



Photo courtesy: Envato

Facts and Figures Healthy Ageing



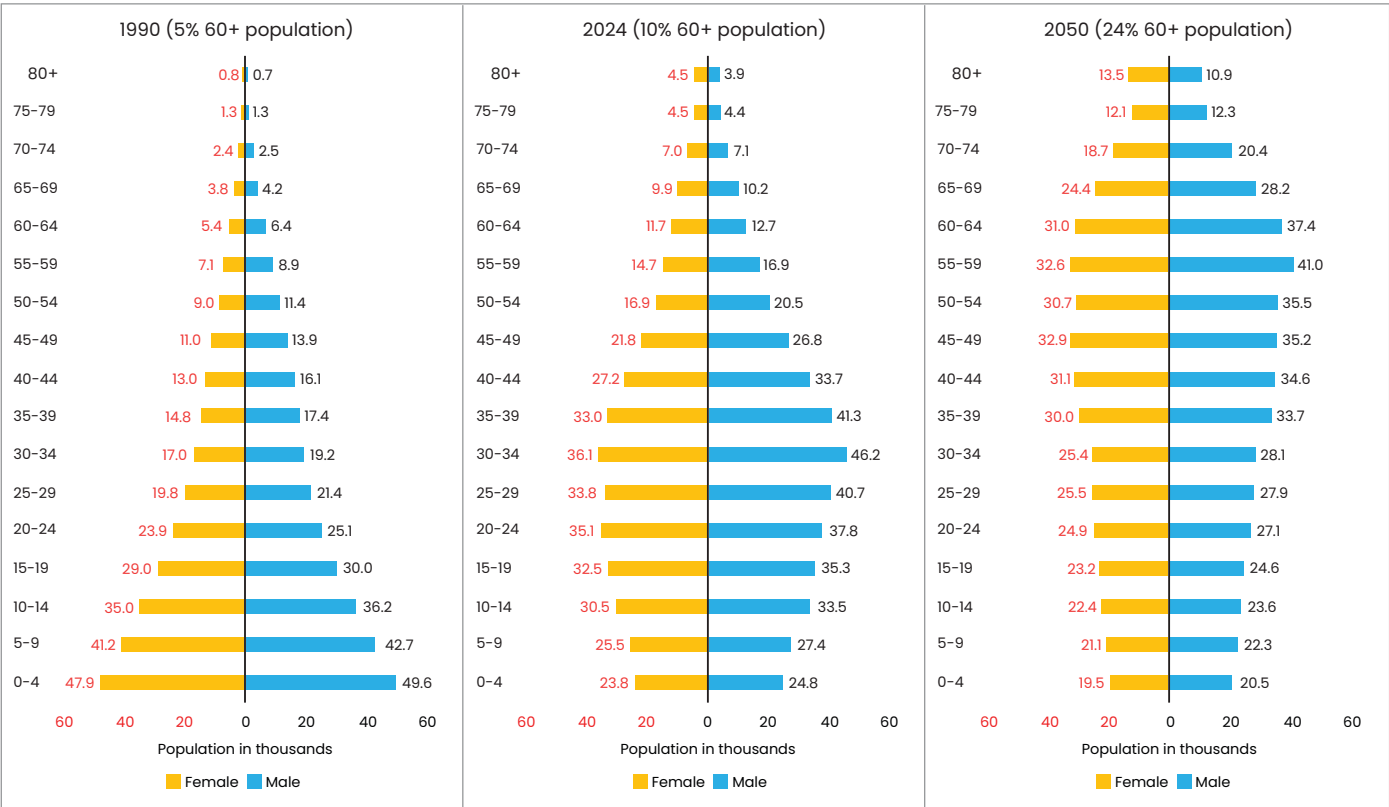
Bhutan



Demographic profile, 2024

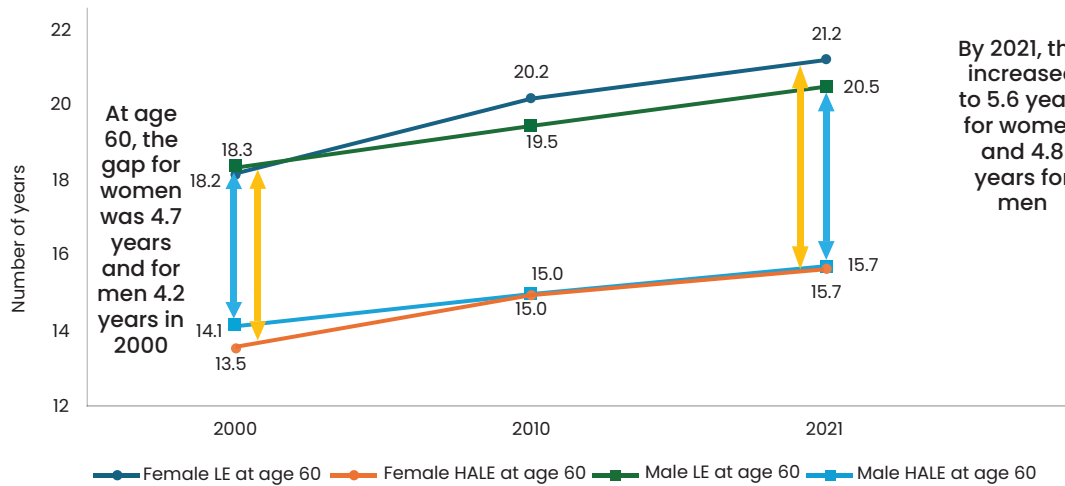
	Total	Female	Male
Total population	792 000	368 000 (47%)	423 000 (53%)
Total 60+ years population	76 000 (10%)	38 000 (10%)	38 000 (9%)
Total 80+ years population	8000 (1.1%)	5000 (1.2%)	4000 (0.9%)

Demographic shift:
Share of people aged 60 years and above expected to increase from 10% in 2024 to 24% in 2050



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2024). World Population Prospects 2024, Online Edition (accessed on 1 August 2025)

Gap between life expectancy and health life expectancy at age 60 years, 2000–2021

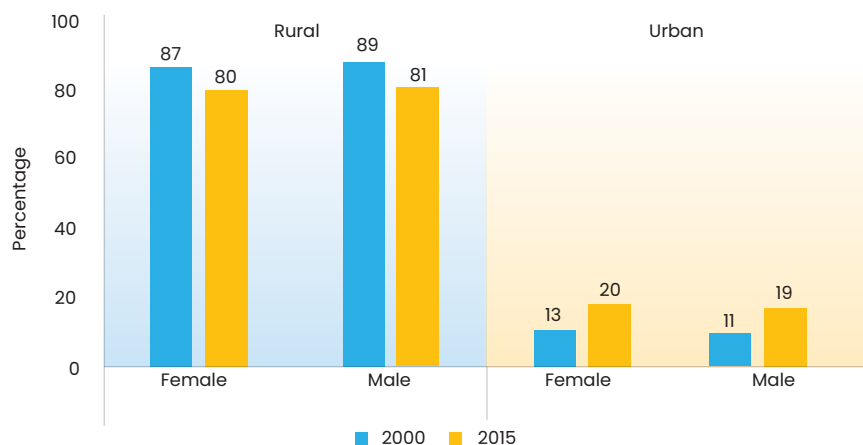


By 2021, this increased to 5.6 years for women and 4.8 years for men

Older women live longer than men but spend more years in poor health, with the LE–HALE gap at 5.6 years for women and 4.8 years for men in 2021

Source: Global Health Observatory-World Health Organization (accessed on 1 August 2025)

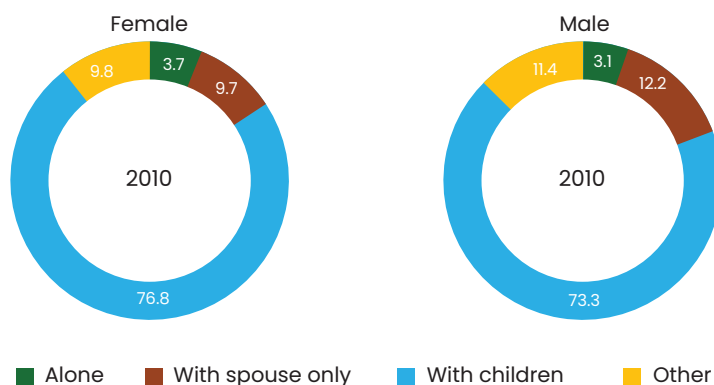
Percentage of older people aged 60 years and above living in rural and urban areas



Between 2000 and 2015, the percentage of older people living in rural areas has declined by 7%, while the share living in urban areas has increased by a similar margin, indicating a clear trend of urbanization

Source: Ageing Data Portal -World Health Organization (accessed on 1st August 2025)

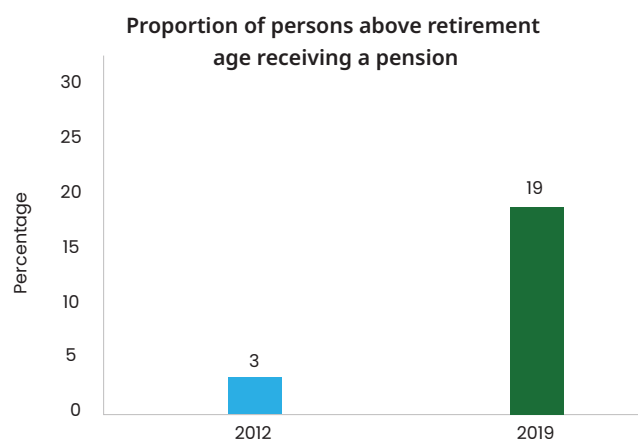
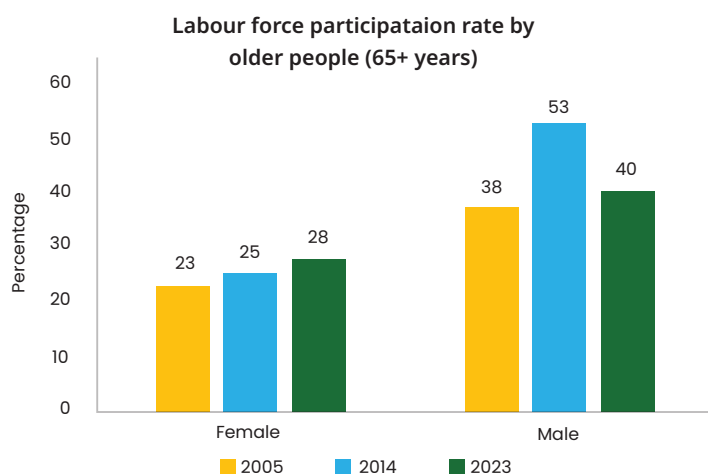
Household living arrangements (60+ years)



While most older people continue to live with their children, the proportion of those living alone or only with a spouse has been steadily increasing over the years

Source: Ageing Data Portal -World Health Organization (accessed on 1 August 2025)

Labour force participation rate by older people (65+ years) and proportion of persons above retirement age receiving a pension



Source: ILOSTAT (accessed on 1 August 2025)



Between 2005 and 2023, labour force participation among older people (65+ years) increased for women and fluctuated for men. However, pension coverage increased from 3% in 2012 to 19% in 2019, indicating a shift from reliance on work to greater financial security through pensions in old age

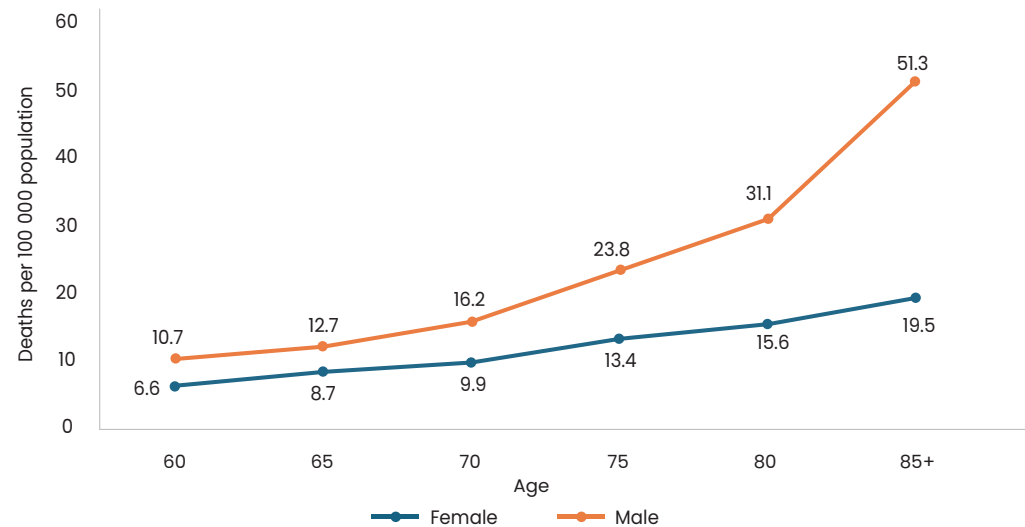


Mortality profile
Top five causes of mortality in older people

	60+ older population				85+ older population			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
Rank	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021
1	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Ischaemic heart disease	Ischaemic heart disease	Diarrhoeal diseases	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Ischaemic heart disease
2	Stroke	Ischaemic heart disease	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Ischaemic heart disease	Ischaemic heart disease	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
3	Diarrhoeal diseases	Stroke	Stroke	Stroke	Stroke	Stroke	Diarrhoeal diseases	Stroke
4	Ischaemic heart disease	Diarrhoeal diseases	Diarrhoeal diseases	Diabetes mellitus	Ischaemic heart disease	Diarrhoeal diseases	Stroke	Alzheimer disease and other dementias
5	Tuberculosis	Diabetes mellitus	Tuberculosis	Tuberculosis	Alzheimer disease and other dementias	Alzheimer disease and other dementias	Alzheimer disease and other dementias	Diabetes mellitus

Source: World Health Organization - Global Health Estimates (accessed on 1 August 2025)

Suicide mortality rate (per 100 000 population) among older people, 2021



Suicide mortality rates among older people rose sharply for males, and were consistently higher in males than females, with the gap widening significantly in the oldest age groups

Source: World Health Organization-Global Health Estimates (accessed on 7 October 2025)



Morbidity profile

Top five causes of years of healthy life lost due to disability (YLD)

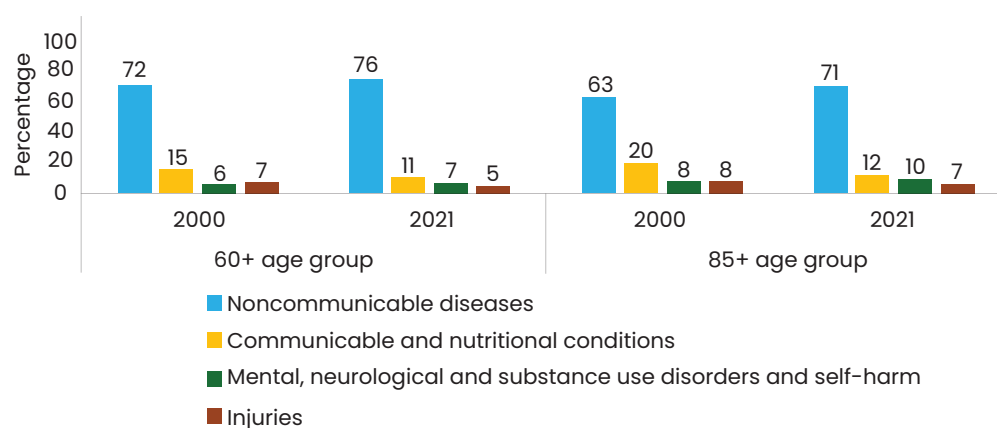
Rank	60+ older population				85+ older population			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021
1	Back and neck pain	Back and neck pain	Other hearing loss	Other hearing loss	Other hearing loss	Other hearing loss	Other hearing loss	Other hearing loss
2	Other hearing loss	Other hearing loss	Back and neck pain	Back and neck pain	Back and neck pain	Falls	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
3	Depressive disorders	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Iron-deficiency anaemia	Diabetes mellitus	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Alzheimer disease and other dementias	Alzheimer disease and other dementias
4	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Depressive disorders	Depressive disorders	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Alzheimer disease and other dementias	Back and neck pain	Back and neck pain	Back and neck pain
5	Iron-deficiency anaemia	Diabetes mellitus	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Depressive disorders	Falls	Alzheimer disease and other dementias	Kidney diseases	Falls

Source: World Health Organization - Global Health Estimates (accessed on 1 August 2025)



Among 60+ older people, back and neck pain and hearing loss are the top causes of disability, with rising impact from COPD and diabetes, while among those 85+ years, hearing loss leads, followed by COPD, dementia, and falls

Distribution of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) among older people



Source: World Health Organization - Global Health Estimates (accessed on 1 August 2025)



Between 2000 and 2021, the burden of DALYs in older people remained dominated by noncommunicable diseases, while the share from communicable and nutritional conditions declined and mental, neurological, and substance use disorders increased, especially in the 85+ age group

Incidence and prevalence of common health conditions

Age group	Tuberculosis* 2021		Acute hepatitis B* 2021		Falls* 2021		Hearing impairments** 2021		Vision impairments** 2019		Anaemia** 2021		Lower back pain** 2021	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
60–64	26 553	24 852	47 044	95 317	3084	2164	51	56	53	45	41	33	26	14
65–69	32 558	28 012	43 924	90 767	4585	2916	59	64	61	53	43	36	27	15
70–74	31 920	25 078	41 712	84 214	6812	4113	66	71	67	59	42	39	28	16
75–79	30 891	26 553	38 599	77 767	11 401	5613	72	77	71	64	46	42	31	18
80–84	35 995	37 158	36 023	72 715	15 064	6734	77	81	74	68	50	43	33	19
85–89	40 878	46 920	32 373	66 075	16 013	7251	79	83	78	72	61	51	35	20
90–94	45 917	56 335	28 842	58 343	14 176	6825	81	84	83	77	79	93	31	19
95+	51 476	65 829	25 760	52 259	10 582	5850	83	84	90	85	80	94	26	17

Source: Global Burden of Disease (accessed on 1 August 2025)

*Incidence rate per 100 000 population **Prevalence

The health burden in older age is shaped by a dual challenge of infectious diseases and chronic/functional impairments



Tuberculosis

TB incidence increases with age and is consistently higher among older men than women



Acute hepatitis B

Hepatitis B incidence declines with age but remains higher in men than women across all age groups



Falls

Risk of falls rises sharply with age, with older women experiencing higher rates than men



Hearing impairments

Prevalence increases steadily with age, slightly higher among men



Vision impairments

Prevalence grows with age, with women are more affected than men



Anaemia

Anaemia is more prevalent among older women, with a steep increase after age 85



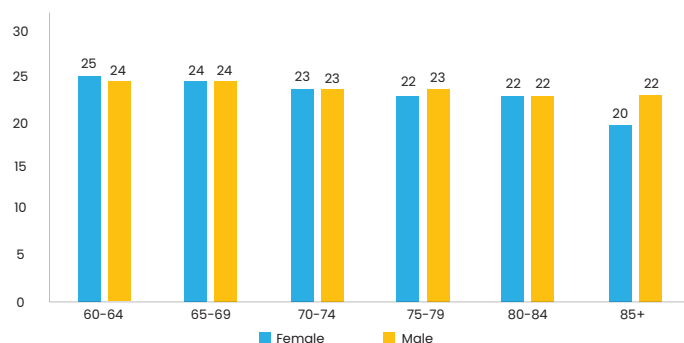
Lower back pain

Higher prevalence among women than men

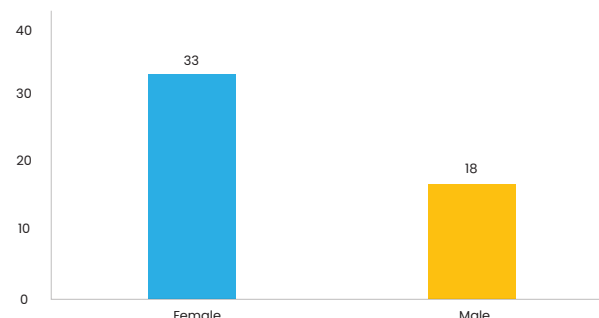


Mean Body Mass Index (based on measured height and weight) and Prevalence of insufficient physical activity in older people aged 70 years or above, 2016

Mean Body Mass Index



Prevalence of insufficient physical activity in older people aged 70 or above



Source: Global Health Observatory-World Health Organization (accessed on 1 August 2025)



UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)

10 national indicators	2020	2023
Focal point on ageing and health in the Ministry of Health	Yes	Yes
National plans, policies or strategies on ageing and health	Yes	Yes
National multi-stakeholder forum or committee on ageing and health	No	Yes
National legislation and enforcement strategies against age-based discrimination	No	Yes
Legislation / regulations that provide older adults with access to assistive devices from the WHO Priority Assistive Products List	No	Yes
A national programme to support activities in line with the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities	No	Yes
National policies in place to support comprehensive assessments of the health and social care needs of older people	No	Yes
National long-term care policy / plan / strategy / framework (stand-alone or integrated within an ageing and health plan)	Yes	Yes
Nationally representative, cross-sectional, publicly available and anonymous individual level data on older persons and their health status and needs collected since 2010	No	Yes
Nationally representative longitudinal surveys on health status and needs of older persons available in the public domain	No	No

Additional indicators	2023
Policy, legislation, strategy, or programme to support combatting ageism	Yes
Human rights mechanisms dedicated to the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons	Yes
Specific legal, administrative, or other effective remedies (anti-discrimination body; national human rights institution) to older persons who have been subject to discrimination	No
Contributing to the UN-Open ended working group on ageing	Yes
Country that implemented actions to support income generation activities for older persons	No
Provision of out-patient-service free of charge in the public sector for older persons	Yes
Provision of assistive devices and technologies free of charge in the public sector for older persons	Yes
Pharmaceutical products and/or other medical supplies free of charge in the public sector for older persons	Yes
Capacity-building plans to strengthen the geriatric and gerontology workforce	Yes
National guidelines for organizing geriatric care and training	Yes
National competency frameworks for geriatrics care workers	Yes
Programmes (in-person or online) available for caregivers of older persons	Yes
Policy, legislation, strategy, or programme to support the integration of palliative care services into the structure and financing of national healthcare systems at all levels of care	Yes

Availability of human and financial resources to address the UN Decade strategic priorities

	Adequate resources	Substantial resources	Limited resources	Very limited resources	No resources	No response
Combating Ageism				✓		
Age-friendly Environment				✓		
Integrated Care for Older Persons	✓					
Long-term Care	✓					

Source: Global Health Observatory-World Health Organization (accessed on 1 August 2025)

Bhutan reported having adequate resources for advancing integrated care, and developing long-term care for older persons, however reported having very limited human and financial resources for combating ageism, and age-friendly environments

Together for
Health, care and dignity
of older population



World Health
Organization

South-East Asia Region