GLOBAL AGING ISSUES AND POLICIES

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Dr. Li's major concentration and publications include: areas of international aging studies between America and China, the elderly people's housing and their children's attitudes toward the arrangements for their elderly parents, evaluation studies on institutionalized care facilities and services, and the elderly and middle-aged people's attitudes toward Social Security and Medicare reformation. She is also interested in the middle-aged population's preparation for their future retirement, home care-giving to Alzheimer's patients, and evaluations on caregivers' pressures when offering care for their family members with Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Li also studies cross-cultural comparisons between the development of mediated communication (email, internet, cell phone, and text messaging) and people's quality of life.

GLOBAL AGING ISSUES AND POLICIES

Understanding the Importance of Comprehending and Studying the Aging Process

Edited by

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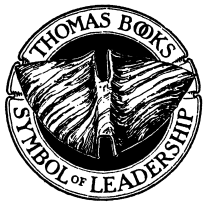

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PREFACE

When surveying 72 freshmen in my classes, the data showed that about 12% of the students' great grandparents are still living. This means that in some families there are four generations living at the same time in the twenty-first century. This is a rare occurrence in American history. Yes! American society is becoming old. The elderly currently make up 13.1% of the population. Generally speaking, when a nation has reached 10% of elderly people (some countries consider 60-year-olds as senior citizens, while other countries consider 65 and older as senior citizens), the society will be classified as aging. By the year 2030, those people who are 65 years and older will be expected to account for 20% of the United States population. This means that for every five Americans, there will be one elderly person.

Aging society is not limited to the United States. In fact, it is an urgent global issue that challenges almost all human societies. The elderly rates are unevenly distributed; for example, Sweden has already reached 19.7%. Japan is even higher with 22.7% and China currently has 8.9% elderly in the total population. However, China has the largest aging group due to the fact that it has the largest population in the world. The fact is that most nations in the world have already become or have the tendency to become an aging society. According to the U.S. National Institute on Aging, in a report entitled "An Aging World: 2008," the number of the elderly people 65 years and older in the world will be 14% in the next 30 years, which doubles the 7% of the current world's population. This means that the number of elderly will rise from 506 million in 2009 to 1.4 billion by 2040. With this projection, it is clear that the human race is now facing a new challenge, that is, inevitable aging issues.

When a nation evolves into an aging society, it has to establish or implement specific policies in order to adapt new approaches to meet the needs of the elderly population. These new approaches include, but are not limited to, elderly services, long-term care, health care policies, institutionalized facilities, illness and healing processes, financial support, and retirement life and leisure. These policies, services, and systems may not have been a critical issue in the past, but it is and will be essential for most of the societies to properly operate on a daily basis. The management of the policies and ser-

vices will require not only the cooperation between different levels of governments, families, and individuals; but the nation must also obtain strong finances and sufficient labor source to support these changes.

Some people consider the increase in the number of elderly as the major *problem* in the twenty-first century. Therefore, I asked my students to choose two words out of four representing their current thinking about the aging issue. The four choices included: problem, burden, issue, and challenge. After collecting the data, the most common response was *challenge,* followed by burden and issue. The word *problem* was chosen the least by students. According to dictionary.com, the term *problem* is defined as "any question or matter involving doubt, uncertainty, or difficulty." In contrast, the term *challenge* is explained as "difficulty in a job or undertaking that is stimulating to one engaged in it." When they responded to why they chose the term *challenge* rather than *problem,* their answers were that *challenge* involves a process that a society and individuals put an effort into fixing and fighting for a solution. However, a *problem* is contributed to a negative aspect and difficult to solve. Most people believe being in an aging society that becomes an *issue* or even a *burden* in society due to intensive needs of the elderly people, such as more special services and financial well-being. According to dictionary.com, *issue* is defined as "a point in question or a matter that is in dispute." Based on the discussion, the students thought that *issue* is a general term to describe their idea about a burden. Nevertheless, when *issue* or *burden* is tied to *challenge,* it indicates the seriousness that people recognized in an aging society and they decided to put an effort in finding a solution.

The book is designed for college students to use as a textbook to study global aging issues and different strategies to comprehend the aging process with a global perspective. Any readers of the general public who are interested in the topics of elderly population will also find the book beneficial. The fundamental purpose of the book is to help students and readers to develop their knowledge on worldwide elderly issues. To accomplish this goal, the text incorporates 18 articles from different countries/regions with a variety of aging topics, which will be divided into continents including Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, and the Oceanic Islands. By sharing these regions'/nations' elderly issues and their particular solutions to the challenges, it will provide people with global views on current aging processes, policies, and strategies. It will help college students and readers understand that the increase of the elderly population is a major development in the twenty-first century. The book will help people comprehend the importance of improving the elderly population's overall quality of life as well as valuing the contribution the elderly can make to the community. In reading about the topics in this book, readers will gain insights about why global elderly issues are

critical, and how the lives of elderly have been impacted and influenced by different policies, societies, and cultures in which they live.

Chapters from the following countries/regions are included in the book:

Africa

- **Sub-Saharan Africa**: A Complex Epidemiological Transition: AIDS, Aging, and Healthy Life Expectancy in Sub-Saharan Africa by Niyi Awofeso, Edward Mills, and Anu Rammohan from Australia and Canada.
- **South Africa**: Aging and the Changing Role of Older Persons: South African Perspectives by Monde Makiwane and Vasu Reddy from South Africa.

Asia

- **China**: Population Aging and Its Challenges on Labor Supply in China by Meiyan Wang and Fang Cai from China.
- **Israel**: Elder Abuse and Neglect: To Report or to Inform? Community Nurses' Perspective on a Policy Dilemma by Talia Marnin and Israel Doron from Israel.
- **Japan**: Elderly Care in a Transnational Context by Mika Toyota from Japan.
- **Singapore**: Are Singaporeans Aging Successfully? by Kwame Addae-Dapaah and Tey Chee Ying from Singapore.
- **Thailand**: Financial Security for the Elderly and Pension Reform in Thailand by Worawet Suwanrada from Thailand.

Europe

- **Austria**: Consumer directed Home Care for the Elderly in Austria: Social Trends and Unintended Consequences by Josef Hörl from Austria.
- **Estonia**: Elderly in Estonia: Coping and Possibilities of Support by Taimi Tulva, Lauri Leppik, Krista Tammsaar, Virve Laidmäe, and Helika Saar from Estonia.
- **Portugal**: Growing Old in Portugal by Catarina Resende Oliveira, Anabela Mota Pinto, Vitor Rodrigues, and Amália Botelho from Portugal.
- **Spain**: Spain's Achievements and Challenges in Regards to High Population, Aging, and the Dependency Law by Nuria Rodríguez-Ávila from Spain.
- **Sweden**: Elderly Care in Swedish Welfare State: Implications of the Population Aging by Yulia Blomstedt, Ingeborg Nilsson, Klass-Göran Sahlen, Anna Sundström, and Anders Brändström from Sweden.

- **The United Kingdom**: Perceived Pain and Quality of Life in Older Adults in the United Kingdom by Ben Chi-pun Liu from The United Kingdom.

North America

- **The United States of America**: Old Southern Queer Folk Resilience in Older Gay Men and Lesbians by Susan Hrostowski from the United States of America.

Oceanic Islands

- **Australia**: Aging Issues and Policies in Australia by Jeffrey Soar from Australia.
- **New Zealand**: Demography of Population Aging in New Zealand: Implications and Challenges by Santosh Jatrana from Australia.

South America

- **Argentina**: Aging, Employment, and Poverty in Argentina by Jorge A. Paz from Argentina.
- **Uruguay**: Happiness among the elderly, the Latin American Case by Natalia Melgar & Máximo Rossi from Uruguay.

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GLOBAL AGING ISSUES AND POLICIES

Part 1

AFRICA

FACTS ABOUT AFRICA

- As the world's second largest continent, Africa is also the second most-populous region.
- Africa is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. The continent is about 11.7 million square miles with approximately one billion people making up the total population (2009 est.).
- There are 54 nations in Africa.
- Africa's population is relatively young. Most countries have low percentages of elderly people. The countries with 5% or higher of aging population includes: South Africa, 5.4%; Aleria, 5.1%; Lesotho, 5%; Mauritius, 7.1%; Morocco, 6%; and Tunisia, 7.2%.
- AIDS/HIV is a major public health concern in African nations. Each year, AIDS/HIV causes the death of many Africans.
- Worldwide, there are about 33.2 million people living with HIV. Among all these people, roughly 22.5 million persons are living in Africa.
- Each day, approximately 14,000 new HIV infections occur worldwide. Over 90% of these people are living in developing countries. Africans, while representing about 10% of the global population, accounts for 64% of all new HIV infections and 72% of all AIDS deaths.
- Roughly 25% of the global diseases reside in Africa, where there is a shortage of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health professionals (less than 5%), who can provide effective preventive health care.
- In the future, it is expected that with the help of United Nations and other international commitments and in collaboration with continued efforts by African nations, HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care, and support will greatly improve.

For further information please check the following websites:

https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos./xx.html
http://pathmicro.med.sc.edu/lecture/hiv5.htm
http://www.worldpress.org/Africa/2602.cfm
http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2011/jul/08/world-map-new-south-sudan

Chapter 1

A COMPLEX EPIDEMIOLOGICAL TRANSITION: AIDS, AGING, AND HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Niyi Awofeso, Edward Mills, & Anu Rammohan

Abstract

In 2005, the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) predicted that by 2050, there will be 9.2 Africans, 8.2 Latin Americans, and 55 Asians over the age of 60 for every 10 Europeans aged 60 and above. Despite the high toll of HIV infection, the annual growth rate among older Africans is 2.6%, faster than in the developed world (1.7%). In 2010, the population of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) was estimated at 800 million, compared with 181 million in 1950. In 2000, UNPF predicted that the population of SSA's over the age of 60 years will double by 2030, from 35 to 70 million people. Increasingly, over the past several decades, elderly SSAs (Sub-Saharan Africans) have been negatively impacted by inadequate policy initiatives to facilitate healthy aging, shrinking social networks, paltry pensions, sub-optimal acute and chronic disease management and poorly funded end-of-life care. This chapter examines SSA's aging trends in the context of the sub-continent's demographic and epidemiologic transitions. Policy initiatives to facilitate healthy aging and improve end-of-life care for SSA elderly will be reviewed.

Keywords: Aging Policies, HIV/AIDS, end-of-life care, healthy aging

Introduction: Sub-Saharan Africa and Its Aging Population

Archaeological records show that *Homo sapiens* (modern humans) evolved in Africa about 130,000 years ago, and commenced migration to other parts of the planet about 80,000 years afterwards. About 2,000 years ago, a climatic change occurred in the northern and central parts of Africa which transformed the Mediterranean climate of these regions to arid desert. The southern region of the Sahara desert corresponds to the African region according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). This region currently comprises 46 of the 55 nations in Africa and is commonly referred to as Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). With a total population of 1 billion people and a land area of 11.7 million square miles, Africa is the world's second largest and second most-populous continent, after Asia (Fage & Tordof, 2002).

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the 2011 Human Development Report, SSA nations persistently experience the most severe levels of multidimensional poverty globally. The report stated that Niger had the highest share of multidimensionally poor, at 92% of the population, followed by Ethiopia and Mali, with 89% and 87% respectively (UNDP, 2011a). In a 2010 study titled "Human Development in Africa," UNDP documented that Africa's average Human Development Index (HDI)–a composite international measure of trends in education, income, and life expectancy–rose modestly from 0.465 to 0.522. Although human development is best assessed by more than these three indicators (Ranis et al., 2005), other potential indicators are closely correlated with the three core UNDP measures (Table 1.1).

Within SSA, Mauritius, South Africa, and Botswana, in that order, enjoy the highest average HDI. In the other extreme, Niger has the lowest average HDI value of 0.326. The average for SSA is 0.487, which is only 7% lower than the overall African average of 0.522 that is inclusive of North Africa. Hence, the SSA HDI picture is unlikely to be much distorted by including the North African countries. In contrast, the average HDI in Western Europe rose from 0.90 in 1990 to 0.95 in 2005 (Stewart, 2010). The life expectancy component of the HDI in SSA showed even slower progress, from 0.482 to 0.508, mainly due to HIV-related premature mortality. Table 1.2 shows changes in SSA's life expectancy and other basic indices compared with global trends from a 1990 reference point.

HDI scores are generally graded as very high if the composite score exceeds 0.793. Low HDI scores are 0.510 and lower. The country with the largest decrease in HDI score since 1998 is Zimbabwe, falling from 0.514 in 1998 to 0.140 in 2010. Although countries with higher values of a given HDI component tend to also exhibit larger values of the other components, Botswana is a notable exception along with other high HIV prevalent countries.