

C. DYE. *Ageing, health and technology in the developed and developing world*. *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):212; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.165.00 **Purpose** The purpose is to describe the key components of demographic change in low- and high-income countries worldwide, and to explore the challenges for technology and health policy presented by aging populations. **Method** A broad survey of literature and statistics on aging, health, population growth, and demographic change¹. **Results & Discussion** Between 2000 and 2050, the number of people aged 60 and over will more than triple from 600 million to 2 billion. The over-60's are the fastest growing age group worldwide, and the majority of people entering this age group live in developing countries. The challenges for health care in aging populations are succinctly represented in the two graphs below, which show that the biggest increase in mortality between 2010 and 2050 will be due to non-communicable diseases in low- and middle-income countries. Among the estimated 96 million people who will die in 2050, more than half (54 million) will be caused by non-communicable diseases among the over-60s in low- and middle-income countries. Taking a public health perspective (i.e. at the level of populations and communities), I will argue that having the best technology is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for healthy aging. Gerontechnology must be used to help implement the right policies for health care in an aging world. I will discuss the right policies under four headings: (i) ensuring that elderly people have adequate financial security; (ii) developing environments that are friendly to older people; (iii) making effective health care accessible; and (iv) maintaining social and family patterns that influence the well-being of the elderly, so that they can continue to participate actively in society.

References

1. World Health Organization. Ageing; 2011; www.who.int/topics/ageing/en/; retrieved April 17, 2012

Keywords: health, population growth, mortality, non-communicable diseases

Affiliation World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland; *E:* dyec@who.int

Full paper: No

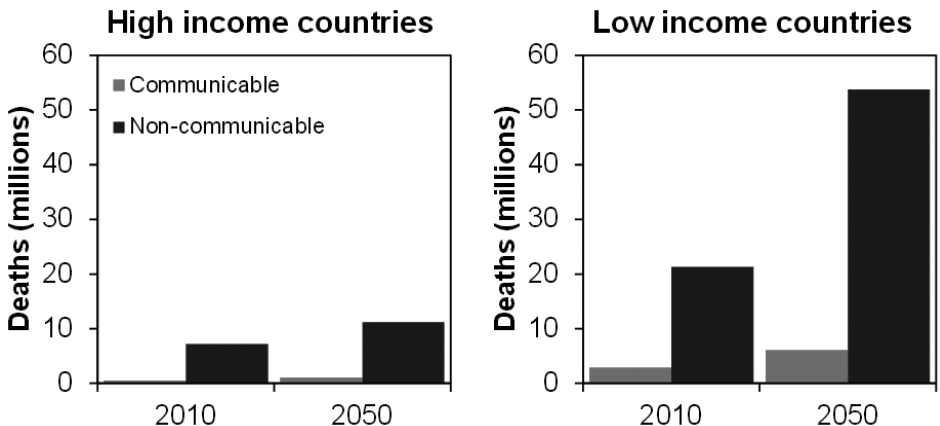


Figure 1. Estimated numbers of people dying from communicable (light) and non-communicable (dark) diseases in 2010 and 2050 in high income (left) and low- and middle-income countries (right)