The Comparative Study of Aging and Health in Asia: Why Are We Here?

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Population Council
Goals of AHA

- Describe health of older persons in Asia
- Examine population trends in older adult health
- Look at individual health transitions
- Investigate determinants of trends and transitions
- Assess implications for policy
- Provide comparisons across Asia
Requirements to Accomplish Goals

- Quality longitudinal data from various places in Asia
- A committed research team from various places
- Original sites: Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan
- New addition: Mainland China 😊
Impetus

1. Population aging in Asia
2. Associated challenges
3. Need for research
4. Existing data
5. Good partners
1. Population Aging in Asia

- East and southeast Asia is most rapidly aging region

- Effects of aging not yet felt
Fertility in Study Sites: 1965 to 2000

Taiwan
China
Philippines
Indonesia
Singapore

TFR

Percent of Population Aged 65 and Older: 1980 to 2040

- China
- Philippines
- Taiwan
- Indonesia
- Singapore
2. Associated Challenges

Mayhew, 1999:

- Number of disabled grows as societies age
- Aging is main factor pushing up health costs
- Health costs are higher where aging is more rapid
Is this true for Asia?

- How does family size reduction influence support?
- Are life expectancy increases leading to:
  - Expansion of morbidity or
  - Compression of morbidity
- What are the determinants of health in Asia?
- How are other changes (e.g. socioeconomic) influencing?
- ALE is important tool
3. Need for Research

- Research on patterns, trends and determinants of health in Asia is still rare
- Need to test universality of hypothesis, e.g.
  - Are functional health problems declining?
  - Does social support benefit health transitions?
  - Does SES associate with better health?
  - Does SES of family members matter?
Model of Transition

- **Country Effects**
  - Has a health problem
  - Does not have a health problem

- **Compositional Variables**
  - Has a health problem
  - Does not have a health problem
  - Died
  - Loss to follow-up

Variables:
- \( p_{11} \)
- \( p_{12} \)
- \( p_{13} \)
- \( p_{14} \)
- \( p_{21} \)
- \( p_{22} \)
- \( p_{23} \)
- \( p_{24} \)
Measuring Health

Medical → Mortality, Chronic Disease
Social → ADL, IADL, Nagi
Subjective → How do you feel?
Issues in Health Measurement

- Reports of chronic disease may be inaccurate.
- Comparative research is hampered by differences in question wording and items:

  But, comparative research is important
  - How cultural, political and geographic factors shape health?
  - How universal are hypotheses across settings?
## 4. Data

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Waves</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Base-line sample size</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1996, 2000</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>2,285</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1995, 1998</td>
<td>55+</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chinese Data

- Beijing Multidimensional Longitudinal Study of Aging
  - Waves: 4
  - Age Range: 55+
  - Baseline Sample Size: 3,257
Comparative Study of Aging and Health in Asia

About AHA

The Comparative Study of Aging and Health in Asia (AHA) is a multi-country collaborative study of health among older Asians. The project uses existing longitudinal survey data to study health transitions in four Asian countries: Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia.

The primary aims of the project are to:

(1) estimate population prevalence levels of chronic health conditions;
5. Good Partners

I know why I’m here, why are you here?