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Emerging Social Issues Division

Social Policy and Population Section

Asia-Pacific Population Journal

Article **Population Ageing in East and South-East Asia, 1950-2050: Implications for Elderly Care**

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Abstract As consequence of sustained declines in fertility and improvements in life expectancy during the last three decades of the twentieth century, East and South-East Asia is now faced with a high rate of population ageing. Given very high rates of growth in the older population in the coming years, the region faces the prospects of an increasing proportion of older persons (defined as those aged 60 years or more) of total population. Moreover, with continuing advancements in medical science, longevity continues to increase and the population of the oldest old (that is those aged 80 years or more) is projected to increase at even faster rates. Women constitute a majority of the older population and an even larger majority of the oldest old population. Older women are more vulnerable than older men, as a higher proportion of them are widowed and have a higher incidence of suffering from disabilities, this adds to the burden of care. This article describes these trends and the subsequent demands of care, mainly in terms of health care and living arrangements, but also the demands that will be placed on the shrinking proportions of the younger adult population. The paper highlights among other things, the need to strengthen both family-based and community-based care systems, which remain strong but are threatened by declining family size, migration and globalization. The article concludes by pointing to the need for mainstreaming ageing into all development programmes.

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