

# ORAL PAPER PRESENTATION 3: PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

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## Assistive technology for older persons – analyses of data from WHO's rapid assistive technology assessment

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**Purpose** With a growing population of older persons globally, the need for mainstream assistive technology (AT) as well as assistive technology specifically intended for older persons is on the increase. The association between age and functional limitations strongly indicates a growing demand due the current demographic development. There was however until recently limited data that can describe the situation, monitor development and compare between countries and populations. Quality data is essential for developing regional, national and international responses to current and future need for AT globally. The Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT) was launched on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and highlights both substantial gaps in provision of AT and AT related services globally and in particular in low- and middle-income countries. As part of the process leading up to the GReAT, World Health Organization and partners developed the "rapid Assistive Technology Assessment" (rATA) survey to enable data collection that for the first time can provide estimates of AT use and need in a global perspective. The purpose of this presentation is to present key indicators from rATA among older persons in the countries that participated in the global data collection. **Method** Data from recent, nationally representative rATA surveys of perceived use of and need for AT among older persons (60 years and older) in more than 30 countries across all WHO regions will be analyzed against sex, rural/urban and Human Development Index (HDI). rATA includes indicators on access to and need for AT, specification of products in use and in need, urban/rural location, and on aspects of provision and quality of services and products. **Results** Prevalence of access to assistive products increases with increasing level of development (HDI index) among persons aged 60 years and above. The need in this age group reduces on the other hand with increasing HDI levels, indicating a higher level of met need in countries with higher HDI. The estimated global need among persons aged 60 years and above is 68.7% including spectacles and 31.2 % excluding spectacles. It is expected that further analyses will reveal similarities across countries/regions in the association between AT use and need and demographic and socio-economic indicators. It is however also expected that we will demonstrate substantial differences in the levels of use and need between countries with different level of development (HDI). These results are important for developing models for estimating needs and building broad-based evidence for developing AT programs in diverse contexts.

### References

WHO (2022) Global Report on Assistive Technology. Geneva; World Health Organization.

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