

# Global case studies can help improve healthy aging and adult caregiving policies.



*The need to transform health and long-term care systems to adapt to an ageing population is a global issue. In October 2023, the LSE Aging and Health Incentives Lab and the University of Pennsylvania's Population Aging Research Center convened a workshop on Healthy Aging and Adult Caregiving, featuring evidence on healthy aging with a global focus. [Nilesh Raut](#) gives an overview of the workshop and its key takeaways, which included case studies from the UK, US, and low- and middle-income countries worldwide.*

Population ageing is transforming health and long-term care systems all around the world. However, we still know little about how to face the challenges that this transformation poses. To help find answers to these wide and complex questions, In October 2023 the LSE [Aging and Health Incentives Lab](#) (AHIL) together with [Population Aging Research Center](#) (PARC) at the University of Pennsylvania, organised the workshop on [Healthy Aging and Adult Caregiving](#).

Participants in the workshop discussed four key areas covering adult caregiving, age, gender and labor, healthy ageing in low and middle-income countries, and long-term care systems. The workshop featured presentations and discussions on topics ranging from the latest advancements in gerontology to the challenges and triumphs of adult caregiving. Speakers from various disciplines provided valuable insights into the intricacies of aging, health, and the profound role of caregivers.

## How best to support caregivers?

The workshops began off with an enlightening keynote speech from [Professor Courtney](#)

[van Houtven](#), which provided uniquely fresh perspective on the positive impacts of introducing the caregivers support policy in the context of veteran affairs in the US. It drew on evidence from a unique randomised control trial which provides some insights into what Veteran Affairs, a government health insurance scheme in the United States that more closely resembles the National Health Service in the UK. Professor van Houtven documented that if the caregivers of veterans are given multi-component training, designed to help caregivers learn and practice coping, support seeking, and hands on skills, then this means veterans have 58 percent fewer days when they are not at home. This shows that a trained caregiver who learns and practices coping can help improve the quality of life for veteran patients.

### **Key themes on healthy aging and adult caregiving**

**Health Shocks and Adult Caregiving:** Dr Tiziana Leone from LSE unveiled the intriguing dynamics of how specific health shocks within households can impact on care provided. One of the presenters, Dr Katerina Gousia from the University of Kent, identified that how a disease such as diabetes leads to increase in the demand for formal and informal long-term care services in the UK. Given that diabetes is one of the major global health emergencies and we put efforts to minimize its impact on health systems, Dr Gousia's research makes us think about its burden on the social care systems too.

**Aging, Gender, and Labor Outcomes:** Dr Nilesh Raut from LSE spotlighted the impact of nurse practitioner reform in the United States. Full practice authority for nurse practitioners increased primary health access while reducing the utilization of home care services. Dr Krzysztof Zaremba from Columbia University identified that the health shock of an infectious disease affects women in a household more than men, as women have expertise on caregiving. This household penalty is observed on top of the already existing gender wage gap, highlighting a health gender gap. This important research reiterates that, women, often entrusted with caregiving responsibilities, bear an additional burden on top of the pre-existing gender wage gap.

**Healthy Aging in Low and Middle-Income Countries:** Led by Professor Hans-Peter Kohler from the University of Pennsylvania, this workshop explored the implications of basic income reforms in developing nations like Malawi. A finding from the research,

presented by Marwa Ibrahim from the University of North Carolina, indicated the significant impact of basic income on healthy aging in these regions, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives in low- and middle- income countries.

**Long-Term Care Systems and Healthy Aging:** Led by Dr Norma Coe from University of Pennsylvania, this session was focused on long-term care systems around the world and how they influence healthy aging. A comparative study between Singapore and Korea, led by Dr Dahye Kim from National University of Singapore, showcased the effectiveness of universal long-term care insurance systems. It illuminated how this model could be considered for implementation in other developed countries. Additionally, this comparison helps the spectrum of developing countries to follow the best practices available the developed world, whilst planning to build long-term care systems in the developed countries.

**“Speakers from various disciplines provided valuable insights into the intricacies of aging, health, and the profound role of caregivers”**

*Nilesh Raut of LSE’s Department of Health Policy gives an overview of global case studies which can help improve healthy aging and adult caregiving policies.*

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## **Further insights from across the globe**

Throughout the workshop, several studies unveiled important insights into the intricate world of aging and caregiving:

- A study in India revealed the blessing of caregiving to grandchildren for grandparents. This finding is particularly significant in a country with a tradition of joint families and intergenerational caregiving (by Dr Sayani Das – India).
- A deep dive into the impact of COVID-19 on informal caregiving in the UK shed light on how infectious diseases can affect the care provided to parents, offering insights into policies related to young adult carers (by Edward Pomeroy – UK).
- The impact of publicly funded social care reform in the UK on the quality-of-life years for the elderly was analysed, emphasizing the importance of such programs (by Dr Andrea Salas-Ortiz – UK).
- A comprehensive look into resilience, accelerated aging, and persistently poor health trajectories in the developing countries were discussed in great details (Cung Truong Hoang, US).

## Healthy Ageing, looking forward

LSE's workshop on [Healthy Aging and Adult Caregiving](#) was a melting pot of ideas, experiences, and perspectives and featured presentations and discussions on topics ranging from the latest advancements in economics of ageing to specific debates in health services research, demography, and gerontology. Researchers from low-middle income countries brought fresh perspectives on how societies and policies are evolving in response to the aging demographic, shining a light on how the world is preparing for a brighter and healthier future.

- *This article is based on the [LSE Workshop on Healthy Aging and Adult Caregiving](#), held online on 25-26 October 2023.*
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