

What are the issues associated with an ageing population and what strategies are countries using to try and cope?

An ageing population is when throughout a nation's population when several factors mean that there are more elderly than there is younger, almost turning the normal population pyramid upside down. You can have smaller families which mean there are fewer children. With advance in technology and advance in medical care, more people can live for longer, mean larger elderly population. Most MEDC's have a big amount of elderly as they can provide more services, and facilities to use in their spare time. An ageing population is said to be the most expensive age group, due to the amount of attention needed for them. The higher elderly population such as 85 year plus is growing rapidly, which puts pressure on health, economic and social systems. The ageing population in the UK, is from the baby boom after the war, when birth rate rapidly grew, and as the generation progressed, they are now the bulge of the pyramid.

The elderly are not spread evenly over the UK, for instance, Devon it is the spitting image of a retirement town, with suitable facilities, such as post offices, doctors, pharmacies and beauty stores. With the town predominantly elderly, it is not a suitable place for a career, or for jobs, and expensive housing, not ideal for young and middle aged people, searching for work. There are places which provide keep fit classes for the elderly, reducing risk of illnesses.

The elderly are more likely to suffer from illnesses because of their old age, and to aid them is very expensive, they do visit the doctors more, and have more hospital appointments, and they override the younger and middle-aged people's health-care, despite the young being the new generation they have less attention. This also means more funding, which comes from the tax payer, the independent population, and with an ageing population beating the independent population, they have to work harder to provide. With a not so good economy, this can be extremely challenging.

Most elderly people need a type of social services to aid them, such as nursing homes, which homes to many elderly, this is very costly, but very effective as everything needed is there and ready, used by professionals. Day-Care centres, providing trips for the elderly, getting them to interact with society, this is also very costly, but it gets them involved.

Transportation, everyone needs to get from A to B, some use private transport, some use public transport. The elderly mainly use public transport, as driving can be a danger, as old age takes an effect on their reactions and body. But using public transport is good, as the spread in money aids the economy, maybe not dramatically, but it helps.

Elderly do play a part in the community, as they offer for voluntary work, helping out charities, and people, this can help the economy also, as the difference they make by volunteering can be a factor. Whilst doing so, they can learn the ways of modern technology, which means, they can do more from home also. Grandparents are also becoming the new babysitters, within most families, both parents work, meaning nobody is home looking after the children, the grandparents can babysit the children; this is a bonus for the independent population as it saves money on day-care centres and babysitters.

Pensions are a big factor. With the current life expectancy becoming higher in most MEDC's rather than LEDC's, people can rely on retiring at an age, and live off pensions as their only income. But with the dependant population, consisting of young and old, increasing, there is a difference between the 2, which means there has to be more work, for the independent population to help the young, and mainly elderly.

There are many problems and benefits with an overall population, but it is all mainly down to the impact on the economy. The higher elderly population cannot look after themselves, which means the government have to pay for services, this is paid by the taxpayer, which is your independent population. They are most patients at hospitals, and healthcare is not cheap, and to pay for it, is the tax payer, again. They can save some money in the economy, but not retiring at all, and still have a self funded income, which is very good, because nobody else pays for it. The wealthier elderly population like to spend their money on luxuries, such as holiday, recreational work, and use money for leisure.

France's solution is favoured on a better dependency, meaning that, the independent population income is suitable for the dependent population. There are also some incentives to favour bigger families, which is having 3 years of paid parental leave, giving the mother or father time with the family with an income. All inclusive schooling, starting at the age of 3, government funded. More children a family have, the earlier a mother can retire, with a full pension. With less financial backing as time goes by, having more children seems a definite solution. There are also other solutions such as, rising retirement age.

Overall, there will always be benefits and solutions to an ageing population, some being more serious than others. However, the only way to sustain it, is to have bigger families, with an upside down population pyramid being serious threats, you need to avoid it, and as quickly as can be done. You need a better dependency ratio, otherwise the economy will fall to pieces.