



World Health  
Organization

WORLD  
REPORT  
ON  
**AGEING  
AND  
HEALTH**



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*Cover:* The painting on the cover of the Report is Rose Wiley's 'PV Windows and Floorboards'. At 81 years old Rose Wiley's style is fresh, unpredictable and cutting edge. This painting won the John Moores Painting Prize in 2014 from more than 2,500 entries. At double the age of previous winners, Rose Wiley shows that older age need not be a barrier to success. The John Moores Painting Prize unlike other prestigious art prizes does not restrict submissions for contemporary works by age. The copyright for this painting is held by the artist.

# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>1. Adding health to years</b>	<b>3</b>
Introduction	3
The context for action	4
The international legal and policy frameworks	4
Current public-health response – more of the same will not be enough	6
The challenges for policy development	7
Diversity in older age	7
The impact of inequity	8
Outdated stereotypes, new expectations	10
The world is changing too	12
Why act on ageing and health?	14
The rights of older people	14
Ageing, health and development	15
The economic imperative	16
Conclusion	18
<b>2. Healthy Ageing</b>	<b>25</b>
What is ageing?	25
Ageing, health and functioning	26
A framework for action on ageing and health	27
Healthy Ageing	28
Trajectories of <i>Healthy Ageing</i>	31
A public-health framework for <i>Healthy Ageing</i>	32
Key issues for public-health action	34
Dealing with diversity	34
Reducing inequity	35
Enabling choice	35
Ageing in place	36

<b>3. Health in older age</b>	<b>43</b>
Demographic and epidemiological changes	43
Population ageing	43
Why are populations ageing?	43
Are the added years in older age being experienced in good health?	49
Health characteristics in older age	52
Underlying changes	52
Health conditions in older age	57
Other complex health issues in older age	62
Intrinsic capacity and functional ability	64
Intrinsic capacity across the life course	65
Patterns of functioning in countries at different levels of socioeconomic development	66
Significant loss of functional ability, and care dependence	67
Key behaviours that influence <i>Healthy Ageing</i>	69
Physical activity	70
Nutrition	71
Key environmental risks	73
Emergency situations	73
Elder abuse	74
<b>4. Health systems</b>	<b>89</b>
Introduction	89
Rising demand, barriers to use, poorly aligned services	89
Demand for health services	89
Barriers to use	91
Systems designed for different problems	93
Economic impact of population ageing on health systems	95
Responses	99
The goal: optimize trajectories of intrinsic capacity	99
Adapt interventions to individuals and their levels of capacity	100
Implement older-person-centred and integrated care	103
Align health systems	107
Conclusion	114
<b>5. Long-term-care systems</b>	<b>127</b>
Introduction	127
The growing need for long-term care	128
Current approaches to long-term care	129
The long-term-care workforce: often undervalued and lacking support and training	129

Financing long-term care: it always has a cost	131
Care provision: outdated and fragmented	133
<b>Responding to the challenge of long-term care</b>	<b>133</b>
Moving towards an integrated system: a revolutionary agenda	134
General principles of an integrated system of long-term care	135
Enabling ageing in the right place	136
Building workforce capacity and supporting caregivers	136
Promoting integrated care through case management and broader collaboration	142
Ensuring sustainable and equitable financing	144
Changing mindsets about long-term care: a political and social challenge	146
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>147</b>
 <b>6. Towards an age-friendly world</b>	 <b>159</b>
Introduction	159
Ability to meet basic needs	160
Financial security, housing, personal security	161
What works in improving financial security	163
What works in ensuring adequate housing	165
What works in meeting the need for personal security	169
Abilities to learn, grow and make decisions	174
What works in fostering the abilities to learn, grow and make decisions	174
Ability to be mobile	179
What works to maintain mobility in older age	180
Abilities to build and maintain relationships	184
What works to build and maintain relationships	186
Ability to contribute	188
What works in facilitating the ability to contribute	190
The way forward	196
 <b>7. Next steps</b>	 <b>211</b>
Introduction	211
Key areas for action on <i>Healthy Ageing</i>	213
Align health systems to the needs of the older populations they now serve	213
Develop systems for providing long-term care	215
Creating age-friendly environments	218
Improve measurement, monitoring and understanding	221
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>223</b>
 <b>Glossary</b>	 <b>225</b>
 <b>Index</b>	 <b>233</b>



## Preface

At a time of unpredictable challenges for health, whether from a changing climate, emerging infectious diseases, or the next microbe that develops drug resistance, one trend is certain: the ageing of populations is rapidly accelerating worldwide. For the first time in history, most people can expect to live into their 60s and beyond. The consequences for health, health systems, their workforce and budgets are profound.



The *World report on ageing and health* responds to these challenges by recommending equally profound changes in the way health policies for ageing populations are formulated and services are provided. As the foundation for its recommendations, the report looks at what the latest evidence has to say about the ageing process, noting that many common perceptions and assumptions about older people are based on outdated stereotypes.

As the evidence shows, the loss of ability typically associated with ageing is only loosely related to a person's chronological age. There is no "typical" older person. The resulting diversity in the capacities and health needs of older people is not random, but rooted in events throughout the life course that can often be modified, underscoring the importance of a life-course approach. Though most older people will eventually experience multiple health problems, older age does

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