

Assessment 1

Support paper

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Humanity has experienced sudden transformations in the demographic ageing population in the last 40 years, preponderantly in countries with a high standard of living. As for the UK, it has been concluded that there is a beginning of a significant imbalance between the workforce and the ageing population. According to the GOV. UK statistics the number of individuals aged 65 and over rised by 1.6% between 2021 and 2022, to 12.7 million, illustrating 18.9% of the total UK people. Moreover, the figure for people aged 65 and over is expected to extend by 1.5% in the next 5 years (IBISWorld, 2022).

Increasing life expectancy is a significant accomplishment that must be celebrated; however, the ageing population process comes with several advantages and disadvantages (Crimmins, 2015). In the next paper, we will look at the challenge facing the UK health and social care system concerning the ageing population and the budgetary impact on the UK economy. Also, I will analyze the information received during the debate between myself and my colleagues on this topic. Furthermore, in the second part, we will present how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected both the ageing population and the UK healthcare system.

According to the statistics in 2014, for every person of retirement age, there were 3.2 people of working age. It is predicted that this proportion will drop to 2.7 by 2042 and state pension spending will rise to 6.1% of GDP by the same year. It must be borne in mind that the shape of the workforce market has changed in the last 20 years as an increasing number of older people in the work field. The percentage of people aged 65 or over who have a job has increased by 50% compared to 1998 and this makes the elderly population a well-defined segment of the UK workforce (Ons, 2019). So, from my point of view, the ageing population should not affect the UK economy. Of course, the government must get involved with resources, laws, and policies to prevent this. Staying in work after age 65 and being able to decide when and how to retire can bring both material and health benefits. Moreover, training in different areas of work for the elderly can give them more flexibility to find a job (Working past State Pension age, 2022).

Likewise, the older population has solid and traditional views and morals, also the older workforce is an experienced and hard-working one. That they continue to work means that younger generations can learn from their experience in the work field (Buckle, 2015). Increasing the number of older people can lead to an increase in the number of volunteers in charity work. This can be an advantage to society, as the elderly bring in free contributions to various community and government projects after retirement. Another notable role that older people play is that they become careers for their grandchildren, thus reducing the level of family expenses and allowing parents to work, thus contributing to the state budget through taxes.

It is true that after the age of 65 a person may need more attention, emotional and medical care, which means increased spending by the NHS (Vernon, 2016). On the other hand, because of the need for care assistance in daily life, building more nursing homes may be imperative and this will lead to more jobs in the system. Also, because of the ageing population, there are opportunities for private companies to join the UK health and social care program. Also, the ageing of the population creates a domino effect, but effectively, industries like construction, food industry, and public transport benefit from that.

Does the ageing population affect the UK economy and health care system? Reflecting and analyzing the point of view of those involved in the debate, we can say that the truth is somewhere in the middle.

A certain percentage of the elderly depend on the NHS service because of the multiple conditions they suffer, but we cannot ignore the fact that these diseases may be hereditary or from a younger age. As well the involvement of the elderly in volunteer activities or their stay at work after retirement brings benefits to the system. So, weighing the pros and cons of the debate, we can say that there is pressure on the UK economy and healthcare system because of an ageing population, but greater involvement of both the UK government and ours can mitigate this pressure. Implementing the program 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England' can be the solution to prepare the population from an early age. (Middleton, 2011)

COVID-19 pandemic has affected the health system and the population in the UK. In 2020/2021, the health system spent £ 7.8 billion on treating patients with COVID-19. It reflected these costs in staff training, substantial investments in social assistance, and financial support for the detection and vaccination of the population against COVID-19. (NHS Confederation, 2021) The impact on the health system during the pandemic was major as the UK faced an ageing population. We have shown that people aged 65 and over are more prone to complications from contracting the disease. The impact on the elderly from a medical and emotional point of view has been a challenge. During all this time, both the fear of illness and loneliness led to various physical and mental illnesses, sometimes even death.

In conclusion, the ageing of the population is not a disease, it is a natural phenomenon in which we all have a part. Age is just a number and as long as we care about our lifestyle, we can prevent the hardships of ageing and also contribute to the well-being of the health and social care system.

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