Population aging in Mongolia, opportunities and challenges.

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Introduction:
All across Asia, the number of people age 65 and over is increasing and the population in this group is expected to grow dramatically over 2050. The ageing process is occurring much more rapidly than European countries. Also ageing is occurring more rapidly than economic growth and many countries in Asia will get old, before they get rich.

For about Mongolia, as in other Asian countries, the proportion of older adults (aged 60 years and over) in total population has been on the increase. At present older adults comprise 7 per cent of Mongolia’s population, but the per cent will be constituted nearly 25 by 2050. Today, only one in fourteen Mongolians aged 60 years and over, there will be one in four by 2050. This projected increase are explained by the rapid decline in the total fertility rate (from 7 % in 1975 to 2.3 % in 2000), improvements in life expectancy, population growth rate in the last quarter of the 20th century and increased survival rates to older people.

In Mongolia, population ageing has some features: (a) the proportion of ‘oldest old’ is projected to increase to 1.0 per cent in 2025 and 3.5 per cent in 2050. (b) ageing is particularly increased among the woman and the percentage of females in Mongolia’s older population is now 56 per cent, which is projected to be unchanged until 2050. (c) older population have usually lower income and 70 per cent of older persons received pension at the lowest rate and could therefore be living in poverty. In Mongolia, family is the main support base for older persons and more than 80 per cent of older persons live with their children and grandchildren. Traditionally, the adult offspring and other relatives provide supports for older persons, both marital and psychological support. But this support and social network is rapidly shrinking as a result of declining family sizes and increasing internal and external migration.

Conclusions:
Many countries in the world may not be able to afford the elderly population, especially the developing countries. Many developing countries need to develop or extend programs for the elderly, such as well-managed health care, pension, and welfare programs, financial systems, capital markets, and establish other necessary institutions. It is clear that developing policies and programs based on its own cultural traditions, economic capacity and social transitions in the society will be more efficient. Especially, in many developing countries in Asia, culture plays an important role in elder care. In the case of Mongolia, it would be more effective for promoting and implementing community and family centered methods and culture based home education programs for caring elderly. Intertwining culture, culture-oriented philosophy and empowerment in elder care can succeed in the main challenges of Asian ageing societies.