



AWARENESS

POPULATION IMPACT ON HEALTH

The Worldometer currently lists the population of the world at around 7.8 billion people. The global life expectancy has increased in recent years, setting the average life expectancy at 70 years. Projections expect this trend to continue, raising the average life expectancy to 77 years, by 2050.

The ability to treat infectious and non-communicable diseases more successfully is the reason for a growing elderly population, which has a massive impact on the ability of the population to maintain the support ratio, according to World Population Review.

A study on the implications of population change, shows that the ageing population will place a strain on health services and a need for more planning to accommodate those seeking long term care facilities. In developing countries though, the burden will be on natural resources and volumes of food production, as well as providing pensions for those no longer able to work.

World Population Day, on July 11th, aims to focus the world's attention on the importance of population issues. Inspiration for this day came from the "Five Billion Day", on July 11th, 1987, when the world's population reached five billion. In a well-supported commentary on Population Matters, authors Robin Maynard and Frank Götmark call for a more radical approach to the population problem.

They don't think the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals are achievable without an additional SDG to dampen population growth.

Funding for voluntary, rights-based family planning, they believe, would reduce the number of births rapidly, as well as empowering women and spurring economic progress.

"Wider awareness of the linkage between family size and ecological sustainability can help parents recognize the benefits of having fewer children."

The UN's World Population Prospects report states that the global fertility rate is continuing to decrease, which in developing regions, had led to a proportionally greater working age population, boosting economic growth.

Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, though, still have high fertility rates with an average of 4.6 children per woman. The population in this region is expected to double by 2050.

World Population Day serves to highlight the problems of overpopulation, while raising awareness of the importance of family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal health, and human rights.