

Editorial

Marvin Formosa¹

Welcome to the second issue of the *International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries*. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since the publication of the first issue. The NGO Committee on Ageing in New York - in partnership with the Permanent Mission of the Argentine Republic and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Focal Point on Ageing - organised an event to commemorate the United Nations International Day of Older Persons at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 6 October 2016 on the theme 'Take a stand against ageism'. The event drew attention to and challenged negative stereotypes and misconceptions about older persons and ageing. More recently, the seventh working session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 12 to 15 December 2016. Finally, it is noteworthy that in a comprehensive report (A/HRC/33/44) the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Ms. Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, assessed the implementation of existing international instruments with regard to older persons while identifying best and good practices and gaps in the implementation of existing laws related to the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons. The report was transmitted to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-third session in September 2016, and was issued in all six official languages of the United Nations.

The International Institute on Ageing has also been keeping a busy, thanks to funds from the United Nations Population Fund. In the second half of the past year, in-situ missions were organised in Nigeria, Malaysia, Philippines, Belarus, Kenya, and China (Nanjing and Wenling). In the same interim, INIA organised for the seventh year running an international training programme in Policy Formulation, Planning, Implementation and Monitoring of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, as well as planning another manuscript publication on ageing issues in Turkey, and receiving, reviewing and producing articles for this second issue of its landmark journal.

Issue 2 of the *International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries* contains six original entries and two book reviews - namely, *A study of pastoral care of the elderly in Africa: An interdisciplinary approach with focus on Ghana* (Ayete-Nyampong, 2014) reviewed by Emem Omokaro, and *The new age of ageing: How society needs to change* (Lodge, Carnell, & Coleman, 2016) reviewed by Mario Garrett.

¹ International Institute on Ageing (United Nations - Malta) (INIA) (marvin.formosa@inia.org.mt)

Department of Gerontology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, University of Malta (marvin.formosa@um.edu.mt)

The first contribution, by Friday Asiazobor Eboiyehi and Akanni Ibukun Akinyemi, is titled 'We are strangers in our homes: Older widows and property inheritance among the Esan of South-South Nigeria'. This article examines the plight of older widows as it relates to property inheritance among the Esan of South-South Nigeria. The paper identifies the challenges associated with bereavement among widows particularly on property and assets bequeathed from their late spouse and the strategies they employed to cope with the identified challenges. This was conducted with the aim of raising discourses towards addressing the social-cultural issues affecting the survival of the widows. Data for the study were purposively collected from respondents in two local government areas - namely, Esan Central and Esan West - with the aid of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. It concludes that socio-cultural practices attributed to inheritance among widows escalates their predicaments among the Esan people. The policy implication is for actions geared towards correcting these oppressive actions towards the widows through the instruments of social institutions and legal framework.

The second contribution, by Le Duc Dung and Gian Thanh long, is titled 'Gender differences in prevalence and associated factors of multi-morbidity among older persons in Vietnam'. This paper examines the prevalence and the determining factors of multi-morbidity among older men and women in Vietnam. Data for this study was utilised from a nationally representative survey - that is, the Vietnam Ageing Survey in 2011. The study sample was restricted to older people (those aged 60 and over). Multi-morbidity was defined as having at least two presences of chronic diseases. Bivariate, t-test, and multivariable logistic regression analyses were applied to identify potential factors correlated with multi-morbidity among older men and women. The results showed that around 44 per cent of older persons reported having multi-morbidity, in which a higher prevalence was found in women (49.4 per cent than men (36.7 per cent). The results of multivariate analysis indicated that factors associated with multi-morbidity were found to vary by gender, in which advanced age and living alone were the strongest predictive variables in both genders.

The third contribution, by Charles Scerri, is titled 'Malta's strategic vision for a National Dementia Policy'. This article highlights how Malta is experiencing a demographic transition characterised by an increase in the old age population, especially in the 75-cohort. WAS Scerri underlines, this will pose significant societal demands as most dementia care is provided informally by family members living in the community. Furthermore, local research studies have shown that there is considerable lack of awareness and professional training that is seriously undermining timely diagnosis and management. As a result, Malta opted to take a holistic approach towards dementia care by embarking on a long-term strategy focusing on increasing awareness, providing the best services leading to high quality dementia care, and fostering dementia training to healthcare professionals in order to be better equipped to support individuals with dementia.

The fourth contribution, by Pia Jolliffe, is titled 'Intergenerational relations and rural development among the Karen in northern Thailand. This scholarly article provides a qualitative analysis of how rural development - in particular changing modes of production

and learning - shapes inter-generational relationships among the Karen people in northern Thailand. Based on long-term ethnographic research with the Karen, the author argues that inter-generational relations and household inter-dependency give meaning to ethnic Karen peoples' aspirations for work and family life. The author explains how traditionally, during childhood transitions, Karen adults guide children and young people towards mastery of culturally relevant skills and technologies and discuss how social transformations and rural development in the last decades have led to major changes in Karen household economies and inter-generational relationships.

The fifth contribution, by Nidhi Gupta, is titled *Development, elder abuse and quality of life: Older women in urban India*. The authors argues that often the concept 'development' is simplistically equated to economic growth. However, philosophically it has a deeper meaning that points towards improvement of humankind. The implicit meaning entailed in 'improvement of mankind' is 'increasing the lifespan' as well as 'quality of life' of people. This paper highlights the types of abuse experienced by older women in an urban context in India, and its influence on various dimensions and overall quality of life of older women. The data from a cross-sectional survey conducted in Mumbai, India, has been used to meet the objectives of this study in addition to review from other empirical studies in Indian context. The findings show a high incidence of elder abuse and family members being the main perpetrators. Elder abuse had a significantly negative impact on all dimensions of quality of life of older women reflecting an urgent need for change in social attitude.

The final contribution, by Maryam Tajvar, Astrid Fletcher and Emily Grundy, is titled *Exploring associations between social support and mental health in older people: A systematic narrative review*. The purpose of this review is to summarize the current state of research on the topic. The authors undertook a systematic review to identify all review studies irrespective of date, and new primary research studies published since 2007 that examined the associations between social support and mental health among older people. Overall, 24 citations (6 review and 18 original articles) met the inclusion criteria. The results for the 'main effect' model and the 'stress-buffering effect' model of the action of social support on health were summarised. Overall, the review studies provided moderate evidence that social support has a protective effect on mental health. Results from primary research studies lend some support to the hypothesis of a protective main effect of support, but are far from conclusive.

As in the first issue, all six articles, which come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and use a variety of models and concepts, are prime examples of research and/or scholarship. I trust that you will find them intellectually stimulated and welcome additions to your library.

Marvin Formosa

Editor-in-Chief

International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries