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Aging in developing countries: challenges and solutions

Resumen

Conferencia impartida durante la celebración del I International Simposium Challenges en Active Ageing, celebrado en Málaga entre el 23 y el 27 de abril de 2012.

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Abstract

Population ageing is unprecedented, a process without parallel in the history of humanity. The pace of population ageing is faster in developing countries than in developed countries.

Although the percentages of older persons are significantly greater in the more developed regions, the number of older people is increasingly larger in the less developed regions. Over the last half century, the number of people aged 60 or older increased globally by an average of 8 million persons every year. Of this incre-

ase, 66 percent occurred in the less developed regions and 34 percent in the more developed regions. As a result, the proportion of the world's population over 60 living in the less developed regions rose from slightly over half (54 per cent) in 1950 to 62 per cent in the year 2000. By 2050, nearly four fifths of the world's older population will be living in the less developed regions (UN 2009).

Currently older people and their young dependants make up a substantial and growing proportion of the poor indeveloping countries and are least able to escape chronic poverty. Older people are more likely to

have chronic illnesses and diseases, they face Severe constraints to gain and income upon which to survive. The survival of children and older people in times of crisis is strongly linked. In the context of HIV and AIDS pandemic older people are now responsible for care of an estimated 60% of orphans and vulnerable children (UNICEF 2003).

The fast ageing of populations around the world is presenting challenges for developed and developing countries. These include (WHO 2011):

- strains on pension and social security systems;
- increasing demand for health care;
- bigger need for trained-health workforce in gerontology;
- increasing demand for long-term care, particularly in dealing with dementia;
- the raising of pervasive ageism that

denies older people the rights and opportunities available for other adults.

These challenges can be counteracted by implementing the following measures (WHO 2011):

- Ensuring that older population have a basic level of financial security
- Developing age-friendly environments
- Availability and accessibility of effective health care
- Maintaining social patterns that influence the well-being of older adults.



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