

New Report Reveals Programs That Promote Healthy Ageing Can Help Reduce Rising Health Costs¹

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[\(BUSINESS WIRE\)](#)--In 2050, the number of people aged 60 years and older worldwide will increase from 605 million to nearly 2 billion.² While it's good news that people are living longer, the number of older adults who will be affected by long-term, chronic conditions will increase,¹ leading to a serious economic consequence as healthcare costs rise: greater demand for care, but less income to support it.¹ A new Pfizer-sponsored report from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), "Preventive Care and Healthy Ageing: A Global Perspective," concludes that when governments increase investment in healthy ageing, healthcare costs go down.¹ The report, which sheds light on ways countries are promoting preventive healthcare, suggests preventive care can pay dividends for cash-strapped governments.¹

"It's crucial for policymakers to consider measures that help ageing individuals remain active and healthy members of society to avoid the heavy burdens associated with the cost of long-term care,"¹ said Katherine Dorr Abreu, the report's editor. "The EIU's report states preventive measures can have up to a fourfold return on investment and can help adults maintain an optimal quality of life as they age."^{3,4,5}

Report Findings

The global report, which provides a deep dive on Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States, highlights compelling insights about the factors contributing to this global healthcare challenge:

- Age-related, infectious diseases such as pneumonia and influenza, as well as noninfectious chronic diseases like heart disease and stroke, are affecting older adults for longer periods of time,¹ adding to healthcare costs and severely impacting a person's productivity and need for support¹
- Global healthcare reforms, increased mobility and evolving attitudes mean that governments must foot the bill for caring for their older citizens,¹ and these governments are finding it difficult to keep up with the rise in chronic conditions since, to date, most healthcare systems have focused on treating acute illness¹
- Immunization is highlighted in the report as one of the most cost-effective preventive measures for older people, but that measure is vastly underused due to structural and social barriers¹
- In developing countries, where they struggle with basic medical services, preventive care measures are seen as unaffordable luxuries¹

"As the world's ageing population increases, there is a greater need to educate all people about preventive health measures, like nutrition, regular exercise, appropriate screenings and vaccinations and to encourage people of all ages to play an active role in addressing the health challenges facing them and society overall,"^{4,5} said Dr. Jack Watters, vice president, External Medical Affairs, Pfizer. "Importantly, preventive care programs must be

supported by all stakeholders and integrated into national healthcare systems in order to be successful.”

Preventive Care Initiatives

Despite the challenges, the report indicates several ways that countries can reduce the incidence of infectious and chronic diseases, and limit long-term spending, including:

- **Health Screenings** – In Japan, where the proportion of older persons considered healthy and active is predicted to rise from 18.9 million in 2000 to 30.3 million in 2025,¹ employers are required to conduct annual health screenings for every employee.¹
- **Vaccination Programs** – Brazil implemented campaigns to encourage adults to get vaccinated to prevent contagious diseases.¹ Today, 90 percent of people 60 years and older have been vaccinated against influenza.¹
- **Wellness Initiatives** – In the United States, where government funding is limited, large private sector employers are promoting wellness among employees through smoking cessation, diet and exercise programs, with some holding annual flu vaccine drives.¹

The report and resources are available free of charge at digitalresearch.eiu.com/healthyageing.

Notes for Editors

The Economist Intelligence Unit research and analysis is based on insights gleaned from in-depth interviews with 21 experts on issues related to ageing globally and in each of the eight countries that were analyzed: Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

About the Economist Intelligence Unit

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