

Supporting paper for the debate on the topic
“Does population ageing pose challenges for
the health and social care system?”

Module code BMHP6009

Assessment 2

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Introduction

The group debate considered the topic affirmative presenting arguments and identifying the challenges for the health and social care system of the population ageing.

My group researched the topic and organised the debate on main points such as chronic illnesses, acute illnesses, health and social care resources, shortage of staff, quality of care, financial aspects and change of the family structure. I was designated the Introduction part where I intended to have a strong opening line to gain attention and interest from the audience. I considered essential to highlight that between 2015 and 2030 the elder population will grow up to 56% which represents a high value (Assets Publishing Service, 2016). The impact of the rise in elderly population impacts more or less different sectors which were discussed in more depth throughout the debate.

Arguments

The ageing population rapid growth has been influenced by the shift in the primary cause of death from diseases to chronic and acute illnesses which boosted life expectancy. Also the incidence of falls, dementia, cancer, obesity, diabetes and most currently covid-19 pandemic are concerns of our society because have registered growth in numbers (Bolton, 2022). That is why the elder and long term care has increased and it is the most daunting health care challenge.

Other sectors that are implicitly connected and that are putting pressure on the health and social care relate to the financial costs involved, from governmental capabilities to retirement pattern and social care expenditure (Local Gov, 2015). The demand and need of resources will continue to rise in prevalence. Staff shortage is another aspect that needs to be considered because United Kingdom struggles with human resources to ensure there is enough numbers of professionals in the healthcare system. There are other external factors that impacted this issue such as Brexit and immigration (UK Health Security Agency, 2019).

Opposite group considerations

The opposite group considered negative the population ageing will pose any challenges to the health and social care system by highlighting their active input to different aspects such as still being in employment at an advanced age, helping with childcare their families and being a great source of knowledge for the young generation.

I considered their points valid, but that does not make null our affirmative argument which is based on data and statistics that clearly indicate that the ageing of the population does pose serious challenges for the health and social care system and that the health and social care system should brace for the rising prevalence of chronic diseases in ageing population.

Statistics

Statistics state that by 2040, nearly one in seven people is projected to be aged over 75 (Parliament, 2022). The Office for Budget Responsibility projects total public spending excluding interest payments to increase from 33.6% to 37.8% of GDP between 2019/20 and 2064/65 – equivalent to £79 billion in today's terms – due mainly to the ageing population (Assets Publishing Service, 2016). According to the Health Profile for England (2019) although the population lives longer than in the past, that does not mean that living a healthy life. An ageing society is more costly to treat because are more likely to develop chronic conditions (Figure 1).

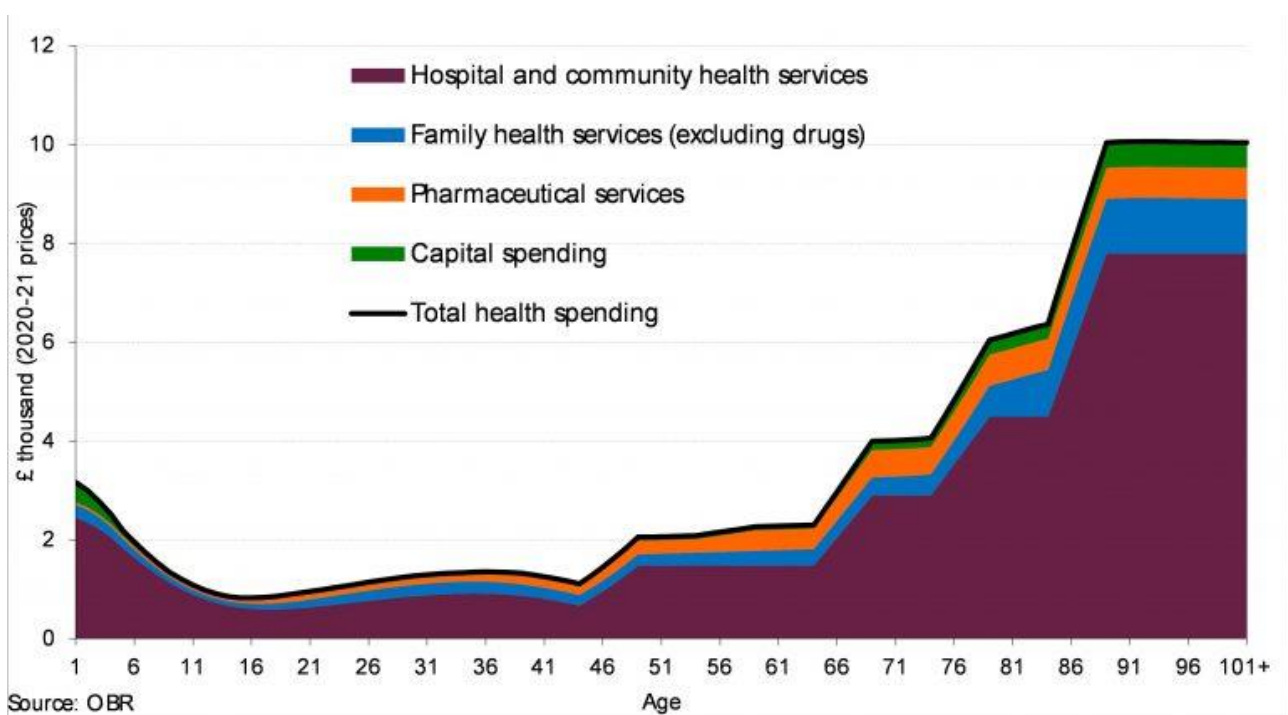


Figure 1 Health spending per person

The mortality rates show that are generally improved because of the development of the treatments and prevention. Advances in medical and social science have extended UK lifespan at a time when fertility rates have been falling. Other statistics show that 75% of 75 year olds in the UK have more than one long term condition, rising to 82% of 85 year olds. Between 2007/08 and 2013/14 the numbers of A&E attendances by people aged 60 or over increased by two-thirds, a steeper increase than is expected by demographic change alone (NHS England data, 2015).

In the United Kingdom the health and social care system is struggling because is challenging to meed the number of needs for elderly. For the elderly there are different surfaces implemented community centres, residential care homes.

Pandemic

The pandemic has affected majorly the healthcare system and a profound impact on the people reaching and providing care. The number of deaths in the care home residents was very high as well as the number of deaths among the domiciliary care. The social care providers were on of the group at the highest risk during pandemic accounting for 76% of Covid-19 caused deaths for their groups (Commons Library, 2022)). That is why between the peak times of the pandemic the admission for the care home residents has reduced to a percentage of 58% for the elective admissions and 85% for emergency admissions. It was intended to be reduced the number of admissions to reduce the risk of spreading the Covid-19 virus to a point where discharges were surpassing the 120% or discharging patients (Disability Rights, 2022). That meant that the number of needs not being met has increased and that the system was not delivering that efficiently. The data based on all this changes and strategies to handle the situation had registered unprecedented figures with poor support from the social care system (The Health Foundation, 2020).

The impact of pandemic on the social workers has also been devastating because of the high number of deaths, but also the uncertainty and the Government was considered to have had weak strategies towards the system. Discharging the patients was done in rush and was not prioritised, also lack of testing in the beginnings of the pandemic was another fail. Shortage of staff with pandemic has become even more difficult for the system and requested staff to work under strenuous conditions (Full Fact, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion the health and social care sector does need improvement and pandemic has been revealing an existing need that has been neglected. The Government needs to ensure that better strategies are put in place, funding, adequate number of trained staff and policies are put in place in order to strengthen the system. Legislation such as Health and social care Act, equality act, data protection act are the legal framework that regulates different aspects from the sector.

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