

Journal issue charts global course for healthy aging

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A [new supplemental issue](#) of *The Gerontologist* contains 12 articles that expand upon the major themes of the landmark World Health Organization (WHO) "World Report on Ageing and Health" released in late 2015.

These articles are largely based on background papers that provided critical input to the development of the WHO report, which was the first of its kind. The supplement addresses such topics as elder abuse, determinants of [health](#), threats to [healthy aging](#), and medical and assistive health technology.

These publications demonstrate that if populations are to live not only long but also healthier lives, then decision makers, practitioners, and researchers will have to do more to address these important topics.

"The WHO report and the new journal supplement mark a real milestone in our work in [public health](#) with regard to aging, as they reframe the whole concept of healthy aging," said Dr. Flavia Bustreo, WHO's assistant director-general for family, women's, and children's health. "They shift the emphasis from the absence of disease to a focus on the functional ability that enables well-being in [older age](#). And they provide a clear framework for global action."

The research contained within the new publications also informed the WHO's Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health, which ministers of health from around the world will discuss at the upcoming

World Health Assembly in May. This strategy looks to reorient health systems so they better meet the needs of [older people](#), encourages every country to develop a system that can provide long-term care to older people with significant declines in capacity, and supports the development of environments that are age-friendly as well as improving measurement, monitoring and research on healthy aging.

The journal issue, report, and strategy also emphasize that every older person is different, and acknowledge that one of the key factors driving this diversity is the cumulative impact of advantage and disadvantage across people's lives.

"The global response to population aging needs to be crafted in ways that overcome, rather than reinforce, these inequities," said Bustreo. "The type of investments that can be made are broad and the papers in the supplement tackle many of the key issues by looking at the nature of the challenge and what can work to address it."

Provided by The Gerontological Society of America

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