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Ageing and adult health status in eight lower-income countries: the INDEPTH WHO-SAGE collaboration

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Abstract

Background: Globally, ageing impacts all countries, with a majority of older persons residing in lower- and middle-income countries now and into the future. An understanding of the health and well-being of these ageing populations is important for policy and planning; however, research on ageing and adult health that informs policy predominantly comes from higher-income countries. A collaboration between the WHO Study on global AGEing and adult health (SAGE) and International Network for the Demographic Evaluation of Populations and Their Health in developing countries (INDEPTH), with support from the US National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (FAS), has resulted in valuable health,

disability and well-being information through a first wave of data collection in 2006–2007 from field sites in South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Viet Nam, Bangladesh, Indonesia and India.

Objective: To provide an overview of the demographic and health characteristics of participating countries, describe the research collaboration and introduce the first dataset and outputs.

Methods: Data from two SAGE survey modules implemented in eight Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems (HDSS) were merged with core HDSS data to produce a summary dataset for the site-specific and cross-site analyses described in this supplement. Each participating HDSS site used standardised training materials and survey instruments. Face-to-face interviews were conducted. Ethical clearance was obtained from WHO and the local ethical authority for each participating HDSS site.

Results: People aged 50 years and over in the eight participating countries represent over 15% of the current global older population, and is projected to reach 23% by 2030. The Asian HDSS sites have a larger proportion of burden of disease from non-communicable diseases and injuries relative to their African counterparts. A pooled sample of over 46,000 persons aged 50 and over from these eight HDSS sites was produced. The SAGE modules resulted in self-reported health, health status, functioning (from the WHO Disability Assessment Scale (WHODAS-II)) and well-being (from the WHO Quality of Life instrument (WHOQoL) variables). The HDSS databases contributed age, sex, marital status, education, socio-economic status and household size variables.

Conclusion: The INDEPTH WHO–SAGE collaboration demonstrates the value and future possibilities for this type of research in informing policy and planning for a number of countries. This INDEPTH WHO–SAGE dataset will be placed in the public domain together with this open-access supplement and will be available through the GHA website (www.globalhealthaction.net) and other repositories. An improved dataset is being developed containing supplementary HDSS variables and vignette-adjusted health variables. This living collaboration is now preparing for a next wave of data collection.

Access the supplementary material to this article: INDEPTH WHO-SAGE questionnaire (including variants of vignettes), a data dictionary and a password-protected dataset (see Supplementary files under Reading Tools online). To obtain a password for the

dataset, please send a request with ‘SAGE data’ as its subject, detailing how you propose to use the data, to global.health@epiph.umu.se

Keywords:

ageing | survey methods | public health | burden of disease | demographic transition | disability | well-being | health status | INDEPTH WHO-SAGE

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