

How Ready are We? Future Aging

Dear Editor,

Iran's population policies, or government strategies related to the conditions of society, have changed a lot in recent decades. In this regard, issues such as war, socio-economic developments, migration and some similar cases have led the government to consider variable approaches and programs to regulate the population, which due to lack of evidence and scientific experience led to heterogeneity of population growth. Although population imbalance in demographic studies is a threatening situation, an increase in the elderly population is not a threat in itself; its social, economic and health consequences in the absence of proper and timely planning are critical, and if these critical conditions continue, the one of the major challenges of population imbalance is shortage of manpower. The key question here is who should work, be productive, care for the elderly, or pay taxes. In such circumstances, it is clear that the pressure is on the active population of the country, the government and the health system, which must be responsive and serve the less active group. In this regard, one of the important requirements of government services is the payment of subsidies and pensions; in this way, organizing the affairs of the elderly without considering the adequate health per capita budget in policy programs will not be fruitful. Another difficulty in timely and appropriate planning for the elderly population, apart from economic challenges, is lack of attention to the society socio-cultural infrastructure in order to have a dynamic and Cheerful elderly population.

Given the mentioned above, the adoption of appropriate population policies and decades of planning and implementation in the structural, content and functional areas in an integrated manner and in various dimensions is necessary to balance the population. For example, forecasting sufficient budgets while a significant portion of the population is transitioning from productive to consumer. A portion of this budget is needed for adaptation spaces and provide services in various areas to the elderly and elderly caregivers (who devote part of their time and attention to these people).

In this regard, due to the limited financial resources of the government, it is valuable to pay attention to the social institutions role. The family is the closest and most relevant supportive institution. The successful experience of some countries such as Japan is a proof in this scope. In this country and some other societies, the acceptance and respect of the elderly in the family and society is taught from an early age, and people support their elderly worthily. In response, the government also provides conditions to facilitate people's lives; for example, in one of the action, instead of caring for the elderly in nursing homes and paying salaries to the center's staff, salaries are

allocated to children to take care of their parents at home so that they can play a more worthy and responsible role.

Success in family-centered programs is so important in some developed countries that it is ranked as a source of evaluation and development. For example, in countries such as Italy, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany and Japan, home care policies are considered and pursued (Asadzadeh *et al.*, 2020).^[1] These countries are competing with each other to the individuals aging be at home and in the family, not in medical centers or nursing homes. At the same time, they emphasize that only the elderly should be kept in medical and supportive centers that cannot be kept at home due to special conditions or specialized needs. Another solution is the establishment of educational, recreational and service places that some countries have planned with the aim of providing common services and opportunities to different age groups, especially to establish interaction and communication between children and the elderly and reduce the generation gap.

This article mentioned only a few examples of cultural context, social empowerment and changing society's view toward the elderly to make aging more affordable and effective by using successful ideas and experiences; however, any purposeful planning and action requires adequate time, tools, methods and resources that must be pursued despite the limitations and difficulties.

In this regard, the government is not the only source of responsiveness. Depending on the capabilities and facilities, all private, charitable and public groups have the opportunity to join priority and important actions. However, quality aging requires new plans and ideas and it should be considered that at least in this regard, time is the most important non-renewable resource. Although we are late, we must both make up for lost time and prioritize planning for the present and the future.

In this regard, related policy measures and the absorption and allocation of required resources are mandatory for the government. In Coordination with government planning, the community is considered as a strong source of support for the elderly by promoting responsible and valuable behavior. The role of the elderly themselves was also important because they can provide their experiences and emotions to the community by useful interactions in order to whole community experience a greater sense of worth and efficiency.

Financial support and sponsorship

This study is the result of postdoctoral research No. 98028273, and was conducted with the support of Iran National Science Foundation: INSF. Tehran. Iran.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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Received: 28 Sep 21 **Accepted:** 16 Oct 21

Published: 24 Jun 22

Reference

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Access this article online	
Quick Response Code: 	Website: www.ijpvmjournal.net/www.ijpm.ir
	DOI: 10.4103/ijpvm.ijpvm_417_21

How to cite this article: Keyvanara M, Samouei R. How ready are we? Future aging. *Int J Prev Med* 2022;13:92.

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