

**THE CHANGING NEEDS OF OLDER  
MALAYSIANS: A SELANGOR CASE STUDY**

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## **Abstract**

Malaysia's older population will increase by 4.7 percent per annum over the next twenty years (2010-2030). Increases in life expectancy and decline in fertility have resulted in an increase in the elderly dependency ratio. This thesis seeks to understand current aged care provision (both formal and informal) in Malaysia, and the extent to which it is meeting the expectations and needs of contemporary and future older populations. The study is based on a survey of 510 people aged 50 years and over in the State of Selangor, Malaysia. It adopts a multi-dimensional approach encompassing four key elements, demography, dependency, availability and accessibility. A needs assessment is based on data collected from face-to-face interviews with older people, complemented by secondary data.

The findings demonstrate that the need for services among older Malaysians vary with ethnicity and socio-economic and health status. It was found that older persons with lower socio-economic status, poorer health status, living in small households and in advanced old age, required greater access to aged care services. Family members, particularly the spouses and children, remain the most important source of support for older Malaysians. However, these supports were often insufficient to cater for the needs of older persons, both financially and physically. In terms of financial well-being, 40 percent of older people perceived that they do not have sufficient financial resources to meet their future needs. Dependency on physical support was associated with the number of chronic illnesses and disability levels of the aged. Although most physically needy people were able to receive a certain extent of assistance from informal sources, such provision was found to be unequally distributed among older groups. Unfulfilled needs not only highlight a lack of formal aged care services available, but also indicate that informal support is limited. In fact the latter may already have reached its maximum levels and been found inadequate to meet perceived needs. While informal support remains significant in supporting these aged people, a substantial shift in policy and planning for formal aged care is necessary not only to complement gradually eroded informal support, but more importantly to enhance the overall well-being of the older people. This is especially important for the future older population (currently aged 50-59) who have greater expectations regarding access to aged care resources and services

than the current oldest Malaysians. Although they are more independent, better educated, have better old age financial coverage and are more aware of personal health status, they also have greater expectations. In conclusion, understanding the needs for aged care services from people of different ethnicities, socio-economic groups, health statuses and spatial locations, has important implications for achieving a balance between the formal and informal provision in future aged care planning.

## Declaration

I, Che Lim certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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## Abbreviation and Acronyms

<b>ADLs</b>	Activities of Daily Living
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of South-East Asian Nations
<b>AUD</b>	Australian Dollar
<b>BMI</b>	Body Mass Index
<b>CI</b>	Confidence Interval
<b>CPF</b>	Central Provident Fund
<b>CPI</b>	Consumer Price Index
<b>CWC</b>	Central Welfare Council of Malaysia
<b>DOSM</b>	Department of Statistics Malaysia
<b>EB</b>	Enumeration Block
<b>EPF</b>	Employees Provident Fund
<b>ESCAP</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System
<b>GP</b>	General Practitioner
<b>GPS</b>	Global Positioning System
<b>iADL</b>	Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>INTRA</b>	Integrated Response of Health Care Systems to Rapid Population Ageing
<b>ISCO</b>	International Standard Classification of Occupations
<b>Kg</b>	Kilograms
<b>KTM</b>	Malaysian Railway - <i>Keratapi Tanah Melayu</i>
<b>KWAP</b>	Retirement Fund - <i>Kumpulan Wang Persaraan</i>
<b>LFPR</b>	Labour Force Participation Rates
<b>LIAM</b>	Life Insurance Association of Malaysia
<b>LSNS</b>	Lubben Social Network Scale
<b>LTAT</b>	Armed Forces Fund
<b>LTC</b>	Long Term Care
<b>MANS</b>	Malaysian Adults Nutrition Survey
<b>MFLS</b>	Malaysian Family Life Survey
<b>MNUSD</b>	Ministry of National Unity and Social Development

<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health Malaysia
<b>MPFS</b>	Malaysian Population Family Survey
<b>MWFCD</b>	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
<b>n</b>	Number of Cases
<b>NACCE</b>	National Advisory and Consultative Council for the Elderly
<b>NEP</b>	New Economic Policy
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>NHMS</b>	National Health Morbidity Survey
<b>NPE</b>	National Policy for the Elderly
<b>NPFDBM</b>	National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia
<b>PHC</b>	Primary Health Care
<b>RAOM</b>	Resource Allocation of Older Malaysian
<b>RM</b>	Ringgit Malaysia
<b>SBWT</b>	Elderly Assistance Scheme - <i>Skim Batuan Warga Tua</i>
<b>SOCISO</b>	Social Security Organisation
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Science
<b>TFR</b>	Total Fertility Rate
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>USD</b>	American Dollar
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation