

# The impact of COVID-19 containment measures on the health of older persons in Asia

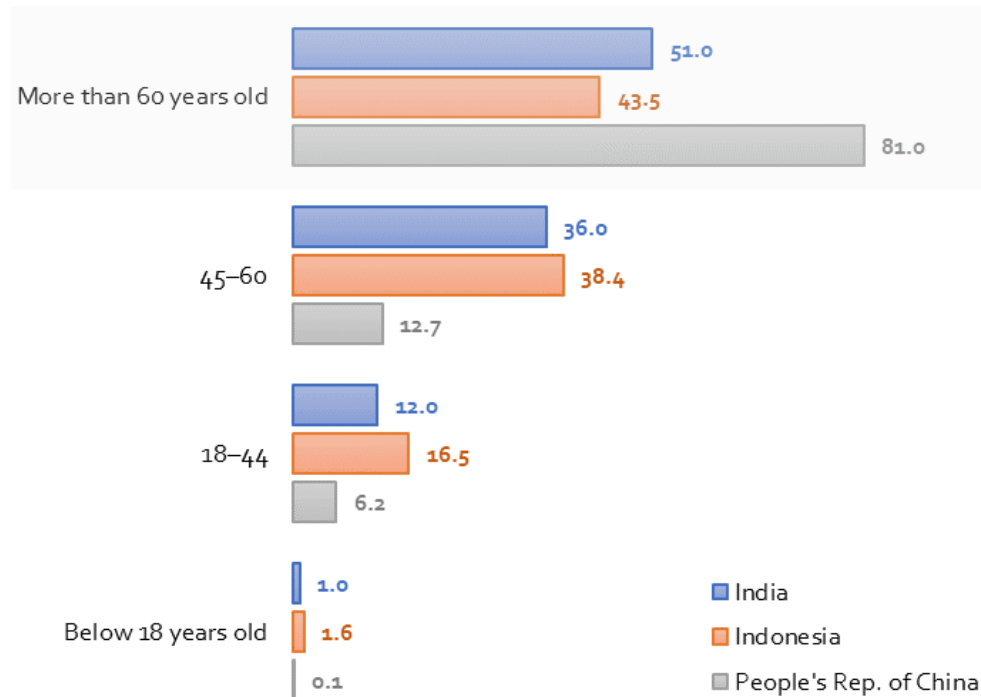
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DONGHYUN PARK  
AIKO KIKKAWA TAKENAKA  
SHU TIAN  
LILIBETH POOT  
CYNTHIA PETALCORIN

14 December 2020

# Older people disproportionately affected.

COVID-19 Deaths by Age



Weak immune system

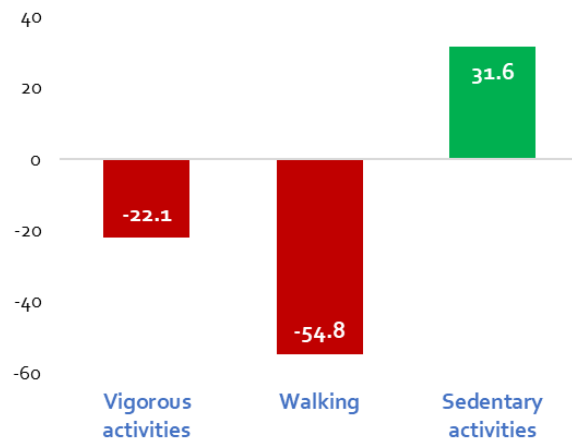


High incidence of comorbidity

Sources: India (as of August 2020 based on information shared by the Union Health Ministry); Indonesia (as of November 2020 based on information from Indonesia's Covid-19 Handling Task Force); People's Rep. of China (as of 11 February 2020 based on a PRChina CDC report)

# Prolonged stay-at-home is taking toll on the physical health and ability of older persons.

Change in time spent on physical activities during confinement period among individuals age between 55 and 65 in Spain, %

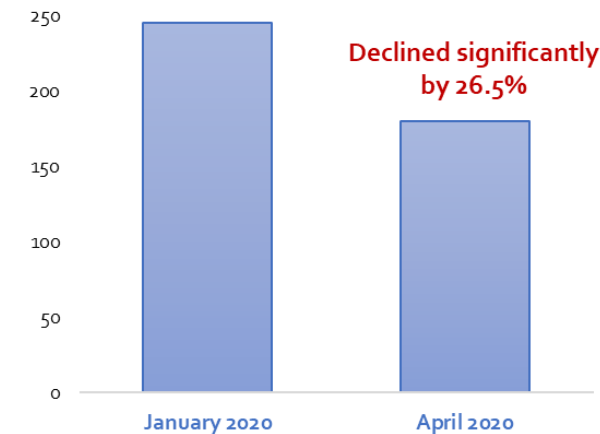


Source: Castañeda-Babarro et al (2020).

In Japan, postponements of regular hospital visits and medical check-ups rose largely out of fear of being infected by care staff.



Median time spent on physical activities by older individuals in Japan, n=1,188



Source: Yamada et al (2020).

# Pandemic-induced social isolation proved detrimental to the mental health of older people.

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In the PRC, Meng et al (2020) found that **37%** of individuals age 60 and above experienced depression and anxiety during the pandemic, with women **affected more** than men.



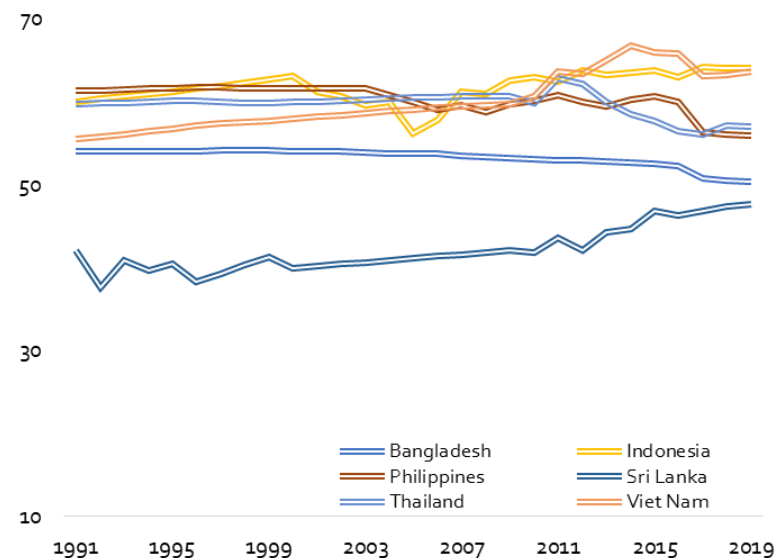
Several analyses using data from the Japan Gerontological Evaluation Study attest **strong link** between incident dementia, functional disability, depression, and premature death with lack of social interactions.



In a WHO-coordinated survey between June and August 2020 in over 130 countries, only about **30%** of mental health services for older adults were available with no disruption.

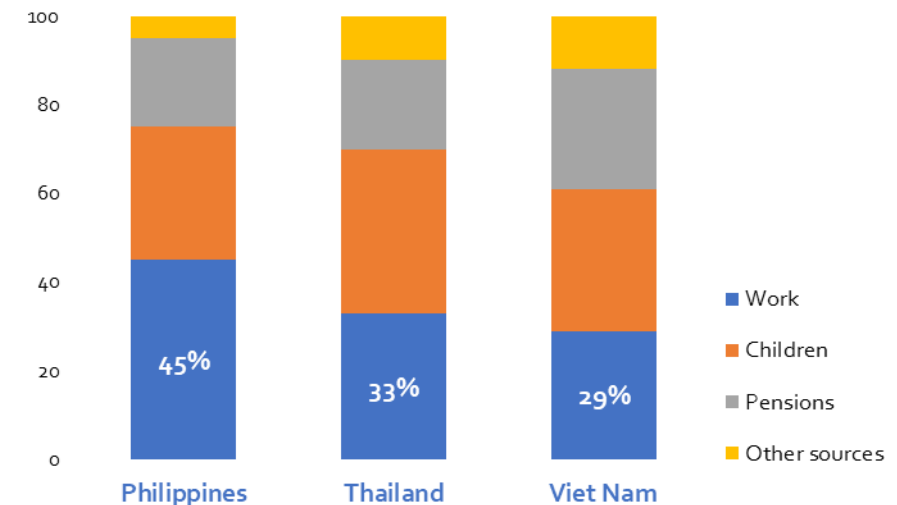
# COVID-19 threatens ability of older persons to work and sustain economic security.

Labor Force Participation Rate of Persons Aged 60 and 64 in Developing Asia, 1991–2019



Source: Data on labor force participation rates by age from the ILOStat database.

Income Sources of Persons Aged 60 and above, %

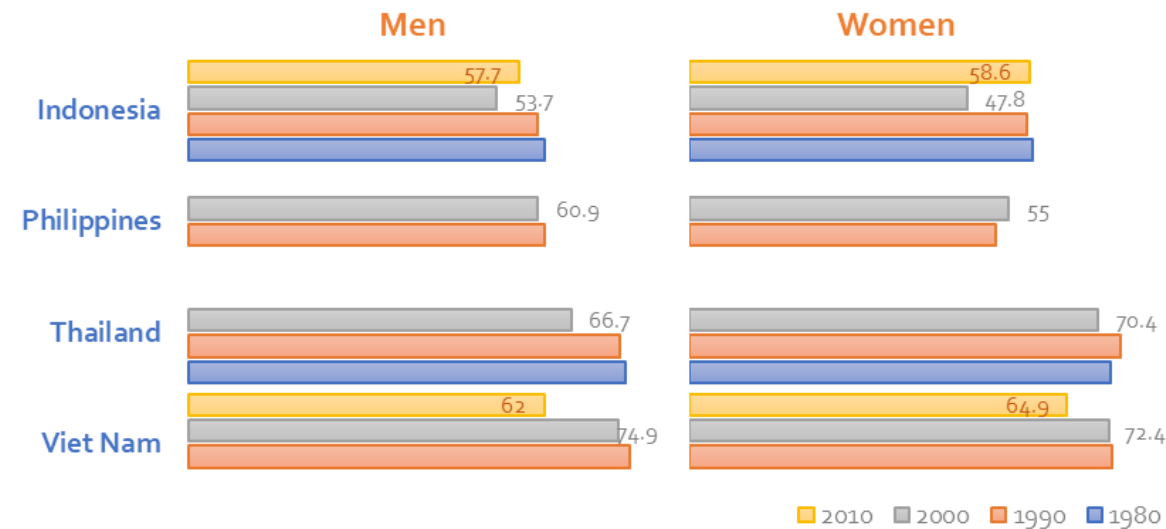


Source: Knox-Vydmannov (2016).

# Intergenerational co-residence in the region pose greater burden for family members especially women who tend to provide informal care.

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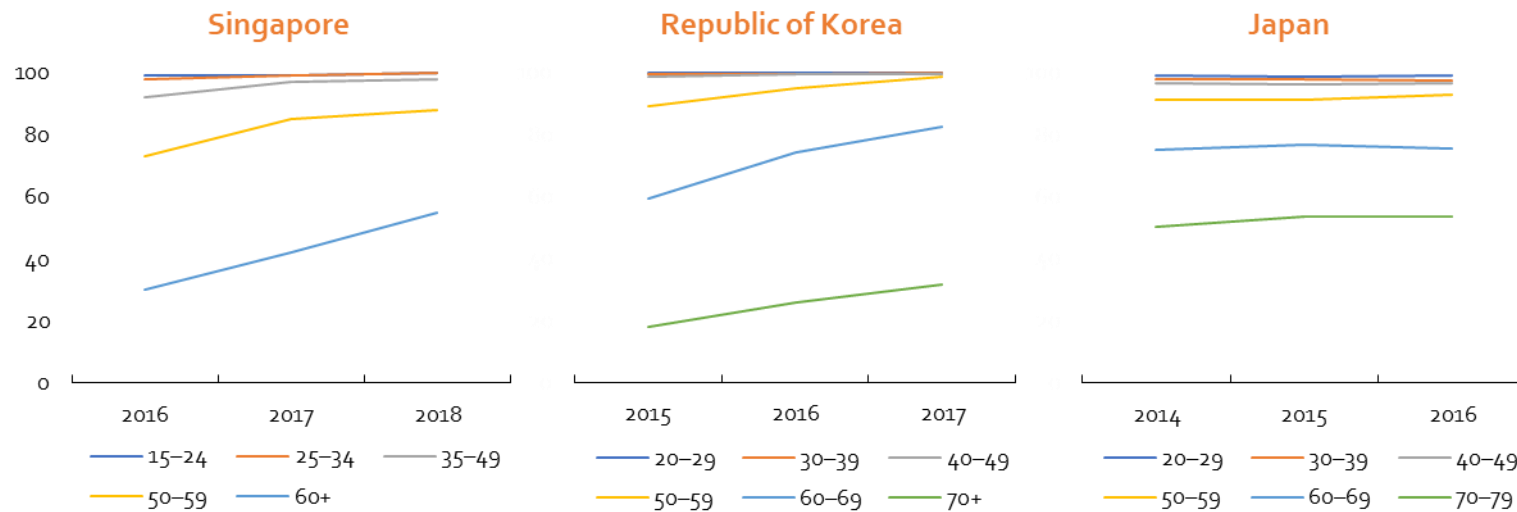
Percentage of Persons Aged 65 and Above Living with their Children by Sex, 1980–2010



Source: Data as published in Palos and Liu (2017) using IPUMS International database.

# Older persons suffer from the double burden of digital and grey divides.

Internet Usage Among Older Cohorts (% of age-specific population)



Sources: Singapore: Infocomm Media Development Authority. 2019. Annual Survey on Infocomm Usage in Households and by Individuals. [www.imda.gov.sg](http://www.imda.gov.sg) (accessed May 2019); Republic of Korea: Ministry of Science and ICT; and Japan: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. <http://www.soumu.go.jp/johotsusintokei/whitepaper/h30.html> (accessed May 2019).

# Key Questions for the Panel

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1. How is COVID-19 impacting **working elders**, for example, in terms of their labor force participation, employment opportunity, and **economic security**? How do you assess the **adequacy of public transfers/support** during COVID-19?
2. To what extent is the pandemic taking a toll on the **mental health of older persons**? To what extent are their needs addressed? What will be the impact of COVID-19 on their health **if the pandemic persists**?
3. **Multigenerational families/communities** are the predominant living arrangement among older persons in many developing Asian countries, but the landscape is changing. What is the implication of your study to them? What are the top policy priorities?
4. What are the **key policy recommendations**? What should Asian governments do to help older persons bounce back better?

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# KSTA 6556-REG Challenges and Opportunities of Population Aging in Asia: Improving Data and Analysis for Healthy and Productive Aging