:
 - Individual achievement; economic independence; socio-geographical mobility
- ❖ Nuclear family as the most appreciated family structure in South-East Asia
- ❖ Life of elderlies has been **heavily impacted** by structural changes



Senior citizens have now started to seek help from the State

MULTIDIMENSIONALITY

- ❖ Asian economies have to cope with an unexpected issue
- ❖ Have to provide well-being to the elders
 - Complex task for Governments in developing countries (Khan and Husnain, 2019)
- ❖ **Multidimensionality** of the concept of well-being
- ❖ Well-being depends on the **socio-economic**, **physical**, and **mental** conditions
 - Indirect **links** between the three main dimensions



SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

- ❖ Presence of **inequalities** → at gender, social or economic levels
- ❖ Disparities in:
 - Income and expenditures (Wang et al., 2017)
 - Dwelling ownerships and housing conditions (Tran and Vu Van, 2017)
 - Role played within society and relative attributed status (Rahman et al., 2009)
- ❖ Constantly aggravate an individual's thoughts, triggering in turn precarious mental health conditions



MENTAL WELL-BEING

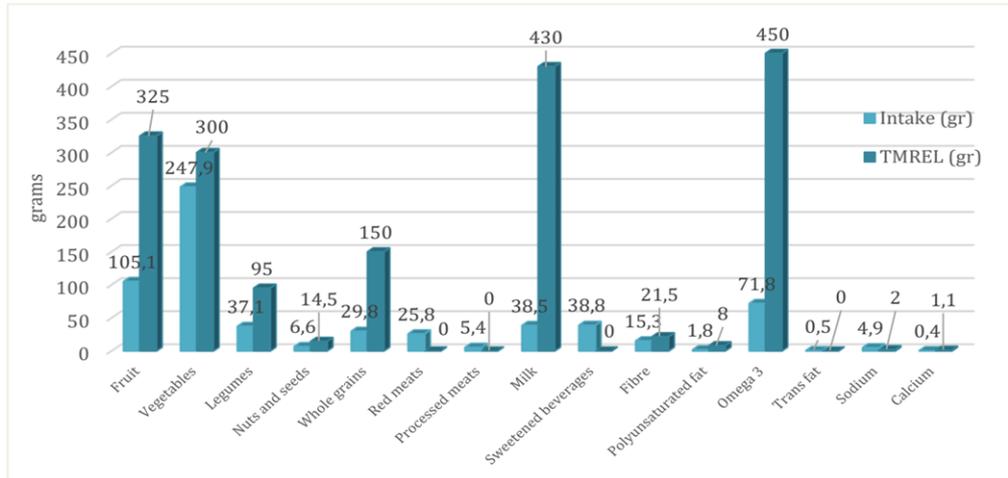
- ❖ Bad living conditions can boost **deadly diseases**, e.g. depression (Subramaniam et al., 2016)
- ❖ Yet, feelings of anxiety, loneliness and fears of death can be decreased by:
 - Frequent interactions with family members and surrounding communities (Thanakwang et al., 2012)
- ❖ Elderlies' mental status heavily relies on their **relationships** with adult children
- ❖ Mental health can be improved also through constant participation in **leisure** activities:
 - Religious celebrations (Tran et al., 2017)
 - Outdoor physical exercise (Bhamani, et al., 2015)



PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



- ❖ Attention to the physical wellness of elderly people
 - Reinforced by an active **lifestyle** (e.g., Bishwajit et al., 2017; Li et al., 2019; Yeh et al., 2018)
 - Importance of frequency and type of exercise
- ❖ Typical changes in body mass index (BMI) → **Healthy diet** is necessary (Agarwalla et al., 2015)



Source: Institute for health Metrics and Evaluation. (2020).

AMELIORATION IN POLICIES

- ❖ Considerable **improvements** in policies aimed at supporting all individuals
- ❖ Yet, there remain areas where amelioration is needed
 - Inadequacy has strong consequences on the life of citizens → overall degree of well-being of elderlies
 - Most striking effects will be seen in the long run (if the situation does not promptly change...)
- ❖ Local policymakers should **identify** and **consider** the main issues present in their countries
- ❖ Priorities **ad-hoc policies** at the local, regional, and national levels

BARRIERS TO PROGRESS

- ❖ Precarious access to **public healthcare** due to different socio-economic conditions
 - Scarcity of medical infrastructures, skilled doctors and geriatric departments
(Teerawichitchainan et al., 2015; Chen, 2020)
- ❖ Almost non-existent **pension systems** (Kaushal, 2014)
- ❖ Shortage of **infrastructures** dedicated to elderlies (Banjare et al., 2015)
- ❖ Effects of the double burden of **malnutrition** (Chern and Lee, 2015)



OUR NEXT STEPS

- ❖ Findings from the systematic review → challenging for Asian economies to cope with a rapidly aging population
- ❖ New **ADB** project in collaboration with the Dhaka Institute of Health Economics (Bangladesh)
 - *“Examining the Well-Being of the Elderly in Bangladesh”*
 - Collect primary data in Bangladesh (quantitative-based questionnaire)
 - Examine the problem faced by the Bangladeshi elderlies and the factors influencing their well-being



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



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Feel free to ask us any question

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