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## -INCUBATOR-

### **Elderly people in Tunisia: a study on challenges and support systems**

**Mariem Jebari**

University of Debrecen Faculty of Health Sciences, Hungary

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Tunisia is experiencing significant growth in the number and proportion of elderly people. Statistics show that the population aged 65 years and over has been steadily increasing over the years. This demographic shift has led to the reversal of the population pyramid creating new challenges for the nation.

Several factors have contributed to this demographic shift. One of the primary reasons is the significant decrease in fertility rates since Tunisia gained independence in 1956. The government implemented various family planning programs that successfully reduced birth rates.

This decrease in fertility, coupled with improvements in healthcare, sanitation, and overall living conditions, has resulted in a substantial increase in life expectancy. As a result, a larger proportion of the population is reaching old age, creating an increasingly aged society and changing demographic trends.

Statistics indicate that Tunisia has seen a substantial reduction in the mortality rate between 1956 and 2022, largely due to advancements in medical care. However, with people living

longer, the burden of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and Alzheimer's disease has increased significantly.

Beyond healthcare, elderly people in Tunisia face challenges in their social lives. Many seniors experience isolation, especially in urban areas where traditional family structures have weakened. The younger generation is increasingly moving to cities or abroad in search of better economic opportunities, leaving the elderly behind in rural areas or in smaller households.

The economic implications of an aging population are also significant. As the number of working-age individuals declines relative to the growing elderly population, there is increased pressure on social security and pension systems. The government must allocate more resources to support the elderly.

Despite limited resources, the Tunisian government is making efforts to prepare for the growing elderly population. Since 1994, numerous programs and action plans have been implemented, focusing on social protection, specialized healthcare, housing support, and educational initiatives for the elderly. These efforts aim to improve the quality of life for seniors and address the unique challenges they face as they age.

Social protection initiatives include pensions, subsidies, and financial assistance programs designed to help the elderly in order to meet their basic needs. While these programs are one step in the right direction, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all elderly people receive adequate support. Healthcare programs specifically tailored to the needs of the elderly are also being developed, with a focus on preventing and managing chronic diseases, improving access to medical services, and promoting healthy aging.

Housing support is another critical area of focus. Many elderly people live under inadequate housing conditions, which can exacerbate health issues and reduce their quality of life. The government is working on providing better housing options for seniors, including affordable and accessible housing that meets their specific needs. Additionally, educational programs aimed at raising awareness about the challenges faced by the elderly and promoting intergenerational solidarity are being introduced.

While Tunisia is facing significant challenges due to its aging population, the government is taking steps to address these issues through various programs and initiatives.