

MAGYAR GERONTOLÓGIA

VOL. 16. CONFERENCE SPECIAL ISSUE/ KONFERENCIA KÜLÖNSZÁM

2024. Vol. 16. Conference Special Issue/ Konferencia Különszám

ISSN 2062-3690

[www.https://ojs.lib.unideb.hu/gerontologia](https://ojs.lib.unideb.hu/gerontologia)

-INCUBATOR-

Addressing the Geriatric Hypertension Crisis in the Philippines: Challenges and Strategies for Improved Care

James Luke Abalos Añonuevo

Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Debrecen, Hungary

Keywords: improve care, Geriatric Hypertension Crisis, elderly, economic challenges

Abstract

This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the challenges confronting the elderly population in the Philippines, focusing on economic insecurity, healthcare accessibility, social isolation, and the socio-cultural context of aging. While the elderly population remains smaller in proportion compared to other Southeast Asian nations—growing from 2.7% in 1990 to a projected 7.7% by 2025—this demographic shift brings significant implications. The increase in the aged dependency ratio, expected to double from 5.5 elderly per 100 working-age persons in 1990 to 10.5 by 2025, reflects the pressures on younger generations to support an aging population.

Economic challenges are a key concern, with many elderly Filipinos continuing to work beyond the typical retirement age due to financial necessity. In 1990, 66.5% of men and 28.5%

of women aged over 60 were still part of the labor force, with rural elderly predominantly engaged in agriculture, while urban elderly relied on family support and limited pensions. The 1984 ASEAN survey reported that only 11% of elderly rated their health as poor, yet 16% did not seek medical care when needed, primarily due to financial constraints.

Healthcare accessibility is another significant issue, with only 15% of elderly Filipinos covered by health insurance, mainly through the government's PhilHealth program. The prevalence of chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis is high, yet many cases remain undiagnosed due to inadequate healthcare access. The paper also highlights disparities in healthcare coverage and outcomes, with higher education levels correlating with better insurance coverage and health outcomes.

Social isolation and the potential for abuse are additional challenges, particularly among elderly individuals who live alone or in precarious financial situations. However, the cultural norm of family caregiving plays a crucial role in mitigating these challenges. In 1988, 68% of elderly Filipinos lived with at least one child, reflecting the deep-rooted expectation that families should care for their aging members. This norm reduces the demand for institutional care, such as retirement homes, but also places a heavy burden on families, particularly in low-income households.

This paper concludes by emphasizing the need for comprehensive policies that address the multifaceted challenges faced by the elderly in the Philippines. Recommendations include expanding healthcare coverage, enhancing economic support systems such as pensions, and fostering intergenerational solidarity. Additionally, the paper advocates for increased public awareness and support for local initiatives that promote elderly well-being, ensuring that this growing demographic can age with dignity and security in a rapidly changing society.