



Non-communicable diseases and population ageing: a new priority for international development?

The Development Studies Association Ageing and Development Study Group

with

Help Age International

Non-communicable diseases and population ageing: a new priority for international development?

The meeting was hosted by HelpAge International at Tavistock Square, London. Around 25 people came along, and participation was evenly divided between academics and staff from a range of NGOs (HelpAge International, Age UK, the NCD Alliance, Alzheimer's Disease International, Medicines du Monde and Volunteers for Rural India).

The first speaker, Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, provided a general review of issues relating to NCDs and population ageing. He challenged the widely-held view that there is an inevitable relationship between population ageing and the prevalence of many NCDs. He highlighted the continued neglect of these issues among global and national policymakers and identified explicit and implicit ageism in the mainstream NCD agenda.

Marc Suhrcke explored the scope for developing an economic case for prioritising NCDs among older people. He argued that this could be made most effectively by allocating economic values to enhanced wellbeing, using techniques such as Values of Statistical Life. There was some discussion about the need to construct an economic case, since good health should be understood as a right, not a good and that arguments should also be framed in terms of equity and social justice. It was, however, recognised that robust and evidenced economic arguments are essential for influencing policymakers, particularly those based in finance ministries.

Maelenn Guerchet drew on newly available data from the 10/66 Dementia Research Group to assess the economic and social effects of old age care dependency on households in China, Mexico and Peru. She presented evidence that households with care dependent elders are more likely to

experience economic strain, but that the effects vary according to the nature of the older person's illness. For example, in the case of care dependency caused by dementia, health care spending was lower since appropriate services were not available or family members did not know what to do about the condition.

Sara Gallardo presented an intervention, funded by HelpAge International, to raise awareness about dementia and older people's health in rural Peru. She demonstrated how, despite failing to receive support from the local Ministry of Health, the initiative succeeded raising awareness in the community and had prompted the local municipality to establish a new old age centre with a particular focus on mental health needs. In the discussion particular attention was paid to the challenges of scaling up such interventions so that they have an impact at the national level.

Finally, a short film, produced by the 10/66 Dementia Research Group Peru team, was shown. The film consisted of interviews with carers of highly dependent older people in rural and urban Peru, focussing on their daily experiences and their feelings about their care activities.

Date: 3 June 1pm to 4.30pm

Loaction: HelpAge International, Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA.

The burden of disease in low and middle income countries is rapidly shifting from infectious diseases to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as cancer, stroke, dementia, heart disease and diabetes. These conditions are particularly prevalent among older people, including those from poorer economic strata. These new needs represent a major policy challenge, but responses at the global and national levels have been slow and half-hearted. This workshop maps out some key issues and challenges, and considers opportunities to promote more effective policy responses.

Programme

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| 1-1.45 | Arrival and lunch |
| 1.45-2.15 | Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, School of International Development, University of East Anglia.

<i>NCDs and older people: why they matter, and why are they neglected by policy-makers?</i> |
| 2.15-2.45 | Marc Suhrcke, Centre for Health Economics, University of York.

<i>Assessing the economic impacts of NCDs among older populations.</i> |
| 2.45-3 | Coffee break |
| 3-3.30 | Maelenn Guerchet, Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College London, UK.

<i>Care dependency in later life. Prevalence, causes and economic impacts. Data from 10/66 and the INDEP study.</i> |

3.30-4 Sara Gallardo, Instituto de la Memoria, Depresión y Enfermedades de Riesgo, Peru.

Raising awareness of Alzheimer's Disease and dementia in Peru.

4-4.30 Round table discussion.

For further information, please contact Peter Lloyd-Sherlock at p.lloyd-sherlock@uea.ac.uk