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Ageing in Finland and Japan - challenges and opportunities

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- 1. Introduction**
- 2. General overview –challenges**
- 3. Statistics from Finland and Japan**
- 4. Health and social services in Finland and Japan**
- 5. Digitalization, AI and ageing- opportunities**



1. Introduction

- **Sari Heikkinen**, PhD, gerontology, Researchprogramme director at Laurea UAS
- Interest areas: social gerontology, immigration issues, especially elderly care services, equal rights, ethical questions
- Projects: Empowering people towards Socially Inclusive Society: study of Ethical Stress of the staff at Care Home
- Resent publication: **Elderly people's perceptions of ICT's role in alleviating social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic** Piia Silvennoinen, Sari Heikkinen <https://journal.fi/finjehew/article/view/122270>
- **Takashi Ishizuki**, PhD, social welfare, MS in Gerontology, Associate Professor at Tohoku Fukushi University
- Interest areas: gerontological social work, Effective use of home services, home support for the elderly in depopulated areas, reduction of dementia stigma, prevention of social isolation
- **Resent Publication:** Takashi Ishizuki (2018) Support for the elderly requiring severe care in the community-based integrated care, Japanese Journal of Gerontology, 39(4) 426-33. (In Japanese) Takashi Ishizuki, Fuyuki Shimizu (2022) Educational effect of on-campus, mainly online, training as an alternative to social work field practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic, Bulletin of Tohoku Fukushi University 45, 1-15. (In Japanese)



2. General overview- challenges

- The world's population is ageing. **Every country** in the world is experiencing growth in the number and proportion of older persons in their population
- In 2018, for the first time in history, persons aged 65 or above **outnumbered** children under five years of age globally.
- Globally, the population aged 65 and over is growing **faster** than all other age groups and in 2050, one in six people in the world will be over age 65 (16%)
- The size and age composition of a population are determined jointly by three demographic processes: **fertility, mortality and migration**. All regions have experienced substantial increases in life expectancy since 1950. While **declining fertility and increasing longevity** are the key drivers of population ageing globally.
- [Reference: https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ageing](https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ageing)



Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)

- The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) is a global collaboration, aligned with the last ten years of the Sustainable Development Goals, to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live.



WHO's work on decade action areas

Combatting Ageism: Ageism affects how we think, feel and act towards others and ourselves based on age. The Campaign aims to change the narrative around age and ageing and help create a world for all ages.

Age-friendly Environments: Both older people and the environments in which they live are diverse, dynamic and changing. In interaction with each other they hold incredible potential for enabling or constraining healthy ageing.

Integrated care for older people (ICOPE): ICOPE reflects a continuum of care that will help to reorient health and social services towards a more person-centred and coordinated model of care.

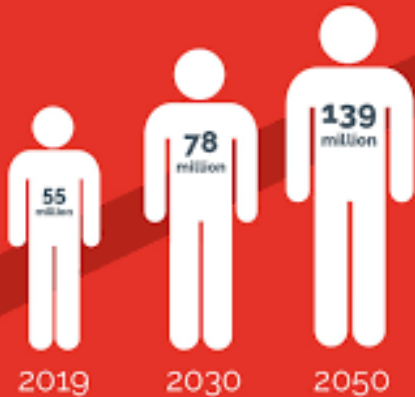
Integrated Continuum of Long-term care: Long-term-care systems enable older people, who experience significant declines in capacity, to receive the care and support that allow them to live a life consistent with their basic rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity.

<https://www.who.int/teams/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent-health-and-ageing/ageing-and-health/integrated-continuum-of-long-term-care#>

- is the monitoring and accountability mechanism for the Global action plan on the public response to dementia 2017-25. **The 35 GDO indicators** is used to measure individual countries' contributions towards achieving the global targets of the Global dementia action plan.
- In 2021, 62 countries have contributed data to the GDO, the next round of GDO data collection was in 2022.

<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/global-dementia-observatory-gdo>

<https://www.who.int/teams/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent-health-and-ageing/ageing-and-health/integrated-continuum-of-long-term-care#>



Estimated growth in number of
people with dementia 2019–2050*

65%
of people dying of
dementia-related
deaths are women

In 2019, Alzheimer's
disease and other
forms of dementia
ranked as the 7th
leading cause of death.



Dementia- it affects us all sooner or later

<https://www.who.int/teams/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent-health-and-ageing/ageing-and-health/integrated-continuum-of-long-term-care#>

Memory disorders in Finland and Japan



FINLAND (5,5 mil),
Around **15% of older
people** suffer from
memory disorders

JAPAN (124,4 mil)
Around **18% of older
people** suffer from
memory disorders

3. Statistics from Finland and Japan

FINLAND total
population 5,5
mil, 65+ 23,3%

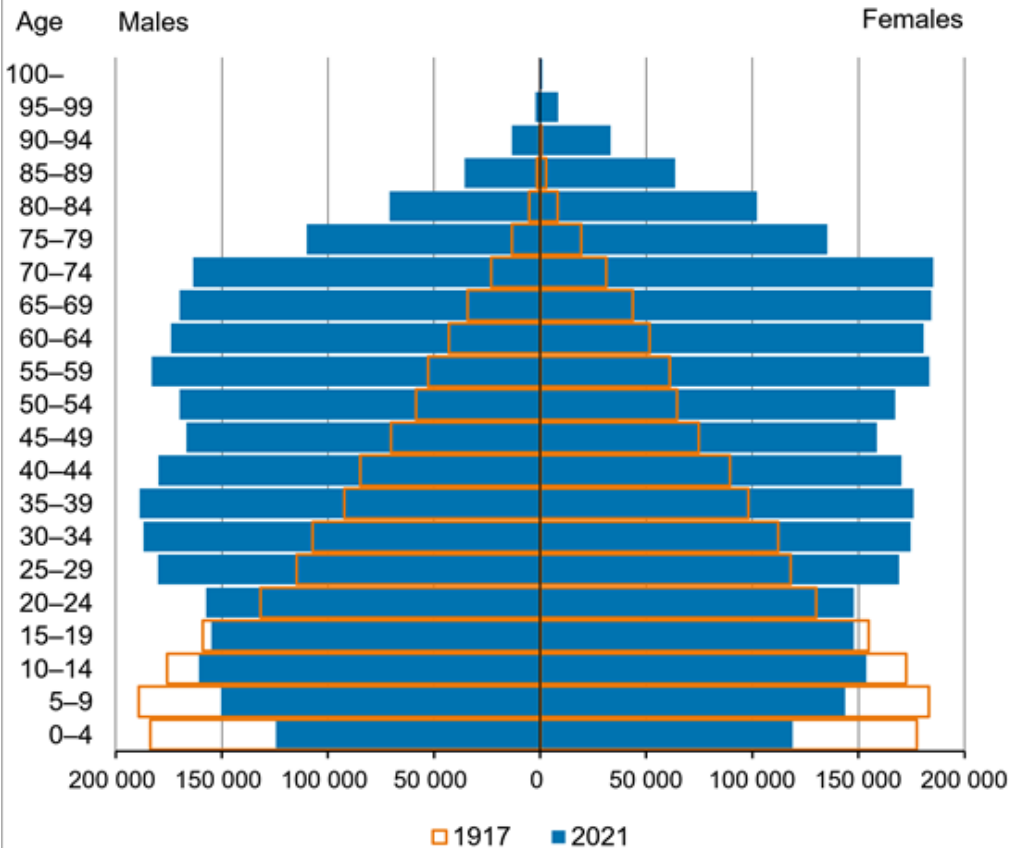
Women Life
expectancy
84,5 years

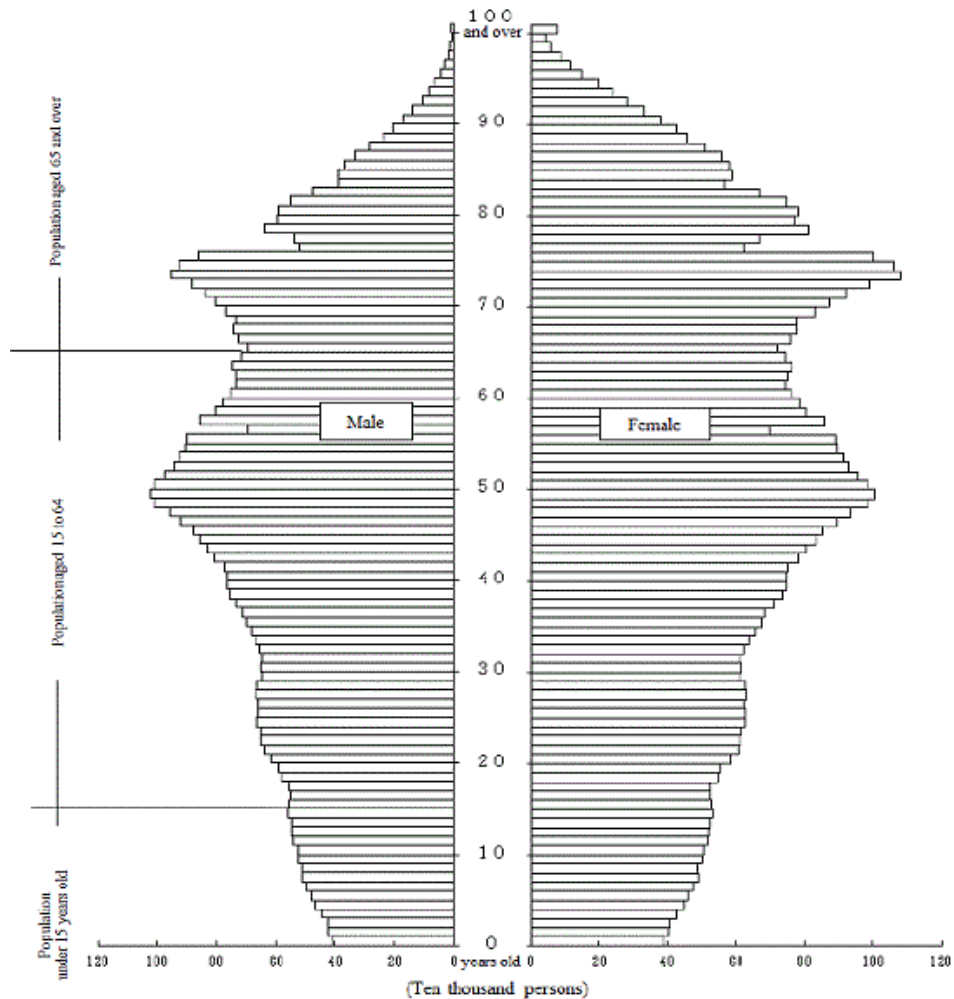
Men
Life expectancy
79,2 years

JAPAN total
population 124,4
mil, 65+ 29,1%

Women Life
expectancy
87,1 years

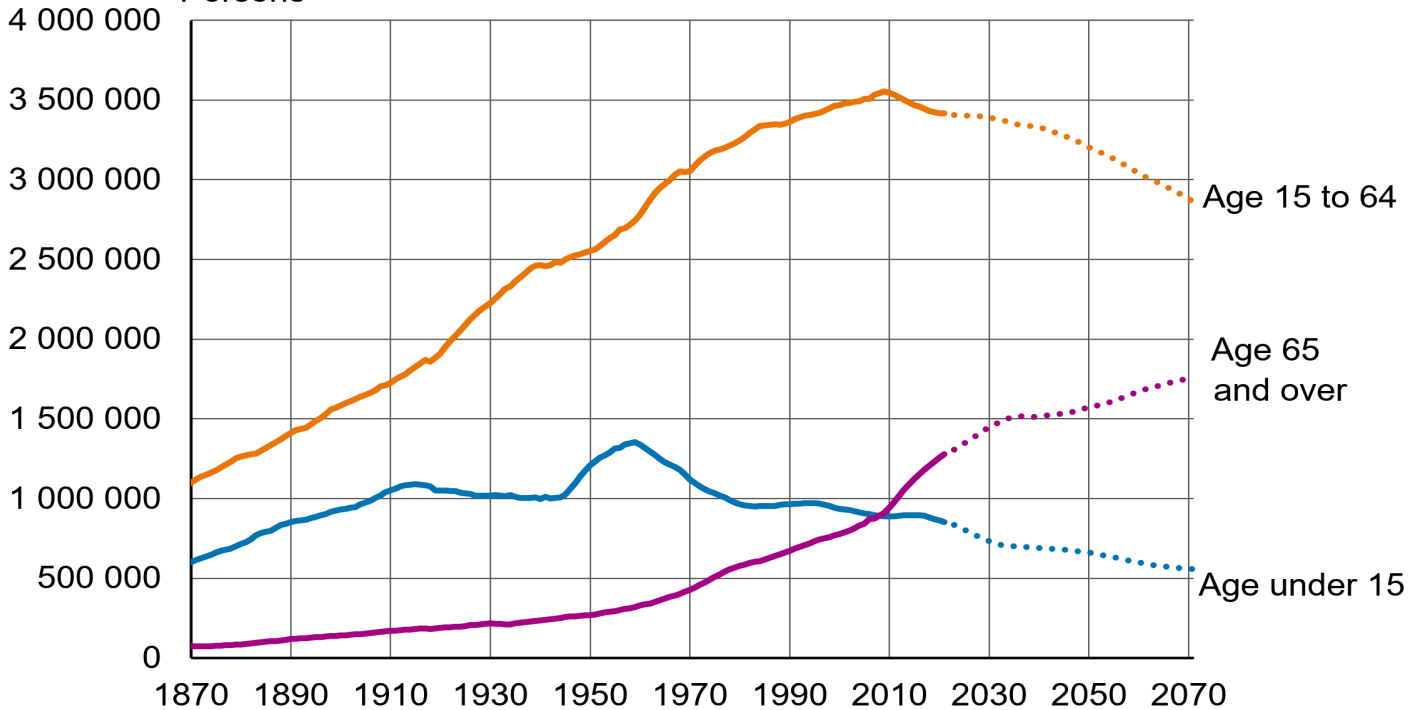
Men Life
expectancy
81,1 years





Population and population projection by age group

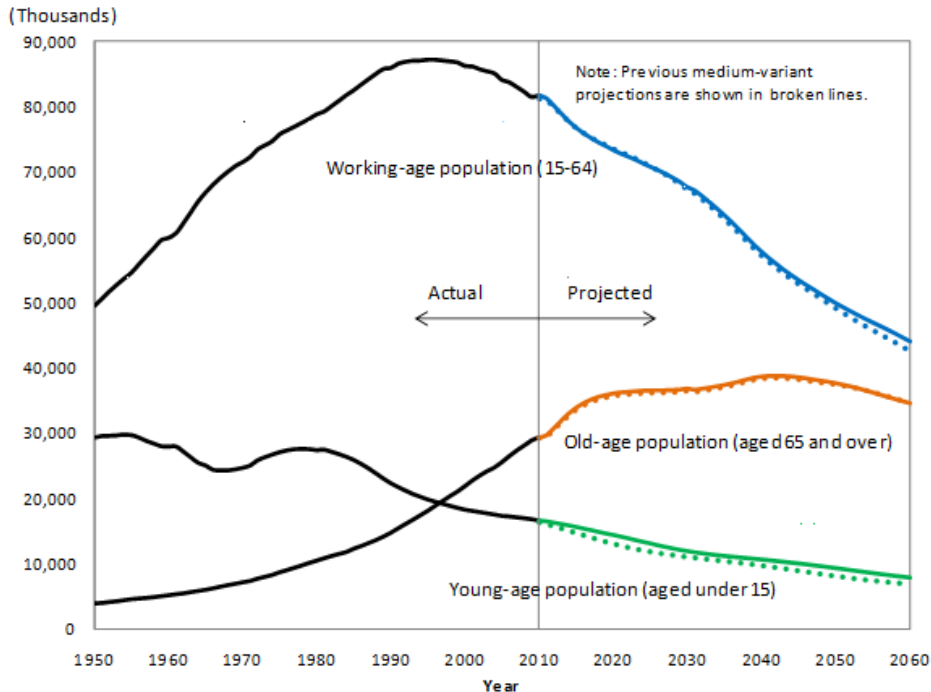
Persons



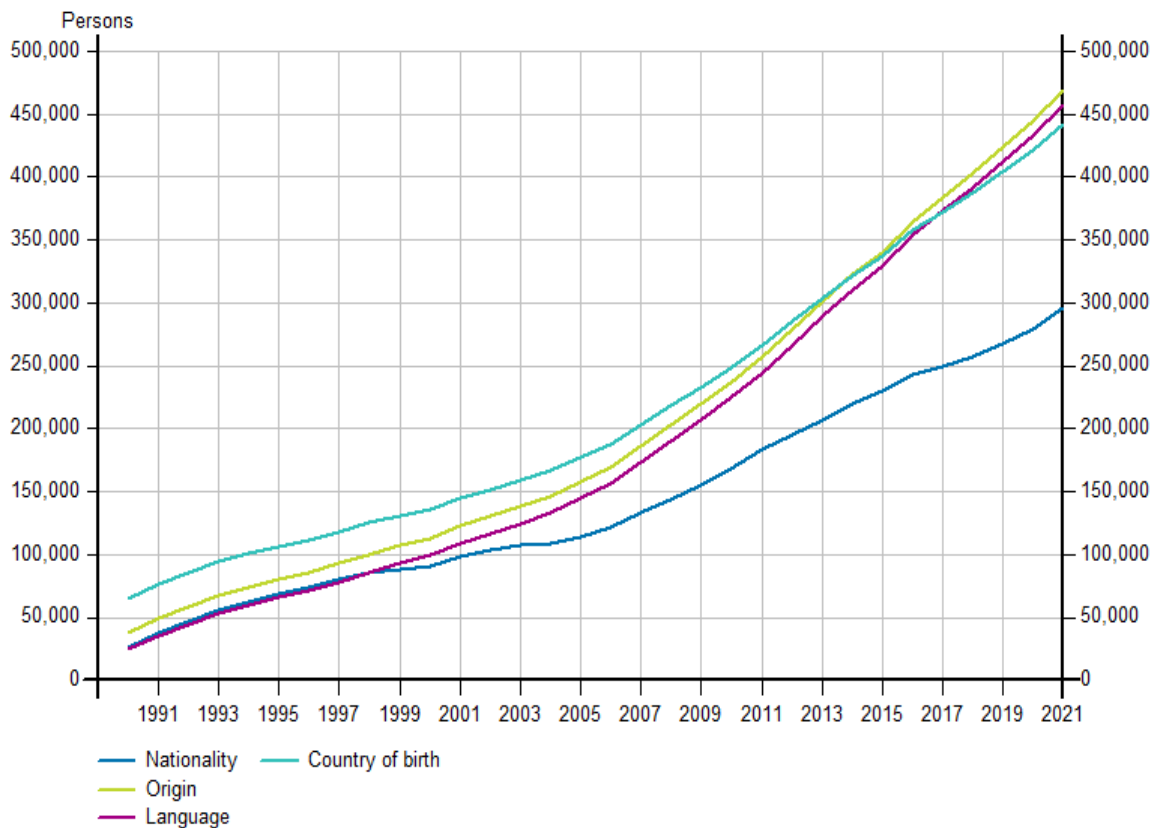
Population and population projection by age group in Japan



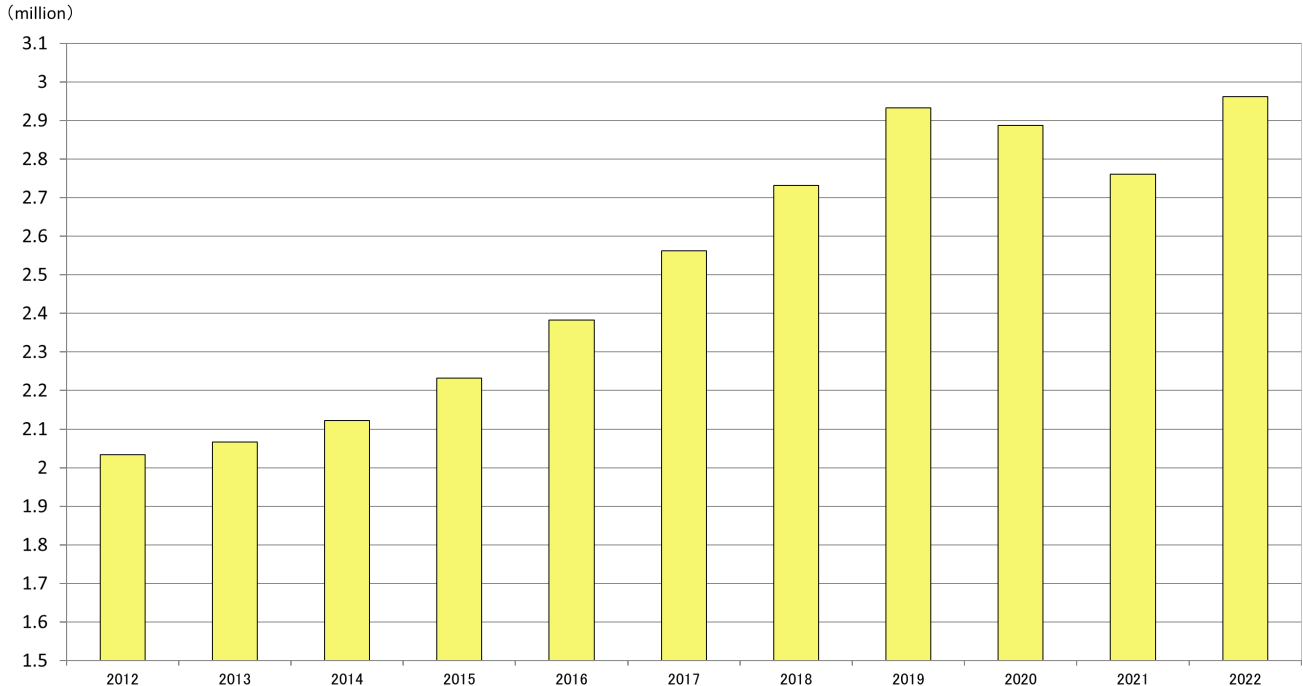
**Figure 1-3 Trends in the population of major three age groups:
Medium-fertility (medium-mortality) projections**



Foreign citizens, persons with foreign backgr., foreign-language speakers and persons born abroad 1990-2021



Foreign population in Japan 2012-2022





4. Health and social services in Finland and Japan

- **Same reasons:** Population is ageing rapidly there is a need for more services than previously. The decline in the birth rate will lead to a smaller number of working-age people and a reduction in tax revenue.

Establishment of 21 wellbeing services counties and reform of the organization of health, social and rescue services

- **Reducing inequalities** in health and wellbeing
 - **equal and quality** health, social and rescue services for all
 - To ensure the **equal availability of services** throughout Finland, improving the availability and accessibility of services, especially primary services
 - Ensuring the **availability of skilled labour**
 - Responding to the challenges of changes in society
 - Curbing the growth of costs, **focus on preventive services**
 - Improving security
-
- Finnish policy focus on promoting functional ability, independent living and active participation

Home and familycare for older people

- **Counties organise home care** (kotihoito) for the elderly, which entails day-to-day assistance and nursing at home. Home care encompasses home services, home nursing and support services. Home services are help with day-to-day activities, such as washing and dressing oneself and eating. Home nursing is nursing and rehabilitation that takes place at home. Support services include meal, cleaning, shopping, security and transport services.
- In 2021 there were 206 000 people who got homecare and 57% (117 102) got services regularly. 45 % (91 858) used a lot of services.

You can also get family care

- there are 51 600 people who get family care and 50 200 carers, mainly women
- Memory disorders are the reason for the family care
- 57 % out of those who get family care would otherwise be in intensive care in a servicehome

- Long-term care insurance system begins in 2000. Under this system, people over 40 years old pay premiums, and those who need long-term care services receive benefits.
- **2005 Emphasis on preventive care**, establishment of community comprehensive support centers in all areas of daily life, and development of community-based services led by municipalities.
- **2011 Development of community-based integrated care system** with the target year of 2025, when the baby boom generation will reach 75 years of age.

- Japan faces significant demographic challenges due to its rapidly aging population. The following challenges necessitate ongoing efforts to reform and improve the long-term care system.
- **Focus on Home and Community-Based Care:** Japan has emphasized the importance of home and community-based care to allow seniors to age in place rather than moving to institutional settings. However, over 50% of those with severe care needs are institutionalized.
- **Workforce Development:** Japan has been working to address shortages in the healthcare workforce, especially caregivers and nurses, to ensure that there are enough professionals to provide long-term care services.

- **Integration of Healthcare and LTC:** Japan has been working to integrate healthcare and long-term care services to provide more holistic care for elderly individuals with complex medical needs.
- **Promotion of Technology:** The Japanese government has been promoting the use of technology in long-term care to enhance the efficiency and quality of services. This includes the use of robotics and digital health solutions.
- **Public Awareness:** There has been a focus on raising public awareness about the importance of planning for long-term care needs and providing education to families and individuals about available services and options.
- **Regional Initiatives:** Japan has encouraged local governments to develop regional initiatives to address the unique long-term care needs of their communities.

- **Few service options in Depopulated Areas:** There are large disparities among areas in the number of options and amount of services that support the community life of the elderly.

Case Study: An old village in the northern Tohoku region. Population is 2,000 with an aging rate of 58%. The only home care services for the elderly are home help and short stay services, as well as a day service held once a week. There is a special nursing home for the elderly as a residential facility. There is a clinic, but no inpatient facility.

Professional's voice:

"The cost of transportation is increasing due to the scattered private homes. Due to the declining population, it is difficult to secure staff, and the staff is getting older. The number of users is also decreasing. There are significant management challenges, but it is important to continue to exist to protect services to the community."

- **Elder's voice:** 91-year-old male, lives alone as his wife is in a nursing home.

He drives 20 minutes each way by himself once a week to attend a local exercise class. *"If I don't move, I'll get sick"*. He does his own housework every day to maintain his health.

"There used to be a lot of people living around here, but now there are many empty houses. I would like to have a chance to meet people. Recently, I was asked to be the neighborhood association president, but I turned it down because I am 91 years old and cannot do it."

- **In depopulated areas it is necessary to create new ways to support the lives of the elderly. Use of new technologies may be effective for purposes such as communication, monitoring, transportation, and improving operational efficiency.**
- **Various issues in depopulated areas will become standard issues in many municipalities in 10 to 20 years.**



5. Digitalization, AI and ageing-opportunities

- The report by International Telecommunication Union addresses the two global megatrends that reinforce each other: the **emergence of digital technologies and ageing populations**, both of which are predicted to bring about important socio-economic changes worldwide.
- By mid 2022, **5.3 billion people** were online, **over 63 per cent** of the world population.
- **Over a third** of the world's people (2.7 billion) **do not use** the Internet.
- **Globally, in 2020, 76% of households in urban areas had access to the Internet at home, almost twice as much as in rural areas (39%)**
- **Digital literacy and inclusion are needed to ensure the potential enabling factor of ICTs.**

Digital inclusion refers to the ability of individuals and groups to access and use information and communication technologies regardless of their gender, age and location. To do so, digital inclusion requires the following basic elements: digital infrastructure, ICT accessibility and the adoption of technology

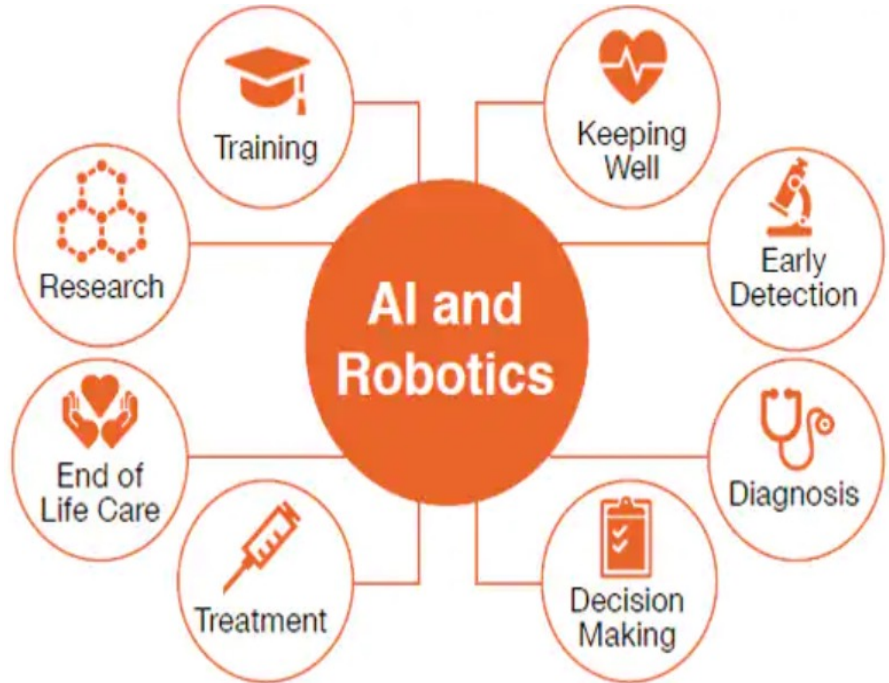
Digitalization and artificial intelligence in our everyday life

- How many cups of coffee you drink a day...



The potential for artificial intelligence in elderly care- opportunities

- AI is getting more and more sophisticated at doing what humans do. It is **efficient, quick, safe**. The potential for both AI and robotics in healthcare is huge.
- **Efficient:** helps healthcare to access, and analyze multiple types and modes of data to optimize disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment
- **Quick:** makes health monitoring for caregivers a snap
- **Safety:** by detecting falls
- More personalized care and health monitoring, smart home care promote independent living ([How AI Technology Can Improve the Lives of the Elderly](#) ([seniorhelpers.ca](#)))



Picture: [The State of Elderly Care Products and How AI Can Revolutionize Aging](#) | by Christopher Dossman | [Towards Data Science](#)

5. How to face the future-summary

Strengthen cooperation between medical care and social services

Develop and use of informal care resources

Social education for both service providers and user to rise common understanding about the care system

Depopulated area with high aging rates tends to lack services. Need to decrease the service gap

Attitudes against older people, not burdens and attitudes against dementia

Find and use the resources of older people

Strengthen intergenerational activities and let people to work as long as they want

See older people as a varied group with different lifestyles and desires

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=653438985366999>



LAU
REA



Thank you!
Kiitos!
Arigatoo!

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