

Ageing and health: from evidence to policy

Technical Meeting, Geneva 2-4 June, 2010

Executive Board room

IER, NMH, FCH and HSS clusters

World Health Organization, Geneva

Background

Declining fertility with increasing life expectancies has led to a marked increase in the older population globally both in relative and absolute terms. This is true not just of high income countries but also of the rest of the world. Major epidemiological changes have reduced mortality and morbidity rates due to infectious conditions and enhanced the prominence of chronic conditions, especially at older ages. This trend has been accompanied by a change in life styles and urbanization that have contributed to an 'epidemic of chronic diseases'. Health systems need to be prepared to respond to this evolving health scenario and find effective strategies to extend health care to and respond to the needs of this rapidly growing segment of the population. The health of the ageing population will also have implications for social and economic policies.

The extent to which countries have begun to generate and use critical evidence for an effective health response has been slow and suboptimal in many countries. Lack of knowledge about the leading health issues among older populations has hampered an effective response and research on the effectiveness of interventions is limited. This lack of evidence is particularly prominent in low and middle income countries, partly because the transitions have been relatively recent. It is also important to recognize that the health of older adults depends on exposures and behaviours during earlier stages of life necessitating a life course perspective in understanding the determinants and planning interventions.

In response, several countries have started to include older people in population-based data collection, such as cross-sectional surveys and longitudinal studies. Multi-country longitudinal studies are a powerful way to generate data, raise global and country awareness of the health issues of older people and inform policy. WHO, with the support of the National Institute on Aging (NIA) is now engaged in several efforts to strengthen the evidence base for policy making. This meeting is organized by the Department of Health Statistics and Informatics of the Information Evidence and Research (IER), in close collaboration with the Non-Communicable diseases and Mental Health Cluster (NMH) and the Family and Child Health Clusters (FCH).

Objectives

The meeting has the following objectives:

- Take stock of what is currently known about health and health-related outcomes and their determinants in the older adult population, with special reference to low and middle income countries;
- Discuss methodological issues related to the measurement of health and well-being of older populations, aiming to identify issues for the development of guidelines for countries;
- Discuss the implications of current evidence for policy required to improve the health and well-being of older adults now and in the future.

Wednesday June 2, 2010

Time	Subject	Presenter
INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND		
09:00 - 09:20	Background & welcome	Shekhar Saxena, WHO Daisy Mafubelu, ADG/FCH, WHO
09:20 - 09:30	Objectives and agenda of the meeting	Ties Boerma, WHO
09:30 - 09:50	Ageing and health: general overview and main issues	Richard Suzman, NIA
09:50 - 10:10	Mortality trends in the past three decades and projections of the burden of disease	Colin Mathers, WHO
10:10 - 10:30	Discussion	
10:30 - 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
MORTALITY AMONG OLDER POPULATIONS		
11:00 - 11:20	Avoidable mortality at older ages	Martin Tobias, Ministry of Health, New Zealand
11:20 - 11:40	Mortality at older ages in developing countries	Martin Adjuik, INDEPTH Secretariat
EVIDENCE FROM CROSS SECTIONAL AND LONGITUDINAL STUDIES		
11:40 - 12:00	Health of older adults in low and middle income countries - results from SAGE and WHS	Somnath Chatterji, WHO
12:00 - 12:30	Discussion	
12:30 - 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14:00 - 14:20	Longitudinal trends in health outcomes of older adults: results from the SHARE study in Europe	Axel Boersch-Supan, Mannheim University
14:20 - 14:40	Health and ageing study in Nigeria	Oye Gureje, University of Ibadan
14:40 - 15:00	Health and Utilization of services – results from SAGE South Africa	JRefilwe Nancy Phaswana Mafuya, HSRC, South Africa
15:00 - 15:30	Discussion	
15:30 - 16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16:00 - 16:20	Patterns in disability and frailty in older adults: results from SAGE	Richard Biritwum, University of Ghana
16:20 - 16:40	Risk factors in an ageing population: results from SAGE in Mexico	Ruy Lopez Ridaura, INSP Mexico
16:40 - 17:00	Risk factors trends in older adults: results from surveillance and SAGE in China	Jiang Yong, China CDC
17:00 - 17:20	HIV and ageing: direct and indirect effect on the health and well-being of older adults	Eugene Kinyanda, MRC Uganda
17:20 - 17:45	Discussion	
18:00 - 19:30	<i>Reception</i>	<i>WHO restaurant</i>

Thursday June 3, 2010

Time	Subject	Presenter
SOCIAL NETWORKS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING		
09:00 - 09:20	The role of social networks in influencing the health of older adults – what is the current evidence?	Lisa Berkman, Harvard School of Public Health
09:20 - 09:40	Measurement of Well-being and Aging: Results from a new diary study	Arthur Stone, SUNY, Stony Brook
09:40 - 10:00	Social networks and health outcomes – results from SAGE	Paul Kowal, SAGE
10:00 - 10:20	Social determinants of health of older adults	Andrew Steptoe, University College of London
10:20 - 10:45	Discussion	
10:45 - 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
EVIDENCE FROM CROSS SECTIONAL AND LONGITUDINAL STUDIES		
11:00 - 11:20	The role of demographic and health surveillance in ageing and health in low and middle income countries	Stephen Tollman, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
11:20 - 11:40	Patterns of chronic disease in India: results from SAGE	P. Arokiasamy, IIPS, India
11:40 - 12:00	Results from the Oman health examination survey 2009 on older adults	Asya Al-Riyami, Ministry of Health, Oman
12:00 - 12:30	Discussion	
12:30 - 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14:00 - 14:20	Cardiovascular disorders: evidence from multi-country surveys (INTERHEART, etc.)	Dr Martin O'Donnell, McMaster University
14:20 - 14:40	Neuropsychiatric disorders: evidence from the 10/66 studies	Martin Prince, King's College London
14:40 - 15:30	Discussion	
15:30 - 16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES and METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES		
16:00 - 16:20	Measuring economic and wealth status among older adults – the HRS experience	James Smith, RAND Corporation
16:20 - 16:40	Measurement of health status – the role of biomarkers	Teresa Seeman, UCLA
16:40 - 17:00	Biomarker studies in low and middle income countries	Sharon Williams, Purdue University
17:00 - 17:30	Discussion	

Friday June 4, 2010

Time	Subject	Presenter
FROM EVIDENCE TO POLICY		
09:00 - 09:30	Summary of evidence presented	Ala Alwan, ADG/NMH, WHO
09:30 - 09:50	Risk transitions, ageing and implications for surveillance and research	Gretchen Stevens
09:50 - 10:10	Costs and effectiveness of interventions for chronic diseases of older adults	Dan Chisholm, WHO
10:10 - 10:30	Preventing morbidity and disability in older adults	John Beard, WHO
10:30 - 10:40	Discussion and Introduction to break out sessions	John Beard, WHO
10:40 - 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:00 - 12:30	Break out sessions * 1: Surveillance and research 2: Health promotion / prevention 3: Access to health care	
12:30 - 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
FROM EVIDENCE TO POLICY		
14:00 - 15:00	Reports from the three break out groups	Plenary
15:00 - 16:00	General discussion	
16:00 - 17:00	<i>Closure</i>	

* *What should countries be doing? What is WHO's role? What are research priorities?*