How quickly is the population of Malaysia ageing?

The population of Malaysia will increase by 31.2% over the next two decades, reaching over 37 million by 2030. The proportion of the population aged 60 years and above is projected to exceed that of the younger population aged 0–14 years in 2049 (see Figure 1).

The proportion of persons aged 60 years and above will increase from 7.7% of the population in 2010 to 14.7% in 2030. The population aged 0–14 years will constitute 24.1% of the total population by 2030 (see Table 1).

How many years can older people expect to live in good health?

In 2010, healthy life expectancy (HALE) at birth was 66.4 years for women and 62.6 years for men. HALE at age 60 was 14.7 years for women and 13.0 years for men.

Table 1. Population percentages and percentage change by age group, 2010–2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (Years)</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–14</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>-6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>28401</td>
<td>37266</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What percentage of older people are participating in the workforce?

In Malaysia (2010), the percentage of labour force participation in the population aged 65 years and above was 15.7% for women and 35.8% for men, with 24.7% of people aged 65 years and above participating in the workforce.

Over a period of 20 years, the median age in Malaysia will increase by 5.7 years, from 26.0 years in 2010 to 31.7 years in 2030. This compares to an increase of 6.4 years in Asia and 4.8 years in Europe over the same period.

The 2010 population pyramid for Malaysia shows a large number of people in the younger age bracket. The number of people steadily declines at older ages (see Figure 2a). Compared to 2010, the 2030 pyramid shows a greater number of people will be present in the middle and older age brackets. The population is expected to live longer in 2030 (see Figure 2b). The age distribution between women and men will remain constant between 2010 and 2030.
Table 2. Life expectancy by sex at birth and at age 60, 2010 and 2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


How do we assess the health of populations as they age?

In Malaysia, life expectancy at birth and at age 60 will increase for both women and men between 2010 and 2030 (see Table 2). Over the next 20 years, life expectancy at birth will increase by 3.2 years for women and men. The life expectancy gap between sexes will remain constant at 4.4 years in 2010 and 2030. For people who survive to age 60 in 2010, women can expect to live another 19.7 years and men another 17.9 years.

What health issues currently affect the population?

In 2004, noncommunicable (Group II) conditions constituted 87% of the overall disease burden. Group I conditions accounted for 11%, while Group III conditions accounted for 2% of the total disease burden (see Figure 3).²

Cardiovascular disease was the number one burden of disease for both women and men. The second largest burden of disease, sense organ disease, affected more women than men, while the third largest burden of disease, malignant neoplasms, inflicted more men than women (see Figure 4).

Policy and practice recommendations

✔ Constructive, proactive measures are needed to monitor the 2011 National Policy for Older Persons and Plan of Action for Older Persons.
✔ Continued support for collaborative and multidisciplinary research is indicated.
✔ Improved translation of health research results is crucial to inform and shape current and future policy.
✔ Coordinated interventions are needed to address health and well-being gaps between majority and minority populations, particularly among older people.

Notes

2. The Gini coefficient is a measure of equality in income distribution where 0 is perfect equality and 100 is perfect inequality.
3. Healthy life expectancy (HALE) is an estimate of the number of years that a person can expect to live in good health, taking into account age-specific mortality, morbidity and functional health status (http://www.who.int/topics/hl_expecatancy/en/).
4. Disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) across a population are used to quantify the burden of disease from mortality and morbidity. DALYs are calculated as the sum of years lost to premature death and years lost to disability due to a given disease or health condition.
5. Burden of disease Group I = Communicable, maternal, perinatal, and nutritional conditions; Group II = Noncommunicable conditions; Group III = Injuries and violence.

Data Sources


