How quickly is the population of Viet Nam ageing?

The population of Viet Nam will increase by 15.5% over the next two decades, reaching over 101 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 2030 (see Figure 1).

The proportion of persons aged 60 years and above will increase from 8.4% of the population in 2010 to 18.3% in 2030. The population aged 0–14 years will constitute 17.3% 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 69.1 years for women and 62.6 years for men. HALE at age 60 was 16.1 years for women and 13.8 years for men.

What percentage of older people are participating in the workforce?

In Viet Nam (2010), the percentage of labour force participation in the population aged 65 years and above was 24.8% for women and 40.0% for men, with 30.8% of people aged 65 years and above participating in the workforce. Over a period of 20 years, the median age in Viet Nam will increase by 10.3 years, from 28.2 years in 2010 to 38.5 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 Viet Nam shows a large number of people in the 15–29 year age bracket, with fewer people in both youngest and oldest age groups (see Figure 2a). There are fewer men than women at older ages. The population distribution for 2030 is predicted to peak at the middle age bracket (35–44 years). In 2030, although it is expected there will still be fewer men than women at older ages, the age distribution becomes more even (see Figure 2b).
How do we assess the health of populations as they age?

In Viet Nam, 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 3.4 years in women and 3.1 years in men. The life expectancy gap between sexes will increase from 4 years in 2010 to 4.3 in 2030. For people who survive to age 60, women can expect to live to another 22.5 years and men another 20.0 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 10%, while Group III conditions accounted for 3% of the total disease burden (see Figure 3).

Cardiovascular disease was the largest burden of disease, with more men suffering from these conditions than women. Sense organ disease was the second largest burden of disease with more women than men suffering from this condition. The third highest burden of disease for women and men was malignant neoplasms (see Figure 4).

How will ageing in Viet Nam affect the disease burden borne by older people?

The burden of disease in Viet Nam is expected to change as a consequence of population ageing. The disease burden in the older age group (60 years and above) is expected to increase between 2005 and 2030 (see Figure 5).

The estimates and projections (DALYs) for persons aged 60 years and above in 2005, 2015 and 2030 show that Group II conditions will continue to increase and hold the leading position for the burden of disease in the Western Pacific Region (see Figure 5).

Policy and practice recommendations

- Constructive, proactive measures are needed to inform the National Committee on Ageing and to monitor the Law on the Elderly.
- Continued support for collaborative, multidisciplinary and cross-country research is indicated.
- Improved translation of health research results is crucial to inform and shape the Law on the Elderly.
- Coordinated interventions are needed to address health and well-being gaps between majority and minority populations, particularly among the older people.