

Where are populations aging better?

A global comparison of physiological age¹

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Abstract

Global comparisons and large samples are needed to inform policymakers on aging trends among people aged over 60 years old. Using harmonized data gathered from the Gateway to Global Aging Data, we developed an original measure of physiological age (PA), namely a measure of age weighted for the influence of frailty, activities of daily living limitations and comorbidities. We compared PA across 12 OECD countries and explored the socioeconomic determinants of the discrepancy between PA and chronological age (CA). We found a strong correlation between our PA measure and biological age. Italy, Israel, and the US are the three countries where PA is the highest (independently of CA). In contrast, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Greece, Sweden, and Denmark have much lower PA. Finally, PA is higher among poorer, less educated, and single older individuals. Countries with higher PA need to reinforce healthy aging measures especially towards the most disadvantaged population.

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