

political and environmental variables and their effect on health and function. Thus they require a scientific approach, of which good data is a necessity.

At the same time, it is recognised that in order to arrive at old age at the best possible health, healthy options need to be taken throughout the lifespan. Thus the practice of healthy lifestyles (as promoted by the Ministry of Health) in order to protect and promote well-being will contribute towards successful ageing.

Conclusion

As Malaysia continues on its path of being a developed nation by the year 2020, population ageing is inevitable. Ageing will generate new challenges for

health and social services. Universally available, equitable and quality health services are required to prevent further disease and disability.

There is a need for a health policy on ageing. The form it will take will depend on quality data being available and political support. Whatever the choices the planners make today will determine the health improvements for vast numbers of the elderly.

Demographic trends regarding the issue of ageing underscore the fact that both current situations and future trends directly concern all of us. Ageing for some is their present reality, for others their future.

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