

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

IN THE DEMOGRAPHY AND ECONOMICS OF AGING

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CENTERS ON THE DEMOGRAPHY AND ECONOMICS OF AGING

With the proportion of older people increasing in the United States and around the world, we face new challenges and opportunities, particularly in the areas of health care and retirement systems, long-term care, and family supports. To help inform public discussion of such issues and promote the health and well-being of older adults, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) of the National Institutes of Health supports research on the demography and economics of population aging.

The NIA-funded **Centers on the Demography and Economics of Aging** comprise an important mechanism for promoting this research. Although each of the Centers has its own set of disciplinary specializations, much of the research conducted by Center affiliates is interrelated. All Centers investigate aspects of physical and cognitive aging, the societal impact of population aging, or the economic and social circumstances of the elderly. Many Centers also conduct research on global aging and cross-national comparisons, and several Centers are pioneering work at the intersection of the social and biological sciences.

The Centers have been instrumental in supporting pilot research, attracting and developing scholars, establishing networks to advance scientific discourse, and developing and promoting new data resources. Many of the Centers disseminate findings by holding workshops and conferences, and providing web-based reports and resources. As such, they enhance the research communities within and beyond their home institutions. Their reach is global, with most of the Centers involved in projects that help develop the fields of demography and economics of aging internationally.

Center Research Themes

- Consequences of U.S. and Global Aging
- Economic and Social Circumstances of Older Adults
- Determinants of Health, Well-Being, and Longevity
- Cognitive Aging and Demography of Dementia
- Aging, Genetics, and Social Science
- Health Trends and Disparities
- Disability, Health Care, and Long-Term Care
- Biodemography of Aging
- Effects of Interventions on Population Health
- Population, Economic, and Health Forecasting

Center Activities

- Funding Pilot Research Initiatives
- Attracting Scholars to the Study of Aging
- Creating Research Networks
- Developing and Promoting New Data Resources
- Holding Seminars, Conferences, and Workshops
- Providing Web-Based Reports and Resources

CORE MISSIONS

The NIA Demography Centers provide research infrastructure to address critical questions about population aging in the United States and globally. Center programs stimulate innovation in all aspects of research from study design to analysis and dissemination of findings. Faculty and affiliates of the Centers come from many disciplines including biology, economics, medicine, public health, psychology, and sociology. Collaborations across disciplines and institutions have been a hallmark of the work fostered by the Centers. Core activities of the Centers include:

Program Development. Each Center promotes exploratory research on innovative topics in aging by funding pilot projects, recruiting new investigators to study aging, and supporting the career development of established scholars. Pilot projects lay the foundation for more comprehensive research projects in new topic areas and include scholars' collaborative projects across institutions and national boundaries. Recruitment and career development expand the network of researchers in the field of aging and enhance the skills of existing researchers.

Networks. Research networks supported by the Centers serve as a focal point for sharing research results and generating new interdisciplinary collaborations. Many of the networks have an international emphasis, providing supportive infrastructure for regular exchanges aimed at harmonization of methods. Other networks, such as the TRENDS in Old-Age Disability Network, have undertaken collaborative research projects.

Data Resources. Data resources developed and managed by the Centers both in the United States and abroad contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge about aging. Center investigators initiate and design new surveys, supplement existing surveys, and formulate and evaluate experimental survey questions and techniques. In addition, they ensure the availability of data and facilitate its use by other researchers through the maintenance of data libraries, the linking of data from multiple sources, and the management of sensitive data. Some Centers develop and support secure data environments where researchers can analyze sensitive data under highly restricted conditions.

National Institute On Aging

The Demography Centers are supported through the Division of Behavioral and Social Research at the National Institute on Aging. As a part of the National Institutes of Health in the Department of Health and Human Services, NIA seeks to improve the health and well-being of older Americans through efforts to understand the aging process and to extend healthy life. The Institute conducts and supports research on all aspects of aging, from investigating basic questions about cellular and molecular changes that occur as people age to the demographic and economic implications of an aging society. Applied research programs funded by the Institute encourage rapid translation of research findings into practical information that practitioners or the public can use to benefit the health of older people. The Behavioral and Social Research Division supports social, behavioral, and economic research and research training on the processes of aging at both the individual and societal level. The Division fosters cross-disciplinary research, at multiple levels from genetics to cross-national comparative research, and at stages from basic through translational.

Seminars, Conferences, and Workshops. Weekly seminar series, data use workshops, and formal research conferences enable the cross- and interdisciplinary interaction of investigators engaged in aging-related research. Seminars can be particularly useful in the early stages of research. The RAND Summer Institute and Mini-Medical programs continue to integrate learning across disciplines for junior investigators and those new to aging research. Other conferences and workshops serve as platforms to provide scholars opportunities to learn about data resources advanced by the Centers.

Research Dissemination. Center investigators disseminate research results through scholarly journals and books, and present findings in both technical and nontechnical formats. The Wisconsin Center manages an electronic mailing service for news and information on aging (the Current Awareness in Aging Report). In addition, the Centers produce *Today's Research on Aging* and *Research Highlights on the Demography and Economics of Aging*, available at <http://agingcenters.org/pubs>.

THE CENTERS

University of California, Berkeley

The Berkeley Center on the Economics and Demography of Aging promotes research in four signature areas: demographic and fiscal consequences of global aging; mortality and health in aging populations; biodemography of aging; and behavioral economics approaches in aging. The Center supports pilot projects in these areas, including mortality projection methods, genomic analysis of longevity, and interventions around financial and health behaviors. The Center promotes broad dissemination of findings through workshops, conferences, and scientific panels. The Center also facilitates the adoption of methods and concepts in aging research by organizations such as the United Nations via projects that include the Human Mortality Database and National Transfer Accounts. New data resources under development by members will enable the Center to conduct “big data” population science analyses.

Duke University

The Duke Center for Population Health and Aging supports research on health and well-being across the life span, the intergenerational transmission of health, and the biomedical and biological demography of aging. The Center furthers international perspectives on aging via its data collection efforts and collaborations in Europe, Africa, the former Soviet Union, China, Indonesia, Mexico, and elsewhere. By developing emerging research areas and supporting scientists with interests in these areas, the Duke Center advances understanding of the determinants of healthy aging and longevity. The Center fosters new and pilot research projects, organizes weekly scientific network seminars that include national and international researchers in biodemography and life course research, trains pre- and postdoctoral scholars, and recruits new faculty with interests in population health and aging. A key Center resource is a secure statistical data enclave that increases access to timely public data while protecting the confidentiality of study subjects.

Harvard University

Harvard University’s Program on the Global Demography of Aging promotes research on the determinants of health and aging and the demographic and economic consequences of global aging, with a focus on developing countries. Interdisciplinary research teams examine changes in patterns of adult morbidity and mortality, associated implications, and related policies. Program strengths include measuring risk factors for and modeling intervention effects on population health; exploring the impact of individual choices through behavioral and economic experiments; and assessing the macroeconomic effects of population aging. The Program fosters international collaboration on population aging—hosting international workshops and an annual conference on the global demography of aging—and provides data and technical assistance to affiliates via the Harvard-MIT Virtual Data Center.

National Archive of Computerized Data On Aging

www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACDA/

The NIA-funded National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging (NACDA) is the world’s largest repository of secondary data on aging and health. Located within the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan, NACDA’s mission is to advance research on aging by providing both support and easy access to salient data. NACDA has acquired and preserved more than 1,600 data sets relevant to aging research.

University of Michigan

The Michigan Center on the Demography of Aging promotes new research on the demography and economics of aging across four signature themes: chronic disease and disability; life course determinants of late-life health and well-being; aging, genetics, and social science; and economics of savings and retirement. The Center also promotes the wide use of Michigan’s key aging-related data collections, notably the Health and Retirement Study and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. In addition, the Center fosters national and international collaboration through coordination of several research networks, funds pilot projects, distributes research findings by affiliates, and supports a secure statistical enclave for access to restricted aging-related data. The Center provides coordinating support to all NIA Centers (<http://agingcenters.org/>) and collaborates with the Population Reference Bureau to widely disseminate all Centers’ research findings.

National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)

The NBER Center for Aging and Health Research promotes studies in seven interrelated areas of population aging: 1) trends in health and disability; 2) health care costs and productivity; 3) implications of health policy reform; 4) possibilities for extending working lives; 5) work and retirement around the world; 6) health and financial well-being; and 7) the broad reach of education. Center research focuses on domestic and international examinations of aging in relation to trends in the economy, labor market, and health care policy. The Center capitalizes on its strengths in conducting internationally focused research, studying economic behaviors, and understanding the changing landscape of economic and health resources at older ages. The Center supports pilot projects and the development of junior faculty, and shares research findings via a range of activities aimed at translating technical results into readable, consolidated publications, notably the NBER Bulletin on Aging and Health.

University of Pennsylvania

The Population Aging Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania supports research in five major areas: 1) health, disease, and mortality risks at older ages; 2) early-life conditions and older adult health, behavior, and well-being; 3) global aging; 4) biodemographic and evolutionary approaches to life history; and 5) domestic/international perspectives on well-being at older ages, with an emphasis on life-cycle decisionmaking and old-age financial security. Across these topic areas, Center researchers focus on methods of data collection and analysis; strategies for incorporating temporal processes; the influence of geographical, social, and economic contexts; and approaches to policy analysis and evaluation. The Center also supports external research networks with a potential to foster interdisciplinary research and cross-disciplinary grant applications; funds pilot projects; maintains a working paper series; and holds a weekly seminar series in conjunction with the Population Studies Center.

RAND Corporation

RAND's Center for the Study of Aging focuses on research exploring the demography, health, and economics of an aging population. Center researchers examine the evolution of economic circumstances over the life course and their implications for savings and wealth; the health changes that accompany aging; trends in population health; and the role of health insurance in aging. Cross-national studies examine attitudes toward retirement and work disability, self-employment, and policy influence on health and income disparities among the elderly. This substantive research is bolstered by RAND's data collection and dissemination activities, including development of user-friendly data for the Health and Retirement Study and collaborative work on European sister studies of aging (SHARE, ELSA). In addition, the Center supports the RAND Summer Institute and other conferences and training workshops.

Stanford University

The Center on the Demography and Economics of Health and Aging at Stanford University promotes the study of trends in the demography, economics, health, and health care of the elderly. The Center focuses on the application of demographic techniques, including biodemography, to explain changes in survival, health, and well-being for the elderly over time. Research addressing how medical technology and health care decisions influence costs and outcomes is particularly timely. A key area of research includes longitudinal and cohort studies of the associations among medical care procedures, costs, and health and economic outcomes across older populations in the United States and other countries. Center researchers also analyze health disparities among aging populations, examine the economics of retirement and demographic change, and have developed a "future elderly" simulation model for Japan, China, and Taiwan. The Center supports research publications, seminars, and workshops.

Center Networks

Faculty affiliated with the Centers bring investigators from the United States and around the world together to form research networks. Active networks include:

- Aging in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Effects of Early Life on Mature Adults
- Evolutionary Network
- Global Demography of Aging
- Health and Retirement Study & International Sister Studies
- Latin American Network on Aging
- Life Course Health Dynamics and Disparities
- Longitudinal Studies of Aging in the U.S.
- Measurement of Biological Risk
- Migration Advantage
- TRENDS in Old-Age Disability

University of Southern California/ University of California Los Angeles

The USC/UCLA Center on Biodemography and Population Health brings together researchers from a variety of disciplines, including biology, epidemiology, and clinical geriatrics to further biodemographic research on the foundations of population health. Center-supported work focuses on expanding and deepening knowledge on the biological pathways through which experiences and exposures over the life course influence trajectories of health, and how such influences may vary across subgroups and settings. Center researchers are at the forefront of efforts to promote theory-based integration of biological measurement into population-based studies and to develop and validate biological measurement protocols. The Center funds pilot research, supports the development of infrastructure for measurement and integration of genetic factors, and organizes a Network for Measurement of Biological Risk among the Demography and Economics of Aging Centers.

University of Washington

The University of Washington Center for Health Trends and Forecasts conducts research related to aging, longevity, and health. This Center builds upon the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) enterprise, leveraging its data, results, and vast network of collaborators. In this capacity, the Center supports new international research to identify the determinants of health outcomes, explore expenditures and disease burdens, and provide comparative and in-depth analyses of results using the GBD data. The Center provides exchange opportunities for visiting scholars from outside institutions who are interested in the trends and determinants of healthy aging, as well as access to new databases and data visualization tools to analyze GBD data. The Center also contributes to the training and career development of early-stage investigators, strengthens international networking opportunities, and provides resources for dissemination.

University of Wisconsin

The University of Wisconsin Center for Demography of Health and Aging supports research across five major themes: 1) aging and the life course; 2) determinants of disparities (ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic) of aging trajectories; 3) comparative international studies of population aging; 4) social and economic aspects of aging; and 5) biodemography of aging. The Center also maintains unique data resources, including the Latin American Mortality Database; the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study; the Mexican Health and Aging Study; the National Survey of Families and Households; the Survey on Health, Well-being and Aging in Latin America and the Caribbean; and the Puerto Rican Elderly Health Conditions Project. The Center shares results of research in the demography of aging via the Current Awareness in Aging Report; develops tools for preparing and analyzing large-scale public data resources in health and aging, including facilities for secure data analysis; and supports regular workshops, conferences, and scholar-researcher visits.

Large-Scale Data Collection and Database Development Activities

Faculty affiliated with the Centers contribute to various NIA-funded data collection and database development efforts including the following:

U.S. Studies

Add Health Parent Study
Americans' Changing Lives
Health and Retirement Study (HRS)
Midlife in the United States
National Transfer Accounts
National Health and Aging Trends Study
National Long-Term Care Survey
National Survey of Families and Households
Panel Study of Income Dynamics
RAND American Life Panel
RAND HRS
University of California Nets: Understanding Personal Networks Over Time
Wisconsin Longitudinal Study

International Studies

Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Study
China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study
Costa Rican Longevity and Healthy Aging Study
Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study
Family Life Surveys (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Mexico)
Global Aging Data Repository
Global Burden of Disease
Human Mortality Database
Latin American Mortality Database
Longitudinal Study of Aging Danish Twins
Longitudinal Aging Study in India
Mexican Health and Aging Study
Nutrition Trial of the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama
Puerto Rican Elderly Health Conditions Project
Survey on Health, Well-being and Aging in Latin America and the Caribbean
Study of the Tsunami Aftermath and Recovery
The Amboseli Baboon Research Project

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The National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health supports research centers on the demography and economics of aging, based at the University of California at Berkeley; Duke University; Harvard University; the University of Michigan; the National Bureau of Economic Research; the University of Pennsylvania; the RAND Corporation; the University of Southern California, and the University of California at Los Angeles; Stanford University; the University of Washington; and the University of Wisconsin. *Research Highlights in the Demography and Economics of Aging* is prepared as a cooperative activity of these Centers. For further information about the Centers, visit the all-centers website at <http://agingcenters.org>.