

Living Well: The Built, Lived, and Social Determinants of Well-Being



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This report is the fifth instalment of a series of annual reports published by the Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA). The purpose of this series is to outline the yearly achievements made by ROSA in the research being conducted on the well-being of older adults in Singapore.

We would like to thank The Ngee Ann Kongsi for their generous support and contribution towards ROSA, enabling us to produce this series of reports for dissemination to the public and key stakeholders.

Director's Message

This year marks a significant milestone for the SMU Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA)—five years of dedicated research, collaboration, and impact. Since our establishment in 2020, ROSA has grown into a well-regarded research centre in Singapore, committed to advancing the understanding of ageing through rigorous academic and translational research. Our work is anchored in real-world data collected from older Singaporeans, allowing us to generate insights that are both empirically grounded and socially relevant.

As Singapore reaches super-aged status in 2026, the relevance and urgency of our work have never been greater. ROSA's longitudinal research, through the Singapore Life Panel®, has become a vital resource for both public and private sector organisations seeking to understand emerging trends and challenges in ageing. These insights help shape responsive, forward-looking strategies that support the well-being of older Singaporeans.

Over the past five years, we have made significant strides in convening key stakeholders—including government ministries, academic institutions, community groups, and corporate partners—to address the multifaceted challenges of an ageing society. By working closely with government agencies to refine our research questions, we ensure that our findings are not only academically robust but also directly applicable to policy development. These collaborations also empower other partners to design interventions that benefit older Singaporeans. Together, these efforts enrich our research and enable us to translate findings into actionable, evidence-based recommendations for both policymakers and industry leaders.

We hope that such research continues to support the development of age-friendly and future-proof strategies and initiatives, enabling seniors to thrive with dignity and purpose, and enjoy their extended longevity.

We are deeply grateful for the support of The Ngee Ann Kongsi, whose generosity has enabled us to expand our research capabilities and deepen our impact. Their belief in the importance of empirical ageing research inspires us to seek new partnerships, both locally and globally, and to continue pushing boundaries.

Looking ahead, we aim to encourage young scholars to explore careers in the field of successful ageing—an area rich with opportunity and meaning. We also invite partners to journey with ROSA, helping us unlock new knowledge and drive innovation in ageing research.

On behalf of the entire team at ROSA, I extend my sincere thanks to our funders and collaborators for their unwavering support. I would also like to acknowledge our researchers and staff, whose dedication and passion continue to drive our mission forward.



Professor Paulin Straughan

Director, Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA)
Professor of Sociology (Practice)
Dean of Students
Singapore Management University

Introduction

As Singapore transitions into a super-aged society, it becomes imperative for us to develop sustainable, inclusive, and effective models of care. In recent years, there has been growing emphasis on embedding healthcare, social services, and everyday amenities within the community. During this year's National Day Rally, the Government introduced Age Well Neighbourhoods, a new scheme that builds on existing efforts from the Age Well SG initiative. Age Well Neighbourhoods seeks to expand active ageing centre networks, bring healthcare closer to homes with the establishment of community health posts, and provide greater home personal care services, further cementing its focus on community-based care.

In line with these national developments, the SMU Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA) has turned its attention towards identifying and understanding environmental factors that shape health behaviours and the holistic well-being of older Singaporeans. Therefore, this fifth instalment of ROSA's annual reports is themed "Living Well: The Built, Lived, and Social Determinants of Well-Being", emphasising the interplay across various facets of the environment and their influence on social and cultural capital, social agency, and well-being.

In the first section of this report, we highlight our institutional developments in the past year. We begin by detailing our collaborations with key industry partners, such as the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), Frasers Centrepoint Asset Management Ltd and Gold Ridge Pte Ltd, and the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). These partnerships are key in the exploration of emerging research areas that encompass multifaceted aspects of well-being among older Singaporeans. Next, we showcase the events that ROSA participated in. We provide a glimpse of the 4th SMU ROSA Annual Symposium on Successful Ageing and showcase the various events that our researchers

have attended locally and abroad. These include the 2024 Australian and Asian Society of Labor Economists (AASLE) Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, the Geriatric Education and Research Institute (GERI) 10th Anniversary Research Symposium 2025, the TRiSTAR Transborder Science Camp 2025 in Tsukuba, Japan, and the National Institute of Education (NIE)'s Science of Learning Symposium. These events provided us with invaluable opportunities to disseminate our work and be inspired by the wide range of perspectives shared by industry partners.

In the past year, ROSA published nine peer-reviewed journal articles on various aspects of older adults' well-being. In the following section, we highlight several key research developments. First, we present key findings from our latest survey on Healthier SG and healthy lifestyles. We then showcase our work on the role of ageing-in-place in the relationship between the built and social environments and older adults' holistic well-being. Next, we summarise findings on the profile and well-being of older caregivers in Singapore. Finally, we drew on the advantages afforded by our high-frequency survey panel, showcasing demographic and well-being trends from 2016 to 2024 for the first cohort of our Singapore Life Panel® (SLP) respondents.

We hope that this fifth instalment of our annual report will provide insights on the social, lived, and built determinants of older adults' well-being. Such research will support policymakers and private enterprises in developing policies and practices that further the well-being of older Singaporeans. The insights in this report were made possible through the invaluable contributions of past and present SLP members. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to The Ngee Ann Kongsi and the Ministry of Education for supporting our vision to advance successful ageing in Singapore.

Research Collaborations



Agency for Integrated Care

Our collaboration with the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) has enabled us to examine a range of care-related trends among older adults. In 2022, we explored the assisted living preferences of older adults by fielding the Senior Living Masterplan survey module, which focused on caregiving, care services, and living or care arrangements. In 2023, we expanded our focus towards understanding social isolation and loneliness among older adults through a series of focus group discussions, which enabled us to identify pressing issues in the community and gather insights on interventions that may alleviate social isolation and loneliness. We have since furthered our collaboration with

the AIC by co-designing an additional survey module that explored older adults' utilisation and preferences of Active Ageing Centres (AACs) in their neighbourhoods. This module focused on respondents' perceptions towards the physical characteristics of the AACs, as well as the services and social resources that they provide. We hope that these findings will help to inform policies that aim to mitigate social isolation and loneliness in the community by tailoring services at the AACs to better meet the various needs and preferences of older adults.

SkillsFuture Singapore

Last year, we began our collaboration with SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) to understand the perceptions that older adults have towards meaningful work and how they may be encouraged to participate in upskilling or reskilling. To

that end, we fielded a survey module to SLP respondents who were aged between 53 and 77 (in 2024), examining work-related indicators such as employment status, autonomy at work, relationship with work colleagues, flexibility of

work arrangements, reskilling opportunities, and beliefs regarding work, reskilling, and volunteerism. This year, we extended our collaboration with SSG and expanded the scope of the research to include a younger cohort of SLP respondents who are aged between 49 and 54 (in 2025). Through this extension, we hope that the findings will provide

SSG with a more nuanced understanding of the ageing workforce. This will enhance its efforts in workplace transformations, providing upskilling and reskilling opportunities for older adults in Singapore.

Frasers Centrepoint Asset Management Limited & Gold Ridge Private Limited

We signed a research collaboration agreement in May 2025 with Frasers Centrepoint Asset Management Limited and Gold Ridge Private Limited to investigate the role suburban malls can play for well-being and ageing-in-place among older adults. In April 2025, we first conducted three focus group discussions to develop a preliminary understanding of older adults' retail behaviours. Drawing on these insights, we developed research questions on older adults' shopping habits in suburban malls, focusing on their motivations, use of loyalty programmes, service preferences, and evaluations of mall accessibility and design.

Overall, we found that older adults generally prioritise convenience and value. Additionally, they tend to frequent suburban malls, which they view as 'one-stop' centres to meet a variety of social and practical needs. The collaboration also

identified gaps in current services for older adults. For instance, we found that low participation rates in loyalty programmes were primarily due to a lack of awareness and the limited appeal of existing rewards to older adults. Other structural difficulties, such as difficulty in navigating complex mall layouts, revealed areas for improvements. Critically, the findings point towards significant potential for Frasers and Gold Ridge to champion age-friendliness and redefine suburban malls as hubs that go beyond home and work, serving as spaces for socialising and community engagements. By shaping the built environment, malls can create more inclusive spaces and foster greater social interactions among older adults, thus enhancing their psychosocial well-being.

Institute of Policy Studies (National University of Singapore)

Following the General Elections in 2025, the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) embarked on a project that examined how governance, national identity, and a sense of belonging are interrelated among Singaporeans aged 21 and above. To recruit older Singaporeans into the project, IPS and ROSA launched a collaboration and fielded a survey module to SLP respondents who were aged 60 and above. This module focused on key topics such as Singaporeans' evaluations of

government performance, opinions on governance and electoral fairness, as well as their assessments of identity, belonging, and inclusion in the Singapore society. Through this collaboration, we hope to achieve a deeper understanding of how government performance and political narratives may promote social cohesion and democratic participation and improve Singaporeans' engagement and well-being.

Events

4th SMU ROSA Annual Symposium on Successful Ageing



L-R: Prof Jia Li, Dean, School of Economics, SMU; Dr Cheong Wei Yang, Vice Provost (Strategic Research Partnerships), SMU; Mr Tan Kiat How, then-Senior Minister of State for National Development and Digital Development and Information; Prof Timothy Clark, then-Provost, SMU; Prof Paulin Straughan, Director, ROSA; Prof Kenneth Benoit, Dean, School of Social Sciences, SMU.

On 22 October 2024, we held the 4th SMU ROSA Annual Symposium on Successful Ageing, which was attended by over 300 participants comprising practitioners from government and non-governmental organisations, academics, students, and members of the Singapore Life Panel® (SLP). We had the pleasure of having Mr Tan Kiat How, then-Senior Minister of State for National Development and Digital Development and Information, as our Guest of Honour. This symposium was themed “Creating Age-Friendly Environments: Fostering Successful Ageing”, which focused on empowering older adults to

age well within communities. The presentations and discussions centred on how research and policy can enhance the community integration and well-being of older adults. In addition, academic experts explored various policy strategies that may be designed to create supportive environments for older adults to age well in their homes and communities.

The event featured two impactful presentations. First, Dr Aiko Kikkawa, who is a Senior Economist in the Economic Research and Development Impact Department at the Asian Development Bank, shared findings from the *Asia Development Policy Report 2024: Ageing Well in Asia*. Dr Kikkawa noted that while Asia’s population is ageing rapidly, it is largely unprepared for the challenges. As such, she argued that one key policy agenda is to ensure or promote the well-being of older adults, which spans across four dimensions: health, productive work, economic security, and family and social engagement. By doing so, Asians may be empowered to age well and maximise their contributions to the economy and society.



Mr Tan Kiat How, then-Senior Minister of State for National Development and Digital Development and Information, delivering his opening remarks at the 4th SMU ROSA Annual Symposium on Successful Ageing.



Dr Aiko Kikkawa, Senior Economist at the Asian Development Bank, giving her presentation on “Ageing Well in Asia”.

Second, Professor Paulin Straughan, Director of ROSA, presented on “Clue to Successful Ageing: What Have We Learnt?”, which leveraged data from the SLP to understand the construct of ageing-in-place. In her presentation, Prof Straughan highlighted the need for ageing societies to harness ageing-in-place, which would enable older adults to transition seamlessly into their later years. This is underscored by ROSA’s finding that 8 in 10 older adults intend to age in their current residences. Prof Straughan proposed a conceptual framework that emphasised the critical roles of the built and social environments in developing older adults’ sense of attachment towards their neighbourhoods, which would in turn, advance their holistic well-being. These environmental features include having good quality neighbourhood amenities, as well as social resources like close neighbours and social support in the community. Prof Straughan argued that policymakers and the community need to



Prof Paulin Straughan, Director of ROSA, delivering her presentation on “Clue to Successful Ageing: What Have We Learnt?”.

play active roles in curating the environments to empower older adults to age in place.

Finally, the symposium concluded with a panel discussion that explored various strategies to support ageing-in-place. The panel featured Dr Aiko Kikkawa, Prof Paulin Straughan, and Prof Ursula Staudinger, Rector of the Technische Universität Dresden, and was moderated by Associate Professor William Tov, who is Co-Deputy Director of ROSA. Prof Staudinger highlighted the importance of government policies such as urban planning and mandated caregiver leaves. Dr Kikkawa discussed the need to accommodate the evolving needs of working women and showcased the Wakaba-dai Housing Complex in Yokohama as a successful model for promoting intergenerational interactions. Finally, Prof Straughan concluded the discussion by suggesting that Singapore leverage existing resources to create spaces for these intergenerational activities.



Panel discussion on the various strategies to support ageing-in-place in Singapore. (L-R: Assoc Prof William Tov, Co-Deputy Director, ROSA, SMU; Dr Aiko Kikkawa, Senior Economist, Asian Development Bank; Prof Paulin Straughan, Director, ROSA, SMU; Prof Ursula Staudinger, Rector, Technische Universität Dresden).

2024 Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference

On 14 December 2024, Associate Professor Kim Seonghoon, who is Co-Deputy Director at ROSA, presented his paper titled “Navigating Unemployment without Unemployment Insurance”, at the 2024 Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference, which was held at the Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. The AASLE serves as a platform for scholars in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss research and policies in labour economics.

In his paper, Assoc Prof Kim examined how older adults in Singapore cope with job loss in the absence of a public unemployment insurance system. The study involved an analysis over a two-year period, where he observed a significant drop in income. This drop remained approximately 50% below pre-unemployment levels after 24 months.

Despite this significant and persistent income gap, their spending decreased by only 13 to 17%. Assoc Prof Kim noted that these findings suggest that older individuals may use robust self-insurance mechanisms like personal savings or family support to mitigate the financial shocks. Moreover, the findings revealed that those who lost their jobs were more likely to transition into retirement or self-employment. Although their health status may have remained stable, their life satisfaction declined significantly. In his concluding remarks, Assoc Prof Kim observed that older Singaporeans are adept at managing the financial impacts of job loss on their own, and that the benefits of implementing a public unemployment benefits system would likely be modest.

Geriatric Education and Research Institute (GERI) 10th Anniversary Research Symposium

The Geriatric Education and Research Institute (GERI)—a collaborator of ROSA—organised a research symposium on 8 July 2025 to commemorate a decade of contributions towards health policies, systems, and practices in Singapore’s ageing population. The symposium was themed “Translating Research for Healthy Ageing” and comprised plenaries on topics like policymaking, translational research, and ageing well in the community. Professor Paulin Straughan presented on “Intrinsic Capacity as a Mediator of Social and Built Environment on the Holistic Well-being in Older Adults”. This presentation showcased research that detailed how neighbourhood amenities and social support may promote the holistic well-being of older adults by enhancing intrinsic capacity. Prof Straughan

emphasised the importance of designing age-friendly urban spaces and community initiatives that foster social connections, which may help to sustain intrinsic capacity and functional ability, thereby enabling older adults to age well in the community.



Prof Paulin Straughan, Director of ROSA, presenting on “Intrinsic Capacity as a Mediator of Social and Built Environment on the Holistic Well-Being in Older Adults” at the GERI 10th Anniversary Research Symposium.

TRiSTAR Transborder Science Camp 2025

On 10 September 2025, the Tsukuba University invited Professor Paulin Straughan to present at the TRiSTAR Transborder Science Camp 2025 held in Odawara, Japan. During the presentation and panel discussion, Prof Straughan shared about the challenges and opportunities that Singapore faces as the country transitions to a super-aged society. These include narrowing the healthspan-lifespan gap, addressing social isolation and loneliness faced by a growing number of older adults, examining caregiving burdens and the various ways to prevent burnout, as well as work

transitions for older adults who are exploring work in their later years. In addition, Ms Lim Wensi, ROSA’s Centre Manager, was invited as a workshop participant with the other TRiSTAR fellows to brainstorm for ideas to solve problems related to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. The workshop proved interesting and meaningful, as ROSA contributed research findings to the discussion, and carried out an exchange of ideas from Japan-based scholars from a multitude of disciplines.



Prof Paulin Straughan elaborating on the opportunities that can be leveraged in ageing societies like Singapore.



Prof Paulin Straughan (standing on the right) observing a group of TRiSTAR fellows in a workshop, in which Ms Lim Wensi participated (seated, third from right).

National Institute of Education (NIE) Science of Learning Symposium 2025

Associate Professor William Tov delivered a presentation titled “Teaching the Science and Practice of Well-Being” at the Science of Learning Symposium 2025, which was held at the National Institute of Education (NIE) on 12 September 2025. Assoc Prof Tov discussed how new findings from the science of well-being

—including work at ROSA—challenge traditional theories that a person’s happiness cannot change. To illustrate this point, Assoc Prof Tov presented his research with ROSA scholar, Jonathan Chia, titled “Supporting Satisfaction, Satisfying Support: Bidirectional Associations of Social Support and Life Satisfaction”. The team found that older adults who perceived higher levels of social support became more satisfied with their lives over five years, whereas those who perceived lower levels of social support became less satisfied. These findings underscore how an individual’s life circumstances and the social environment can influence their well-being in the longer term. This highlights opportunities for policies to enhance the conditions that improve well-being, particularly within an ageing population.



Assoc Prof William Tov presenting on “Teaching the Science and Practice of Well-Being” at the NIE Science of Learning Symposium 2025.

Research Developments

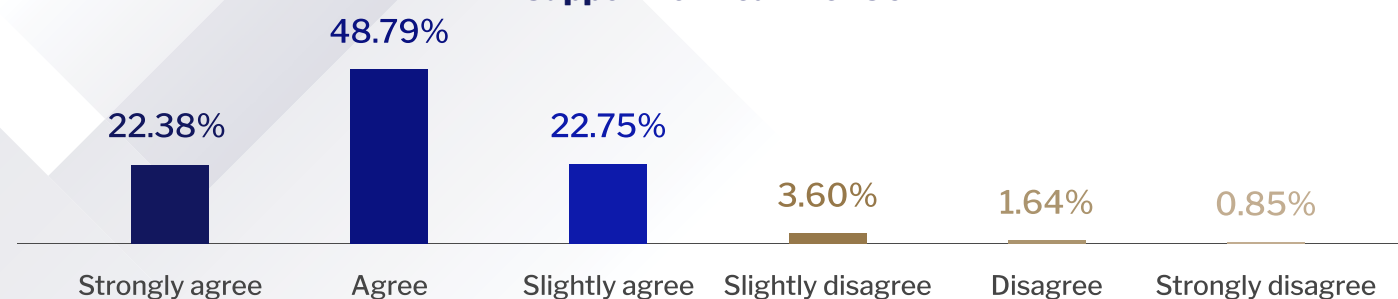
Research on Healthier SG and Healthy Lifestyles

Recently, we fielded a new survey module that focused on Healthier SG and healthy lifestyles, as part of our focus on preventive health and healthspan. We drew upon responses provided by 7,056 respondents aged between 50 and 80 from the Singapore Life Panel® (SLP). Overall, we observed encouraging trends, but our findings also revealed several areas in which Healthier SG may expand on.

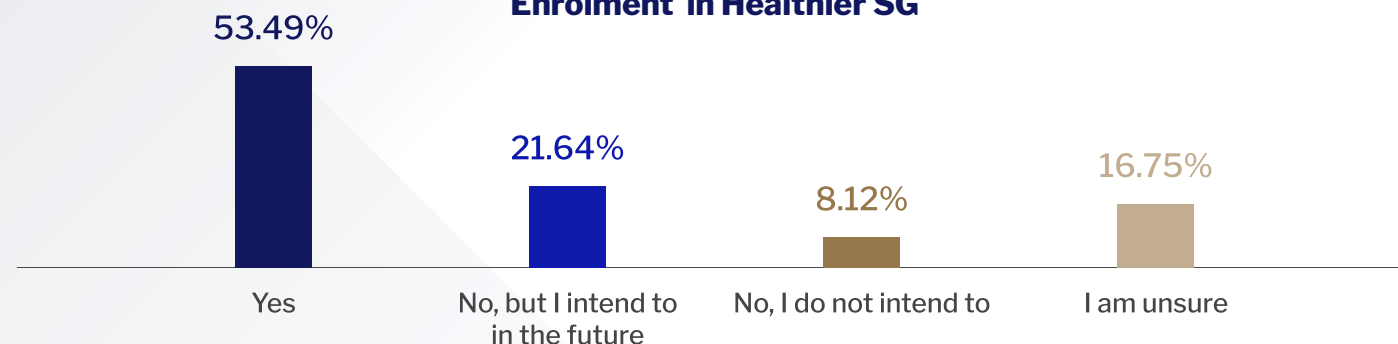
Supporting Healthier SG

Slightly over 90% of respondents indicated that they supported the initiatives set out by Healthier SG. Similarly, over 90% of respondents indicated that having regular health screenings is important. With regards to enrolment in Healthier SG, we found that slightly more than half of our respondents have enrolled (53.49%) and a fifth intended to do so (21.64%). These findings appear to demonstrate a positive behavioural shift among older adults as they begin to think about preventative care. This also appears to be a promising sign for Healthier SG, as its goal of increasing health awareness seems to be gradually taking root among older adults.

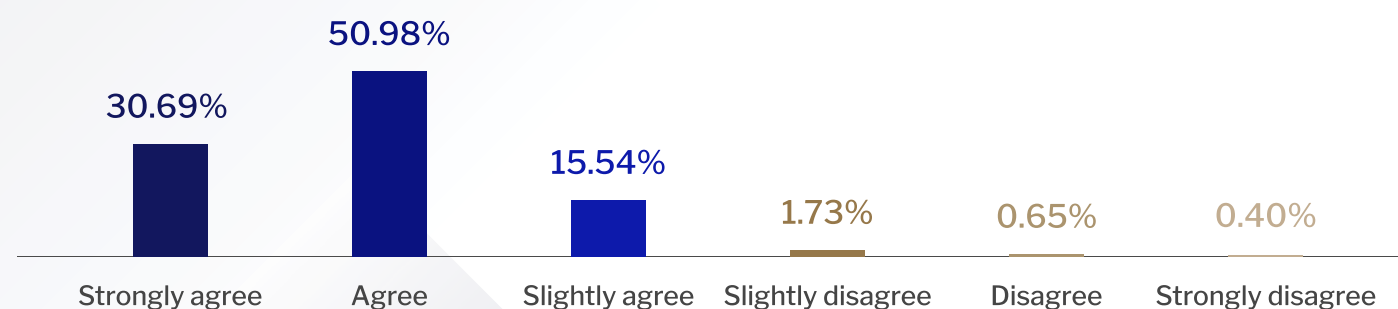
Support for Healthier SG



Enrolment in Healthier SG



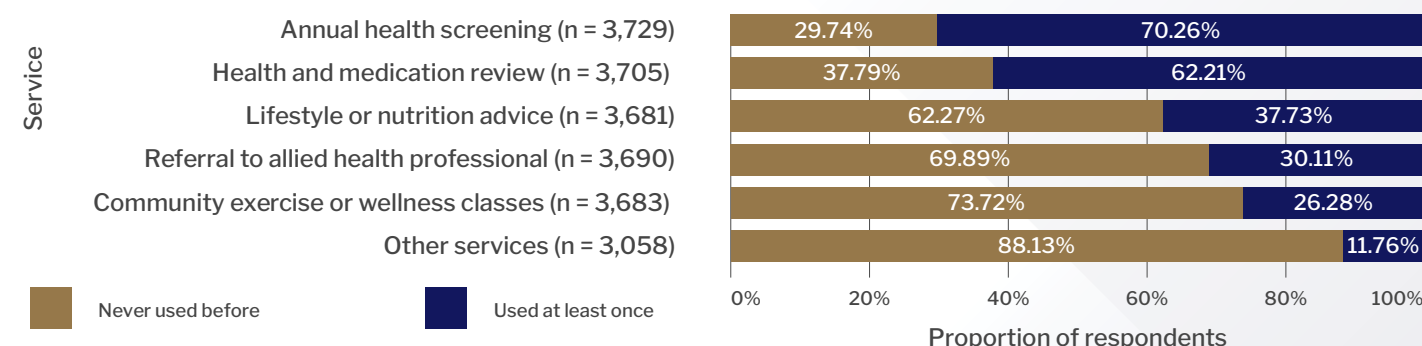
Importance of having regular health screenings



Usage of Healthier SG services

We further explored Healthier SG enrollees' usage of health-related services. We found that annual health screening (70.26%) and health or medication reviews (62.21%) are the most widely used services. However, services like lifestyle or nutrition counselling (37.73%), referrals to allied health professionals (30.11%), and community exercise or wellness classes (26.28%) remain underutilised. These suggest that there are opportunities to increase older adults' awareness of preventive health and wellness services available in the community. It is important to highlight that preventive health should go beyond health screening and encompass holistic approaches for long-term holistic well-being.

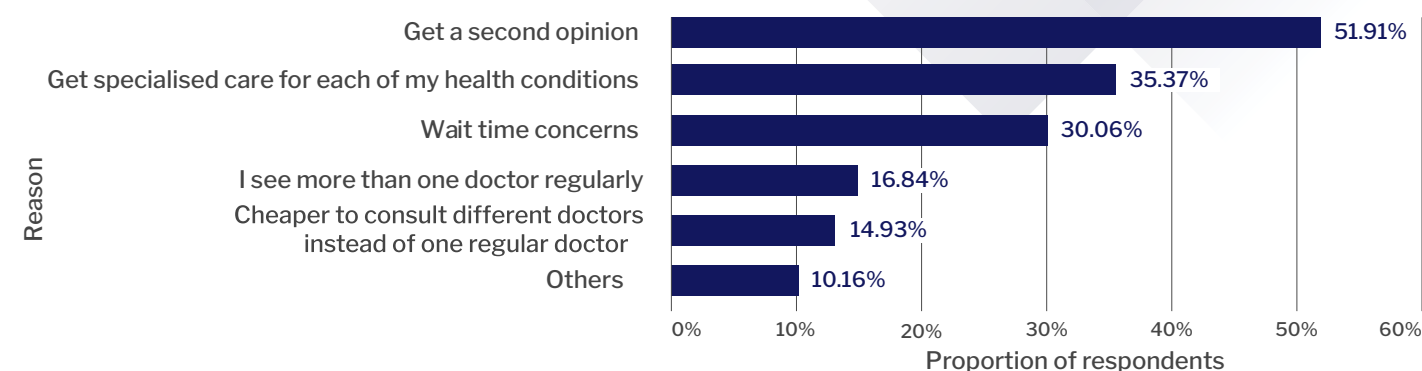
Healthier SG services used by respondents



Barriers and challenges facing Healthier SG

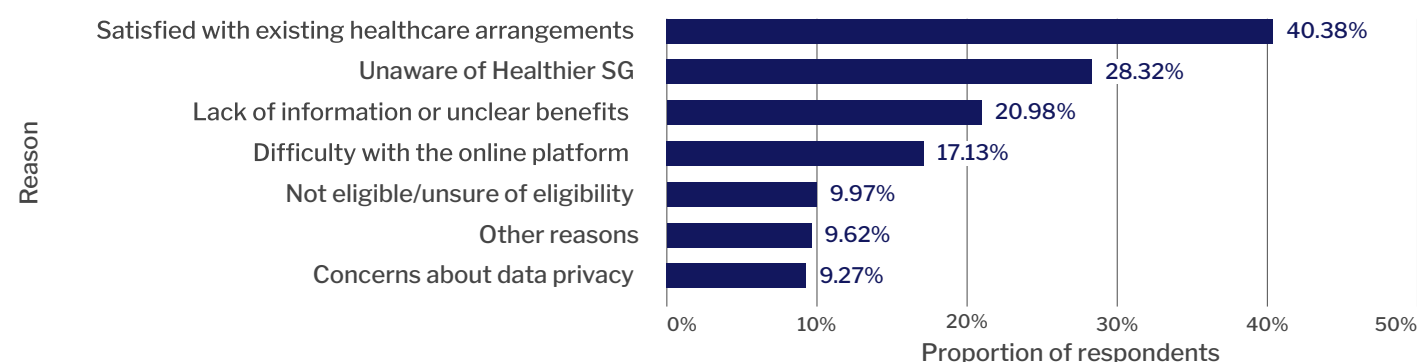
Expanding on our findings related to Healthier SG enrolment, we uncovered some nuances in respondents' sentiments. We found that even if respondents were to enrol in Healthier SG, more than 80% indicated that they will still seek advice from another doctor. In fact, this sentiment has increased since our last survey in 2023 (67.42%). Also, of the respondents who indicated that they have a regular doctor, many reported that they will still seek other physicians for second opinions, followed by wanting to seek specialised care. It is less clear whether the resources provided by Healthier SG are not sufficient for their needs or whether older adults simply feel anxious because of growing health concerns as they age. Further research is needed to clarify this distinction and to better understand older adults' health needs.

Reasons for seeing another doctor



Among the respondents who are not enrolled in Healthier SG, about 40% indicated that they felt satisfied with their current healthcare arrangements, while smaller groups cited lack of information, a lack of awareness of Healthier SG, or concerns over eligibility as reasons for not being enrolled. As such, targeted outreach and clearer communication may help to address gaps in awareness, eligibility, and understanding among older adults who are not yet enrolled.

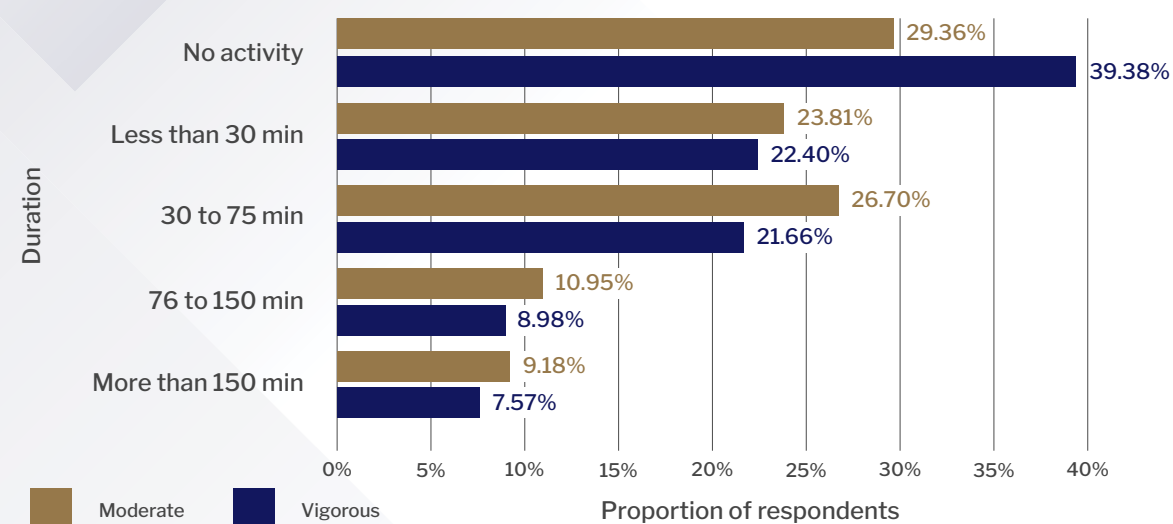
Reasons for not being enrolled in Healthier SG



Healthy Lifestyles

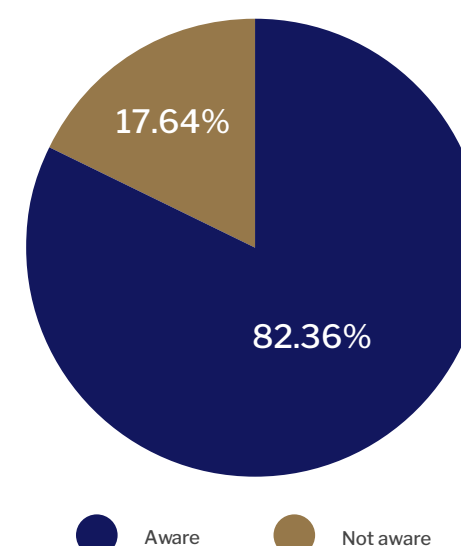
Turning to healthy lifestyles, we found that over half of the respondents engage in some form of moderate or vigorous physical activity. Moderate physical activities, such as leisure cycling, cause a slight increase in breathing and heart rate, while vigorous physical activities, such as running, cause a significant increase in heart rate and heavy breathing. However, we also noted that about 30% of older adults do not engage in any activity at all. We note that it is possible that a portion of this subgroup may experience functional disabilities that hinder movements, which prevent them from partaking in regular physical activities. Thus, policies like Healthier SG may further examine alternate approaches to encourage physical activities that are appropriate for those experiencing functional disabilities.

Duration of moderate and vigorous physical activities

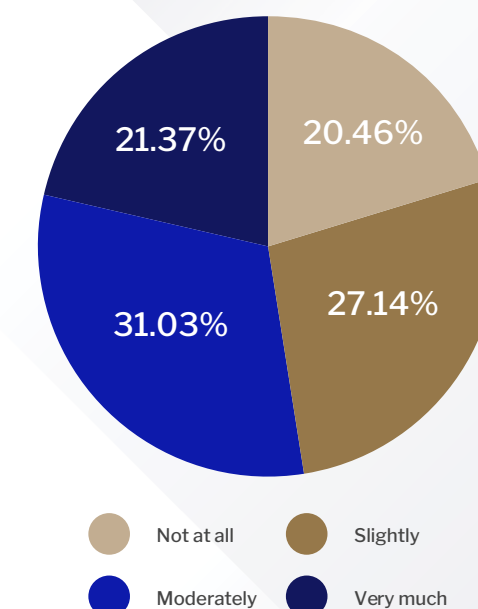


In terms of dietary patterns, our findings show that fast-food consumption averaged about once a week among respondents, while meals at hawker centres averaged five times a week. We further found that respondents' awareness of Nutri-Grade labels was high (82.36%), where only about 1 in 5 indicated that these labels did not influence their beverage choices. Taken together, these findings appear promising as healthy diet options seem to be generally well received by older adults.

Awareness of Nutri-Grade labels

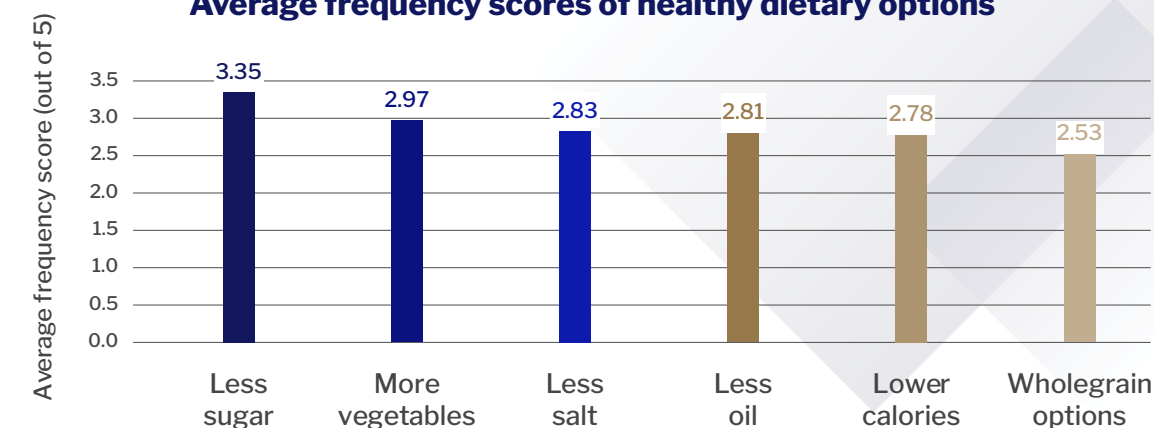


Influence of Nutri-Grade labels on beverage choices



Finally, we explored respondents' adoption of healthy dietary options. We found that the average frequency of asking for less sugar was highest compared with other options. Requesting for wholegrain options and lower-calorie choices, however, remain relatively low. These findings highlight a need for more targeted nutritional education and incentives to encourage broader dietary improvements.

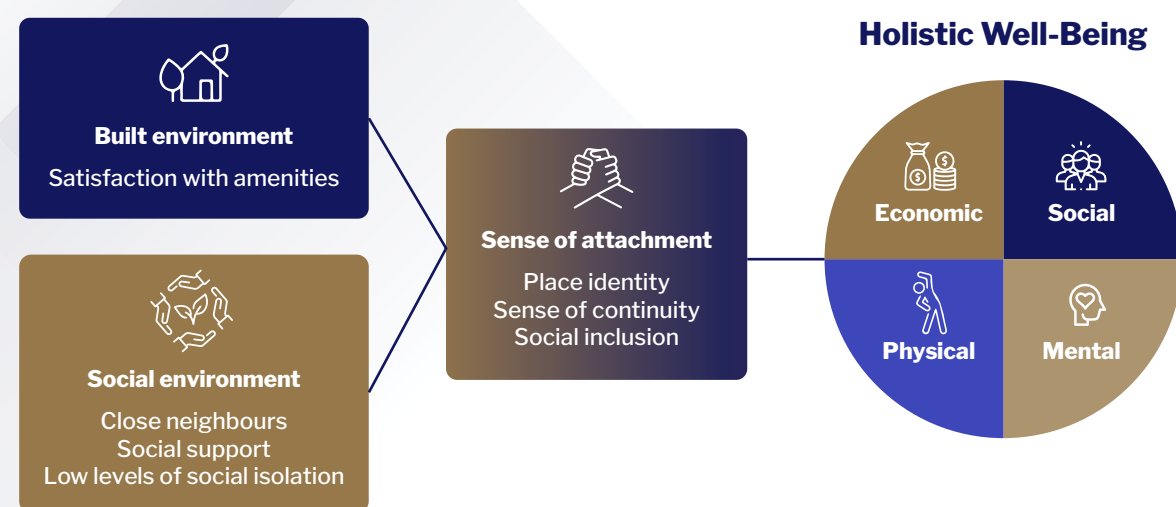
Average frequency scores of healthy dietary options



Ageing in Place—The Key to Receiving a Superaged Society

Singapore is becoming a super-aged society, with 1 in 4 citizens projected to be aged 65 and above by 2030. This demographic shift presents challenges in ensuring older adults can age with dignity and well-being. Traditional models of institutional care are increasingly unsustainable, prompting a shift toward “ageing in place”—where older adults remain in their own homes and communities. This emphasises the importance of both the built and social environments in supporting holistic well-being in ageing. In Singapore, where public housing and community ties are strong, understanding how place identity, continuity, and social inclusion contribute to ageing in place is crucial. As such, we successfully published a paper utilising the Singapore Life Panel® to explore how these dimensions influence well-being. The paper offers insights for age-friendly environments that promote independence and ageing in place.

The study tested several models to understand how amenities and social environments influence ageing in place and its impact on well-being. Satisfaction with amenities (i.e., parks, clinics, community centres, etc) was positively linked to how connected older adults feel with their neighbourhoods, and this has an overall effect on well-being. However, the main finding was that the quality of relationships among neighbours was more important than structural living conditions (i.e., living alone) for ageing in place and well-being.



Conceptual framework linking the built and social environments to holistic well-being through sense of attachment.

Ageing in place must be supported by the assurance that neighbourhoods remain conducive and stable as individuals grow older. These findings challenge prevailing notions of gentrification and continuous urban upgrading, which may inadvertently disrupt a sense of continuity among older adults. Nonetheless, both public and private sectors should critically consider how spatial design facilitates the organic development of social interactions and networks that foster familiarity and attachment to place. Furthermore, ageing policies should prioritise social connectivity across diverse living arrangements, recognising that meaningful relationships and community engagement are vital regardless of whether individuals live alone or with others.

You may scan the following QR code to access the full journal article:



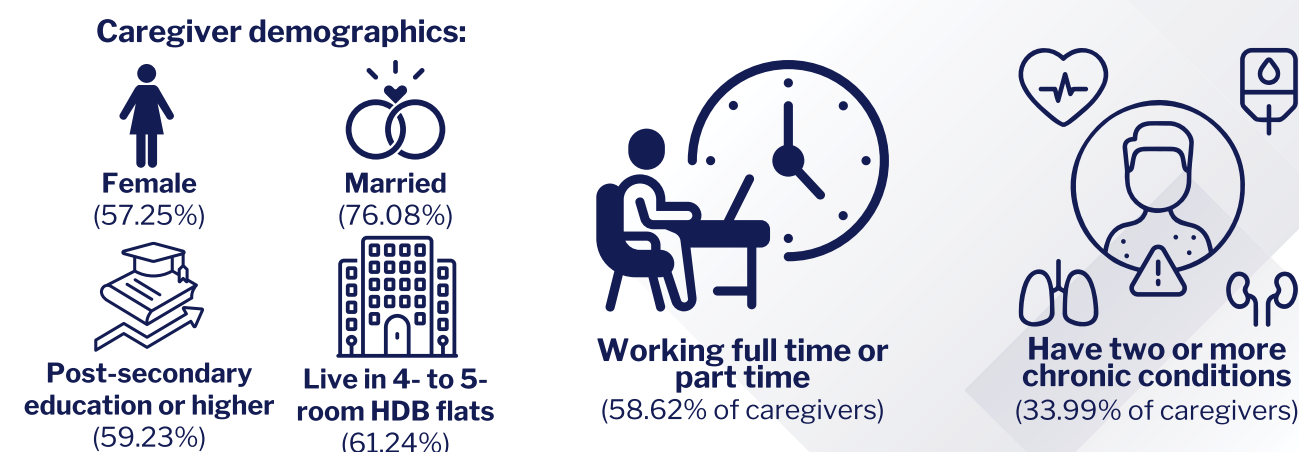
Profile and Well-Being of Older Adult Caregivers in Singapore

Older adults are increasingly taking on the role of caregivers due to extended longevity and declining birth rates in Singapore. The demands of caregiving, however, can pose significant challenges to their physical, social, and emotional well-being. This study thus serves to deepen our understanding of older adult caregiver demographics, caregiving patterns, and access to caregiver support services, to better alleviate caregiving burdens and improve their well-being.

Caregiver Profiles

Approximately 1 in 7 older adults were caregivers, with an average age of 63.2 years. There were more caregivers who were female, married, living in larger HDB flats, and more educated. Notably, many of them were juggling caregiving responsibilities alongside work, highlighting the need for enhanced workplace support for caregivers such as flexible work arrangements and caregiving leave.

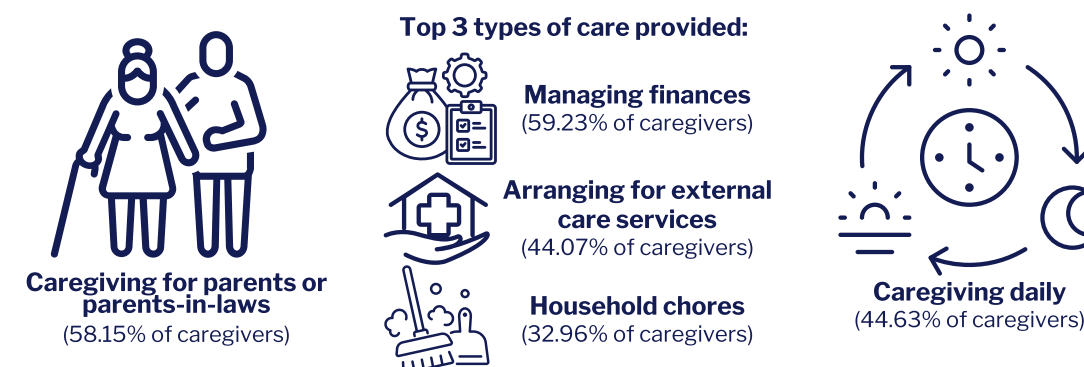
Additionally, around a third of caregivers reported poor actual and self-rated physical well-being, which may pose challenges to their capacity to care for their care recipients. Caregivers should be encouraged to engage in self-care, and health screenings and healthcare services should be made more accessible to them.



Caregiving Patterns

Most were caregivers for their parents or parents-in-laws, who had age-related physical limitations, such as frailty and mobility issues. Caregiving responsibilities were primarily administrative in nature.

On the frequency of caregiving, about 4 in 5 caregivers provided care at least once a week. Nearly half of the caregivers provided care daily, majority of whom lived with their care recipient, which may intensify their caregiving responsibilities.



Caregiver Support Services

Despite the significant burden caregiving brings, we observed both low awareness and usage of respite care services. These findings point to the need for more outreach efforts to educate caregivers on the availability of support services and to simplify the process of application.

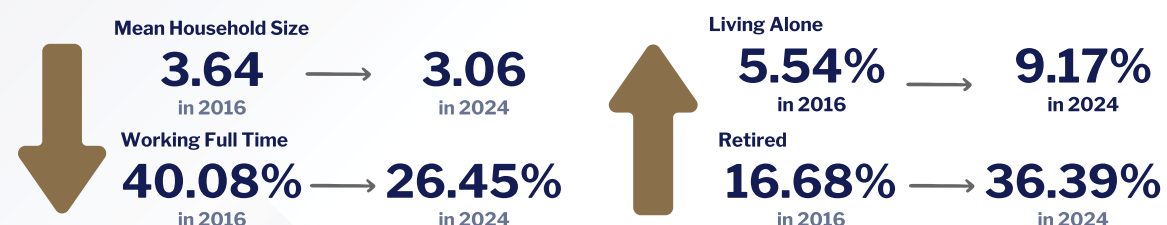


Demographic and Well-Being Trends from the Singapore Life Panel® from 2016 to 2024

The Singapore Life Panel® (SLP) is a longitudinal study established in 2015 tracking changes in well-being of older adults in Singapore. This report summarises the key demographic and health trends, as well as changes in economic and life satisfaction among the original cohort of respondents over the nine-year period from 2016 to 2024.

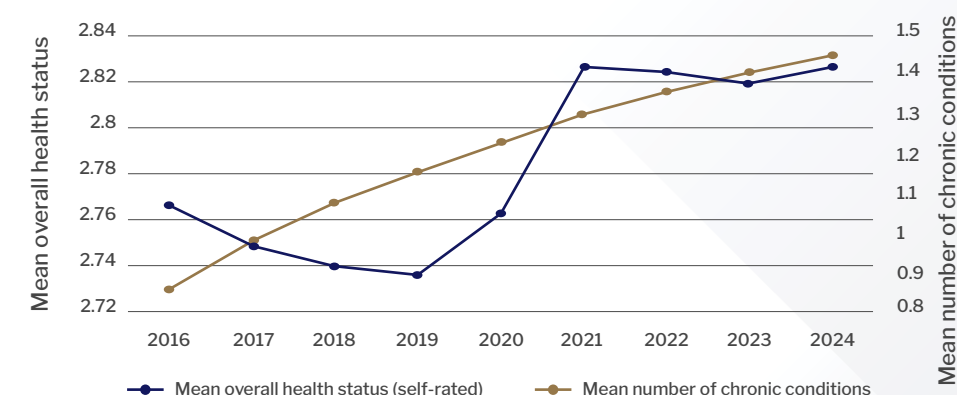
Household Sizes: There has been a steady decrease in mean household sizes. Conversely, there has been an increase in the proportion of older adults living alone, which may be attributed to life stage changes that come with ageing, such as widowhood and children moving out of their family homes. These findings suggest potential vulnerabilities in social isolation and the need to boost community support systems.

Employment: Over the nine-year period, the proportion of SLP respondents working full-time declined, while those who are retired increased. However, despite enhanced support for flexible work arrangements in recent years, the proportion of older adults who worked part-time or flexibly remained relatively stable. Policymakers may thus want to further explore the barriers and resistance older adults face towards continued employment and strengthen policies which support flexible work arrangements post-retirement.



Health: Interestingly, self-rated health has seen an increase since 2020. This is despite an increase in the number of chronic diseases over time. This discrepancy may be explained by the adoption of healthier lifestyles after the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in more positive perceptions of health. However, it remains uncertain how well this can translate to improvements in objective health. To bridge the gap between perceived and objective health, policymakers should continue with healthy lifestyle campaigns and community programmes which leverage social norms and embed these habits into daily routines.

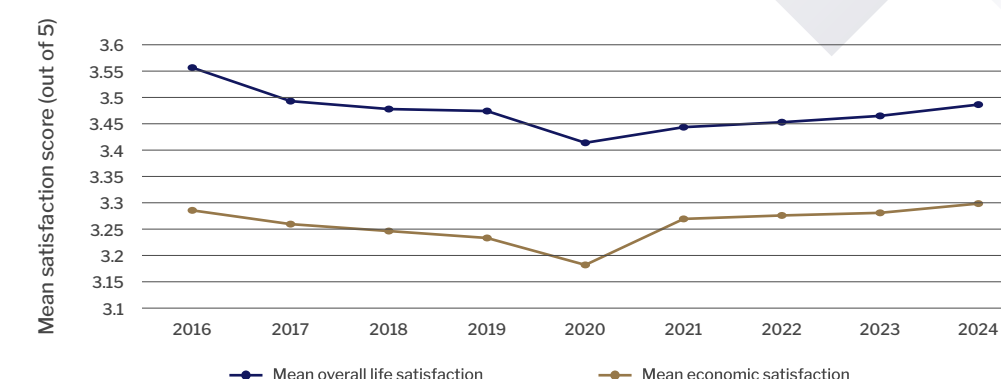
Overall health status and chronic conditions among respondents (2016 to 2024)



Older adults with lower education levels experienced both poorer perceived and actual health, highlighting compound challenges this vulnerable group may face in accessing health information and affording healthcare. Targeted interventions, such as subsidised health screenings, and tailored health education programmes and outreach efforts to those of lower educational background or economic stratum, can be considered.

Life and Economic Satisfaction: Overall life satisfaction of older adults declined to its lowest during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. While steady recovery has since followed, the overall life satisfaction in 2024 has yet to return to pre-COVID levels. Economic satisfaction mirrors such trends but saw a faster recovery post COVID-19. This upward trend could have been attributed to economic interventions during and after the pandemic. Differences in life and economic satisfaction were observed across demographic factors across all years. Generally, older adults who were males, of lower socioeconomic status, and of younger birth cohorts saw poorer overall life and economic satisfaction.

Trends in life satisfaction and economic satisfaction (2016 to 2024)



You may scan the following QR code to access the full research brief:



Looking Ahead at the Coming Year



As ROSA celebrates its fifth year as a research centre, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the researchers, partners, and collaborators who have played a pivotal role in advancing successful ageing in Singapore. The data and insights generated from the Singapore Life Panel® have informed the public, government, and industry on challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, helping to build the foundations for a more inclusive and age-friendly society.

In the coming year, we will focus on delivering high-impact outcomes that inform and influence national policy on ageing and position ourselves as a key contributor to Singapore's future-ready ageing strategy. To do this, we will deepen our partnerships with key stakeholders such as SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC). By aligning our efforts, we can better support lifelong learning, integrated care, and community-based initiatives that empower older adults to thrive. We also look forward to amplifying our research impact through strategic collaborations with academic institutions, public agencies, and private sector organisations. These cross-sector partnerships will enable us to co-create solutions that are responsive to the evolving needs of our ageing population.

In addition, we will continue to advance the

aspirations and highlight the key challenges faced by older Singaporeans in our outreach efforts. These may include platforms such as our annual ROSA symposium, as well as participation in international and local events. Through these engagements, we aim to share evidence-based insights and advocate for policies and practices that promote the well-being of older adults.

Our research will continue to contribute towards Singapore and SMU's vision of sustainable urban living. We seek to deepen understanding of how the built, social, and lived environments intersect to shape the ageing experience. This includes examining how urban design, housing, and public infrastructure can better support mobility, safety, and accessibility for older adults. Equally important is our exploration of the role of social networks, community engagement, and cultural norms in fostering a sense of belonging and purpose.

By integrating insights from lived experiences—captured through longitudinal data and qualitative research—we can inform policy and planning frameworks that are inclusive, future-ready, and responsive to the diverse needs of older Singaporeans. The multi-disciplinary ROSA team, which includes early-career researchers, remains committed to producing impactful research that helps shape successful ageing for all in Singapore.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude for the able assistance of the following ROSA staff in putting together this report:

Tan Yi Wen

Zidane Tiew

Emi Loh

Shania Go

Lim Wensi

About the Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA)

ROSA is a multidisciplinary research centre based in SMU. It was established with an MOE Tier 3 social sciences research grant, as well as the generous support of The Ngee Ann Kongsi. Research at ROSA seeks to define and measure a holistic construct of well-being and to identify the factors that impact Singaporeans' well-being as they progress through the later phases of life. Through close collaboration with government and other partner agencies, ROSA also aims to translate research insights into policy innovations that advance the well-being of older adults holistically and promote successful ageing in Singapore. ROSA brings together a diverse team of leading international and local researchers in ageing and age-related issues from various disciplines. Through empirical evidence derived from a longitudinal methodological approach, the multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research team advances propositions that promote successful ageing in Singapore. The work at ROSA is supported by The Ngee Ann Kongsi and the Ministry of Education, Singapore, under its Academic Research Fund Tier 3 program award reference number MOE2019-T3-1-006.



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The Ngee Ann Kongsi

The Ngee Ann Kongsi is a non-profit Teochew philanthropic organisation focused on educational, cultural and charitable activities in Singapore, while placing a deep emphasis on preserving the Teochew heritage. The organisation is an active advocate in education. It was founded in 1845 by Teochew immigrants from China to provide welfare services for its members, and was formally incorporated under the Ngee Ann Kongsi (Incorporation) Ordinance in 1933.



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The research at ROSA is also supported by the Ministry of Education, Singapore, under its Academic Research Fund Tier 3 programme (Award reference number MOE2019-T3-1-006). Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the views of the Ministry of Education, Singapore.



Centre for Research on Successful Ageing
Singapore Management University – School of Social Sciences
10 Canning Rise, #05-01, Singapore 179873

 rosa.smu.edu.sg

 rosa@smu.edu.sg

