

APPRA
Asia-Pacific Population Research in Ageing
www.ageing.ox.ac.uk

The Asia-Pacific region is diverse with regard to its population, ethnicity, economy and culture. Asia bears the largest proportion of the world's population, whose growth is projected to continue at least for another century, as will its share of older people. Its demographic characteristics and estimated progressions lend themselves to a promising outcome. Asia today is in the forefront of providing low cost labour and emerging technology, producing high grade products and world class services. As the booming market of the 21st century, Asia provides numerous opportunities to businesses, manufacturing industries, and educational and health care organisations. In the south of the area, Australia and New Zealand are two economically developed nations already experiencing the various challenges of an ageing society and are so far successfully managing to address many of them. The whole region has been undergoing significant socio-economic transformations within a very short space of time and thus many traditional social institutions, family and cultural norms are affected. Individuals, communities and states in the region are experiencing many changes as a result of the increasing older population. There needs to be systematic research on ageing for a fuller understanding of its causes and consequences within the paradigm of socio-economic and cultural transformation, and to contribute to the population's overall wellbeing. Such research is also needed to enable countries to share their experiences of handling ageing issues. They can thus benefit from the APPRA initiative and put the ageing agenda into policy and practice. The Oxford Institute of Ageing (OIA) can play a vital role in this research hence the appropriateness of the APPRA network collaborating with the Institute.

The acronym APPRA stands for "Asia-Pacific Population Research in Ageing". APPRA, an Asia and Pacific regional ageing research network of academic researchers, NGO workers and civic partners, was established by the OIA at the University of Oxford in 2006. It is a network of people who are interested in ageing research across the Asia and Pacific region no matter where they currently live and work. APPRA was initially formed to address some key gerontological and geriatrics issues in the region to achieve certain goals, in particular filling the knowledge gaps in the existing literature. Since its inception, APPRA has been based at the Oxford Institute of Ageing since when the OIA has been coordinating their various programmes.

The main goals of the APPRA network are as follows:

- to disseminate population ageing research within the Asia and Pacific region by organising and supporting seminars, workshops, conferences, policy dialogues and through the media
- to support capacity building within the region by staff training, curriculum development and participation in the Oxford Spring School
- to share web-based information and to enhance awareness about ageing societies
- to provide the opportunity for academic visitors to spend time at OIA and for exchange programmes
- to initiate links and collaborative programmes with government departments, research institutions, NGOs, business communities, and civil society

- to develop research ideas for joint research projects
- to produce high quality publications

The OIA promotes other strong research groups: AFRAN, focusing on African health and ageing issues, and EAST, concerned with ageing and migration in Europe. Current research activities in Asia at the OIA include:

- Population research in Indonesia, such as “Ageing in Indonesia - a longitudinal ethnographic and demographic study of population ageing in three rural Indonesian communities”, funded by the Wellcome Trust, London.
- Health and ageing in Bangladesh. The focus is concentrated on the socio-demographic changes at macro and micro levels and their impact on health and ageing issues in Bangladesh.
- Poverty and vulnerability among older people in South Asia.
- Emerging population challenges in China, particularly rapid population ageing, care and support of older people, and shrinkage of future labour force.
- HSBC Future of Retirement study in Asia. This survey includes eight Asian countries & territories - India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, Singapore, China and Hong Kong.

APPRA also has interests in other demographic issues such as migration, fertility transition, infant and child mortality, reproductive health and public health in general. Any future collaboration or joint research applications with APPRA are welcome from either institution or personal levels. Moreover, NGOs currently working or interested in Asia and the Pacific countries are encouraged to contact APPRA for future collaboration. More generally, the APPRA network membership is open to everyone who has an interest in ageing research within the Asia-Pacific region. There are currently many members including at least one individual from each country within the region and this bank of expertise will work together as a think tank for the benefit of older people in the Asia-Pacific region.

It is anticipated that the APPRA network will build a bridge between scholars and policy-makers in the region and will provide an opportunity to promote research collaboration, and the pooling of ideas as well as sharing experiences on ageing issues. The network members will have the opportunity to focus on critical issues of common concern for the ageing population both in the region and worldwide. High quality research will inform policy makers and encourage them to adopt a variety of policy measures not only to improve the quality of life for older people but also to prepare the younger generation about the likely scenario of an ageing society through media campaigns and the school curriculum, enhancing the possibilities for intergenerational understanding and co-operation.

Professor Sarah Harper, Director of the Oxford Institute of Ageing is responsible overall for the coordination of the APPRA network along with Dr. Hafiz T.A. Khan. Further information about APPRA can be obtained from Dr. Khan via email at: hafiz.khan@ageing.ox.ac.uk