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Healthspan barometer: evaluating public perspectives on healthy ageing in Singapore



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Foreword



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With rising longevity, understanding healthspan—the years lived in good health—becomes crucial. As a leading life insurer, we aim to be a trusted health partner, supporting people in their wellness journeys. Moreover, we also play an important role in encouraging our customers and the community to adopt healthier lifestyles.

This starts with commitment to understanding what impacts and influences people's well-being. To better support individuals in leading longer and more fulfilling lives, we commissioned Economist Impact to undertake a study to understand the perceptions surrounding healthspan among Singapore residents.

In *Healthspan barometer: evaluating public perspectives on healthy ageing in Singapore*, we explore the outlook of healthspan in the country with emphasis on the interconnectedness of individual resilience, financial planning, and social structures in fostering a supportive environment for healthy ageing.

It is heartening to see a strong public awareness of the need for ageing well - a dialogue on healthy longevity that we have sparked since 2018 with our *Ready for 100* and *Fulfilling Futures* series of research by Economist Impact. At the same time, the healthspan barometer reveals anxieties about healthy ageing, especially amongst Gen Z. This concern underscores the importance of taking action early to ensure we enjoy our older years.

The pursuit of better health is a collective responsibility. We hope that the insights shared will be useful to all stakeholders within the health ecosystem, as we navigate the complexities of ageing in our society. Together, we can all take proactive steps to narrow the gap between healthspan and lifespan for a healthier Singapore.

Contents

- 4** About this report
- 5** Executive summary
- 7** Healthspan perceptions
- 12** Individual resilience: physical and mental health
- 16** Financial planning: saving for a rainy day
- 20** Social structures: supportive networks and environments
- 22** Encouraging greater uptake of existing programmes
- 24** Next steps
- 25** Appendix
- 26** References

About this report

Healthspan barometer: evaluating public perspectives on healthy ageing in Singapore is an Economist Impact report, sponsored by Prudential. It explores how people in Singapore gauge their prospects for living a healthy, long life. The analysis is based on a survey of 1,014 residents of the country conducted in July and August 2024.

The respondents range from 20 to 70 years of age and are evenly split between males and females. They also include people across different income brackets and employment statuses.

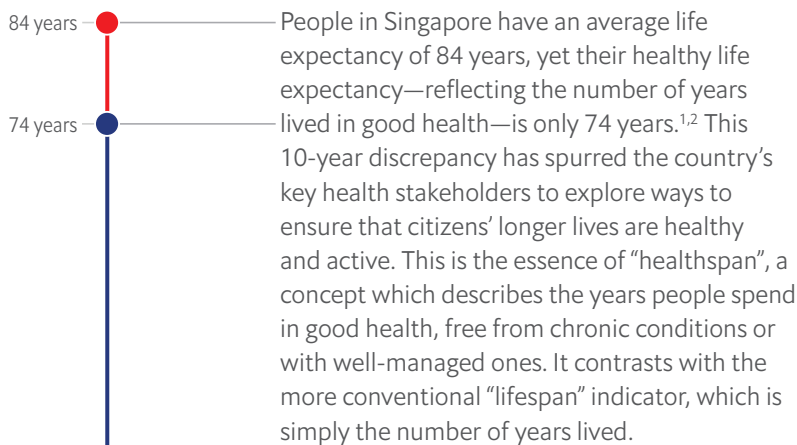
Additional insights were obtained from in-depth interviews with subject matter experts. We thank the following individuals for their time and insights:

- **Brian Kennedy**, distinguished professor of biochemistry and physiology, National University of Singapore (NUS)
- **Wai Mun Lim**, founder and chief executive officer, Doctor Anywhere
- **Kenneth Mak**, director-general of health, Ministry of Health (MOH)
- **Andrea Maier**, Oon Chiew Seng professor in medicine, healthy ageing and dementia research, National University of Singapore (NUS)
- **Weng Mooi Tan**, head (Integrated Health Promotion) director, Ministry of Health Office for Healthcare Transformation (MOHT)

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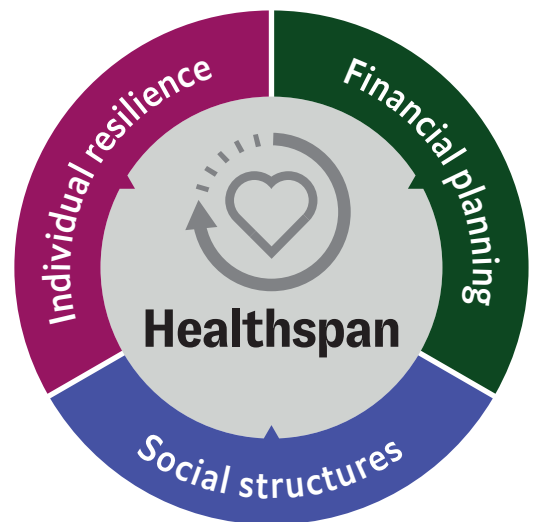
Executive summary



Our barometer, based on a survey of over 1,000 residents of Singapore, assesses the enablers of increasing healthspan in the country. It groups healthspan enablers into three pillars: individual resilience, financial planning and social structures.

The first pillar encompasses facilitators of physical and mental health, while the second and third look at the wider determinants of healthy ageing, including people’s financial means to support future healthcare needs as well as the social, digital and built environments that they live in. The barometer also considers people’s adoption of the numerous healthy living initiatives launched by the government and their use of technology to manage their health.

Figure 1: Three pillars enabling healthspan



Source: Economist Impact 2024
Graphic insight: Economist Impact

The barometer provides a window into the health practices of Singapore residents and our survey respondents’ self-assessed prospects for a healthy, long life. The research points to a growing public awareness of what is needed to support such longevity, but also documents well-founded concerns about the obstacles to realising it.

The main findings of this research include:

Anxious ageing. Despite reporting good health today, most respondents lack confidence in their ability to preserve physical and mental independence in their old age. Confidence is also low in their ability to finance old age healthcare needs. At the same time, the experts we interviewed see growing interest from people in living healthier and planning better for the future.

Gen Z’s distinctive concerns. In several respects, the youngest respondents in our survey (born between 1997 and 2006) exhibit more concern about their prospects for healthy ageing than their elders. The largest contributor is worries about mental/emotional health decline, including the prospect of isolation in old age. They are also the least confident about maintaining their physical health over time.

Financing friction. The respondents have major concerns over the possibility of depleting savings due to unexpected health issues. Most rely on cash savings, along with their Central Provident Fund (CPF), to cover future healthcare needs. Yet less than half are actively accumulating savings today for this purpose. A greater uptake of health insurance could fill this gap.

The growing relevance of social structures. In the survey, personal health and financial security are the primary factors shaping perceptions of healthy ageing, while social structures seem to be less influential. The government, however, has placed a focus in some of its recent health initiatives on community and physical environment contributors to healthy ageing. Many respondents indeed value aspects of the built environment as being beneficial to their health, such as free fitness facilities, parks and accessible public transport.

Gaps between awareness and adoption. People’s awareness of the government’s numerous health initiatives is generally high, but in some cases it is not accompanied by wide scale adoption. The challenge for health stakeholders is to find ways of increasing people’s motivation to start using these programmes and to stick with them.

In addition to the barometer, which identified discrepancies between awareness and adoption of healthy ageing initiatives, the expert opinions we gathered further point to four main areas where the government could lead efforts and work with the private sector and individuals to reduce these gaps:

CALL TO ACTION

1) Financial health literacy

- Improve financial knowledge among Singapore residents
- Focus on saving for future healthcare needs
- Start instilling healthy living practices at an early age, such as in schools

2) Private sector partnerships

- Leverage businesses’ resources, knowledge and expertise
- Expand reach and support of healthy ageing programmes

3) Community involvement

- Strengthen social structure for healthy ageing with the support of civic organisations
- Tap into peer networks

4) Programme customisation

- Tailor healthy living initiatives to people’s unique needs
- Align healthy living programmes with people’s real motivations

Healthspan perceptions

There is little consensus among experts on the precise definition of healthspan, but most agree on its fundamental concept: the period of one's life spent in relatively good health, in which chronic illnesses and age-related disabilities are non-existent.^{2,3} For this research, healthspan also includes reasonably well-managed chronic illnesses—we assert that there is more to healthspan than one's physical condition. Mental and emotional health, for example, are intrinsic to overall health. The capacity to finance healthcare needs, the social and physical environments in which people live, and other support mechanisms are enablers of healthspan. "Many people in Singapore think of health as mainly a person's physical condition," says Weng Mooi Tan, head and director of the integrated health promotion programme at the Ministry of Health Office for Healthcare Transformation

(MOHT). "We need to start seeing this more holistically, without compartmentalising the different facets of health." This expanded definition provides the foundation of the healthspan barometer.

Our survey indicates that many Singapore residents make these connections. When asked to define what healthy ageing means to them by selecting up to three factors, the largest share say it is being physically active (43%), and 35% say it is being free from chronic disease and maintaining cognitive function. Around one quarter of respondents select financial security to support one's health needs (27%), as well as feeling emotionally balanced and content (25%) as one of their top three elements defining healthy ageing.



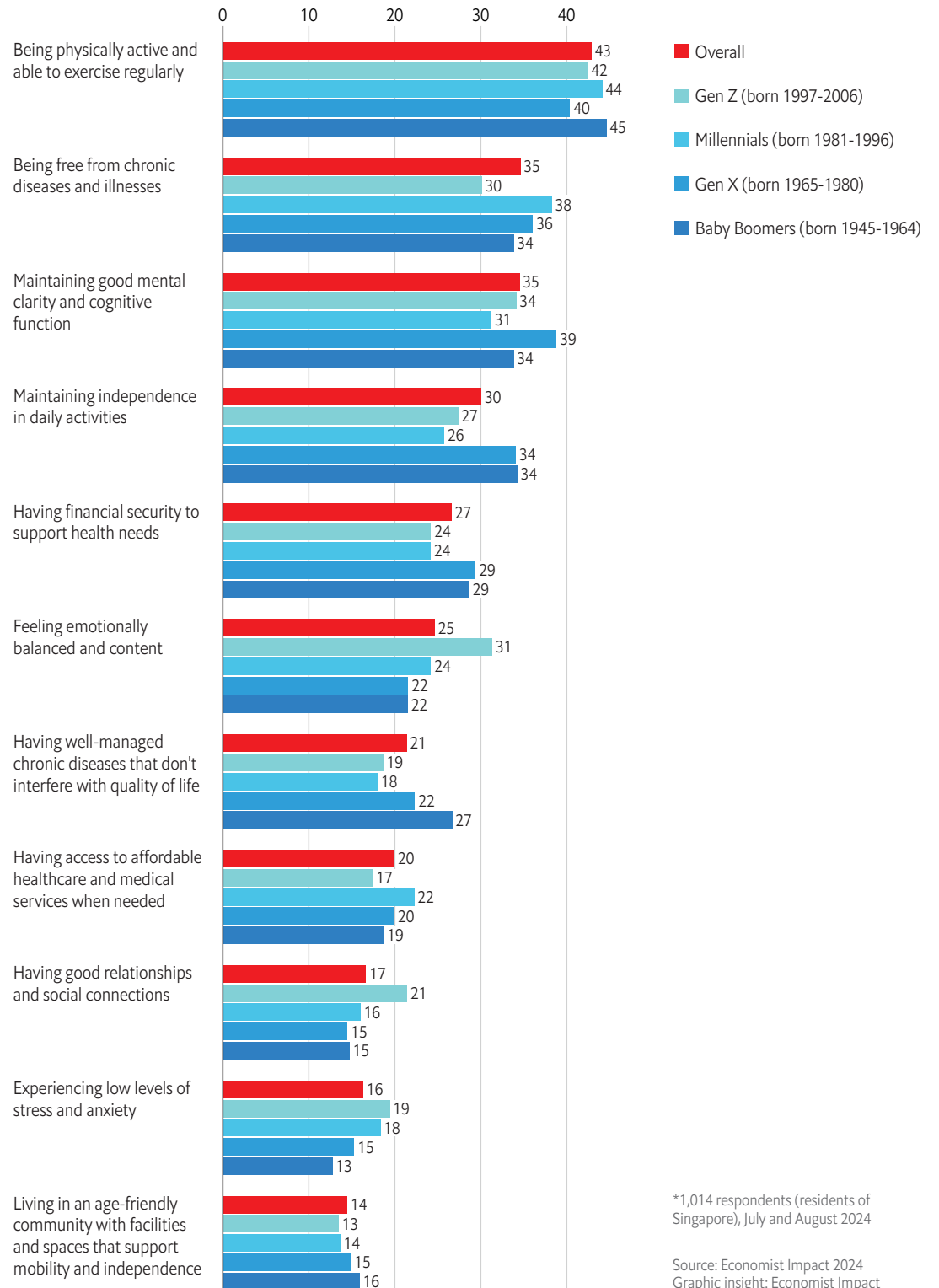
“Many people in Singapore think of health as mainly a person’s physical condition. We need to start seeing this more holistically, without compartmentalising the different facets of health.”

Weng Mooi Tan, head and director of the integrated health promotion programme at MOHT.

Figure 2: A rounded view of healthy ageing

What “healthy ageing” means to Singapore residents

% responding (respondents could select up to three). * Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



Considerably fewer respondents deem aspects of our social structures pillar, such as social connections (17%) and living in age-friendly physical environments (14%), as one of the top three contributing factors of healthy ageing.

The four generations represented in the survey differ to some extent in the emphasis they place on these different factors. For example, Baby Boomers, those closest to old age in our survey cohort, focus on having chronic diseases that are well-managed slightly more than others as a primary definition of healthy ageing.

Perhaps most noteworthy, however, is the considerably larger emphasis that Gen Z respondents place on emotional balance. This is one of several indications in the survey that this youngest age cohort is more acutely aware than others of the importance of mental and emotional health to one's overall health. As we will see, their fears of decline in this context are more pronounced than older respondents

in several respects. Wai Mun Lim, founder and chief executive officer, Doctor Anywhere, says, "Gen Z likely feels more anxious about ageing because they're not just thinking about living longer, but about how well they'll live as they age. They've grown up more aware of issues like mental health, wellness, and quality of life. With constant exposure to information about health risks, climate change, and societal challenges, they're more conscious of how these factors could impact their future."

According to Andrea Maier, Oon Chiew Seng professor in medicine, healthy ageing and dementia research at National University of Singapore (NUS), these differences reflect a significant shift in attitudes among young people about what's important in life, particularly since the pandemic. "They've recognised the effects of work-related stress on their health and realise the importance of maintaining a good work-life balance," she says.

“They [younger people] have recognised the effects of work-related stress on their health and realise the importance of maintaining a good work-life balance.”

Andrea Maier, Oon Chiew Seng professor in medicine, healthy ageing and dementia research, NUS.





Good health today but anxiety for the future

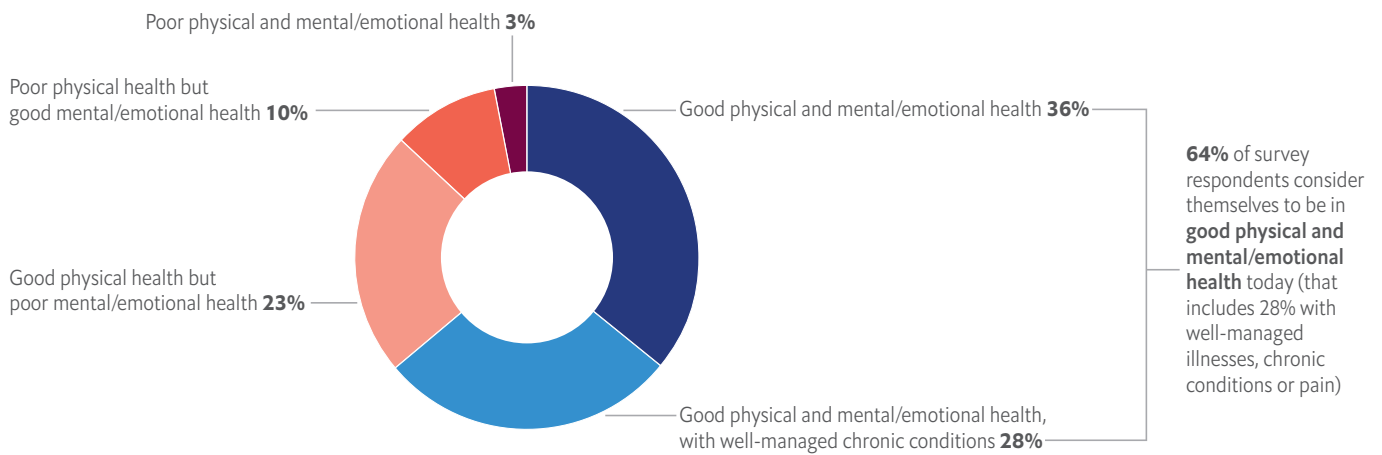
The majority of our survey respondents consider themselves to be in good physical and mental/emotional health today (64%). That includes 28% with well-managed illnesses, chronic

conditions or pain. Around one-quarter overall, though, say they suffer from poor mental/emotional health (23%).

Figure 3: Good health today

Respondents' self reported health status

% responding.* Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



Source: Economist Impact 2024
Graphic insight: Economist Impact

*1,014 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024

“People are afraid of living a long time and not being healthy for a lot of that time, and that’s why we need to **focus on healthspan, compress morbidity, and narrow that gap.**”

Brian Kennedy, distinguished professor of biochemistry and physiology, NUS.



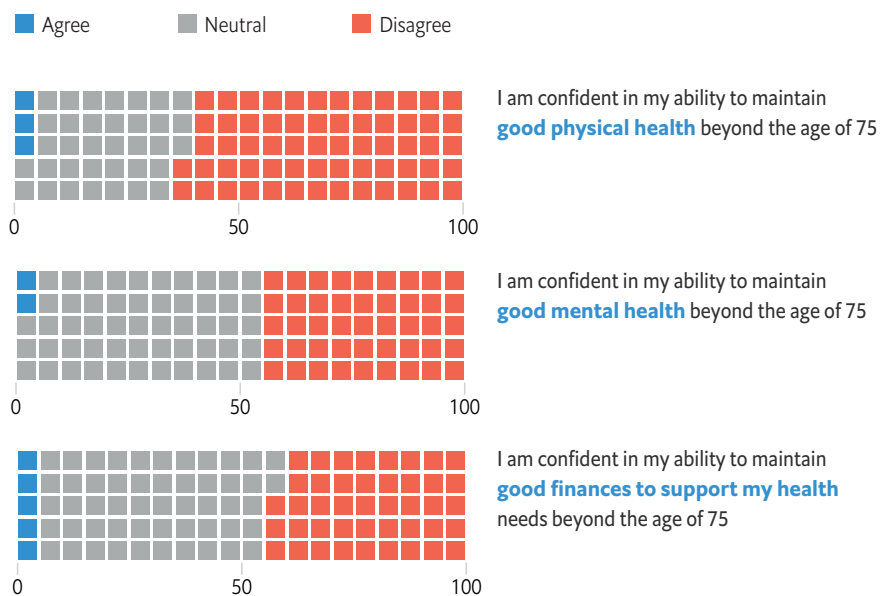
The respondents are decidedly less upbeat about the future. The majority (62%) are not confident they will be able to maintain good health in old age when it comes to their physical health, with Gen Z respondents being the least confident (68%). Nearly half of respondents also lack confidence about maintaining their mental health (45%) and the finances they’ll need to support healthcare needs in old age (43%).

“People naturally have fears about getting older, and these are no different in Singapore than elsewhere,” says Brian Kennedy, distinguished professor of biochemistry and physiology

at NUS. However, given the increase in life expectancy in the country in recent decades, people’s expression of these fears underscores concerns about a gap between lifespan (years lived) and healthspan (years lived in good health). That difference is currently a decade, with average life expectancy at 84 years and healthy life expectancy at just 74 years.^{1,2} “People are afraid of living a long time and not being healthy for a lot of that time, and that’s why we need to focus on healthspan, compress morbidity, and narrow that gap,” says Professor Kennedy.

Figure 4: Health anxieties for old age

Respondents’ confidence levels in their ability to maintain different aspects of health after age 75 % responding.* Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



Source: Economist Impact 2024
Graphic insight: Economist Impact

*1,014 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024

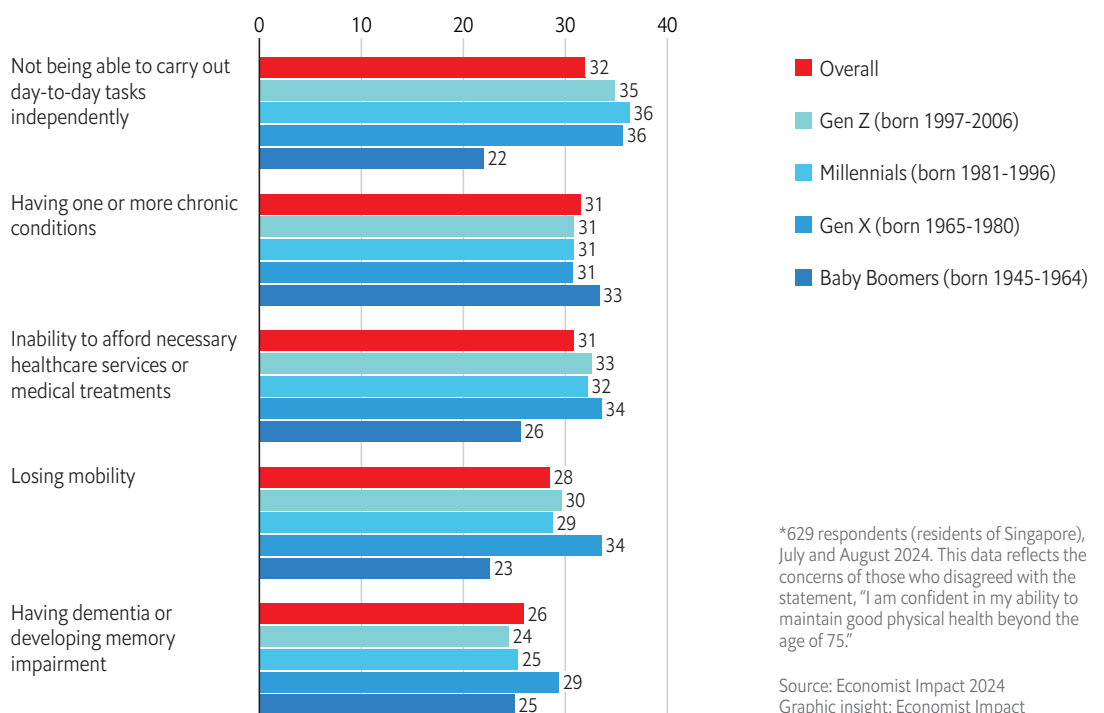
Individual resilience: physical and mental health

Our survey respondents express varied concerns about the prospects of maintaining physical health into old age. For Gen Z, high on the list is the concern of losing independence—being able to carry out day-to-day tasks without assistance. For Baby Boomers, having to deal with one or more chronic conditions, such as diabetes or

hypertension, is of great concern. A potential inability to afford needed medical services or treatments looms large as a concern for all the respondent age groups. This highlights the importance of financial planning to maintain physical health.

Figure 5: A variety of physical health concerns

Respondents' specific concerns about their ability to maintain physical health beyond age 75 (top responses)
 % responding (respondents could select up to three).^{*} Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



All health stakeholders in Singapore recognise that maintaining a healthy lifestyle over the years is the surest way of minimising the chances of contracting debilitating illnesses as one grows old. That is why government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Health (MOH), have launched several initiatives in the past decade that encourage residents to exercise regularly, eat healthily, and reduce or eliminate practices such as smoking and drinking alcohol (see page 22).

Annual MOH surveys suggest that these initiatives are bearing fruit, showing improvements over time in physical activity levels, for instance.⁴ “We’ve worked to try and provide infrastructure and physical environments that are conducive to healthy behaviours, such as exercise and sports,” says Kenneth Mak, director-general of health at the MOH. “The National Steps Challenge, for example, has been very successful in getting a majority of our citizens walking.” (The National Steps Challenge is a programme which uses wearables, a smartphone app and rewards to encourage walking, and which residents can sign up for at any point in time.⁵)

Our survey nevertheless shows that residents could be doing more to improve their health behaviours. For example, just around 31% of the respondents (25% among Gen Z) say that they participate in moderate or intense physical activity (such as brisk walking, cycling or swimming) more than twice per week. And 36% (47% among Gen Z) consume a 250ml serving of sugary drinks, equivalent to a standard pre-packaged packet drink, at least twice per week.

Both Professor Mak and Dr Tan acknowledge the need to continuously adapt their ministry’s approaches to healthy living initiatives. “It’s one thing to encourage individuals to exercise more,” says Professor Mak. “But a more far-ranging approach should involve getting peer networks to provide that encouragement.” Dr Tan agrees, citing the example of a community group for the

children and youth in one neighbourhood (Boon Lay). “We provided education and involved the children and teenagers in healthy eating habits. Based on that, one child started a healthy sandwich club, and many followed suit and joined the club.”

“It’s one thing to encourage individuals to exercise more. But a more far-ranging approach should involve getting peer networks to provide that encouragement.”

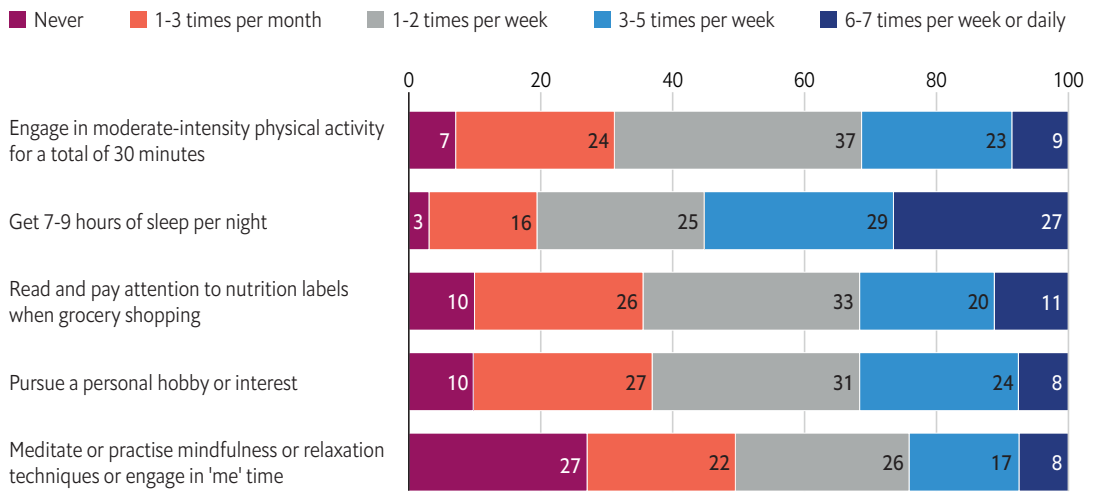
Kenneth Mak, director-general of health, MOH.



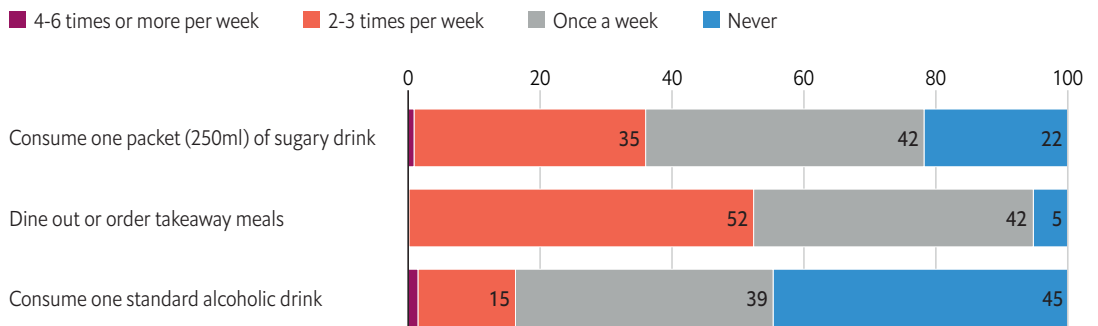
Figure 6: More exercise and better diet needed

Respondents' frequency of engaging in health-related behaviours
 % responding.* Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation

On average, how often do you currently engage in the following health-related behaviours?



On average, how often do you currently engage in the following behaviours?



Source: Economist Impact 2024
 Graphic insight: Economist Impact

*1,014 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024

Mindfulness matters

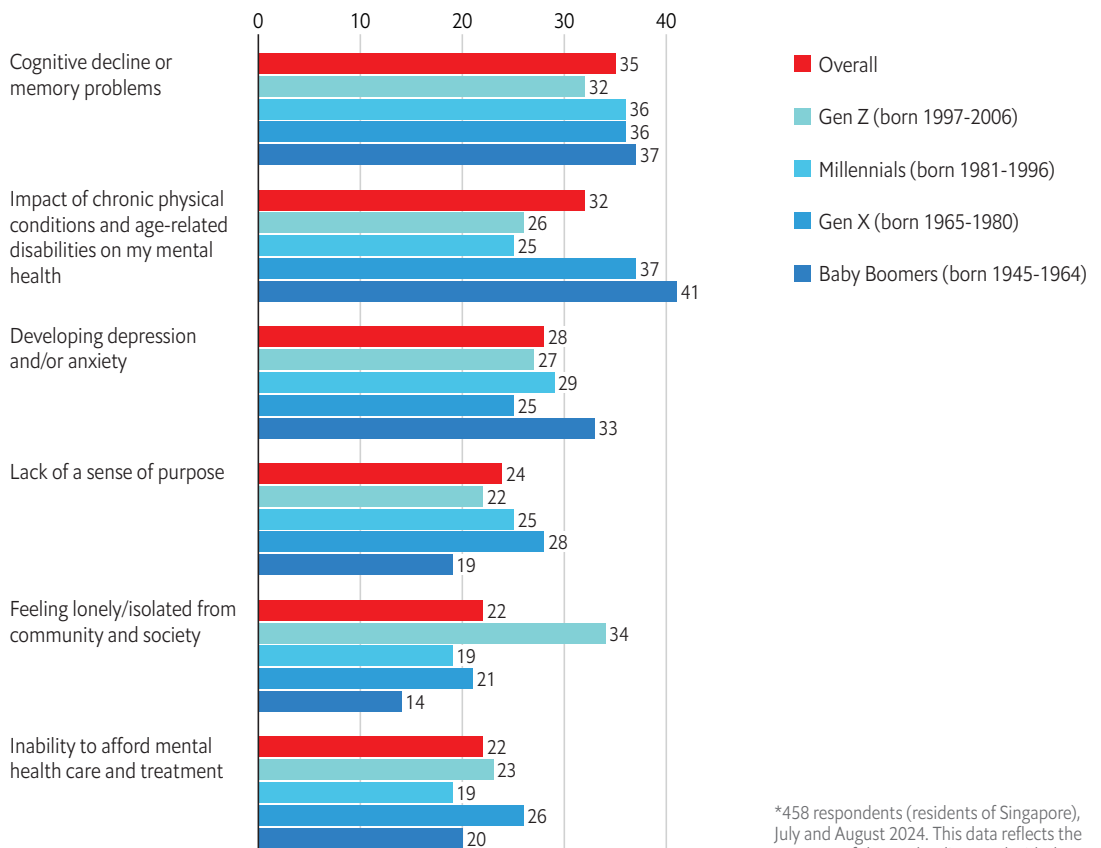
When it comes to maintaining mental health, all the respondents are primarily concerned about the potential onset of cognitive decline and memory problems. But the mental impact of having to deal with chronic physical conditions also weighs heavily, especially for Baby Boomers.

Engaging in activities conducive to maintaining mental and emotional health is reasonably common among the respondents. For example, 63% pursue a hobby or interest, and half practise meditation or another mindfulness technique, at least once per week.

The prospect of loneliness and isolation is a relatively minor concern for three of the four age groups in the survey. Interestingly, it is a concern raised much more strongly by Gen Z respondents. Professor Mak interprets this in a positive way: “Younger Singaporeans are more willing to articulate their mental health concerns than older generations and are thus more willing to seek help for them.”

Figure 7: A variety of mental health concerns

Respondents’ specific concerns about their ability to maintain good mental health beyond the age of 75 (top responses)
 % responding (respondents could select up to three). * Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



Source: Economist Impact 2024
 Graphic insight: Economist Impact

*458 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024. This data reflects the concerns of those who disagreed with the statement, “I am confident in my ability to maintain good mental health beyond the age of 75.”

Financial planning: saving for a rainy day



The financial pillar of our healthspan barometer focuses on people’s management of their personal finances to meet future healthcare needs, particularly in older age. Those needs may include covering the cost of care for long-term conditions, paying unexpected bills for medical emergencies and coverage of other types of healthcare expenses. Overall, the respondents’ confidence in their ability to fund healthcare in older age is low—43% respondents do not feel confident about their ability to

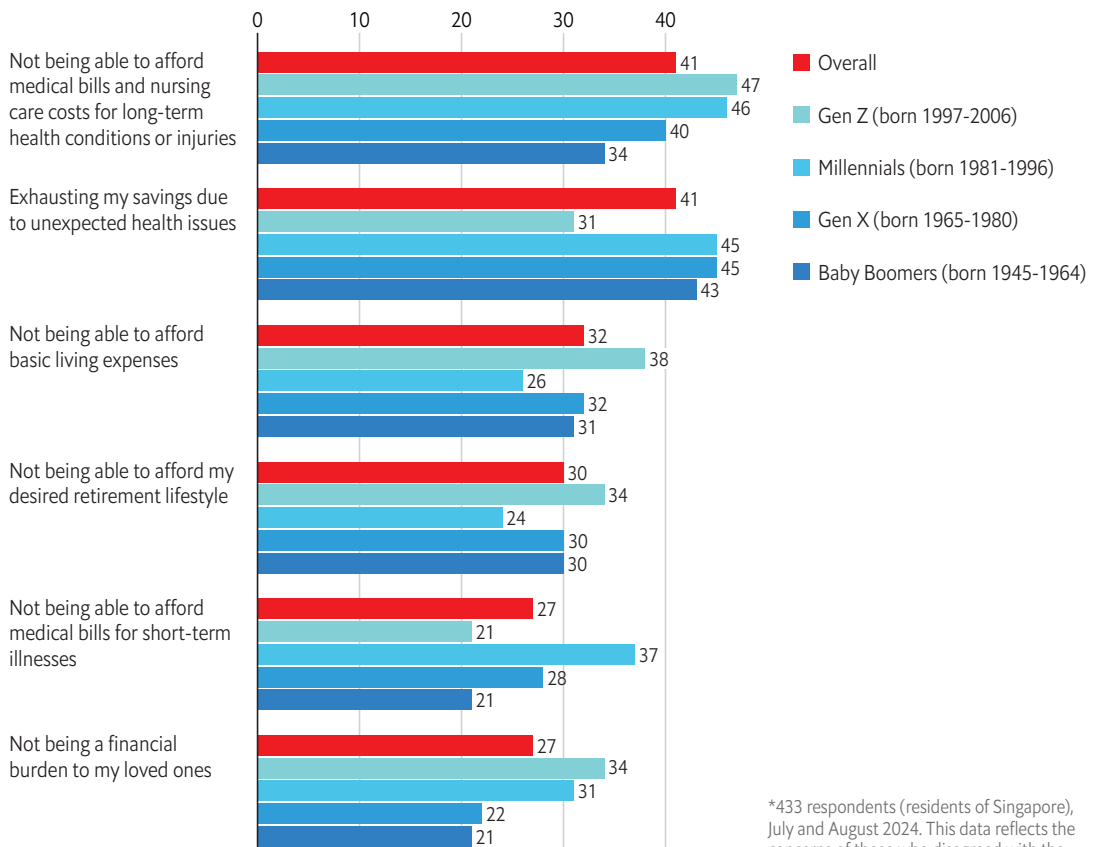
maintain good finances to support their health needs beyond age 75 (Figure 4).

Respondents have two major concerns in this area. 41% expressed concern about affording medical bills and nursing care costs for long-term health conditions or injuries. This worries Gen Z respondents more than other age groups. The same proportion of respondents (41%) were concerned about exhausting their savings to address unexpected health issues.

Figure 8: Worries about future funding gaps

Specific concerns of respondents who were not confident about their ability to maintain good finances to support their health needs beyond age 75 (top responses)

% responding (respondents could select up to three). * Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



Source: Economist Impact 2024
Graphic insight: Economist Impact

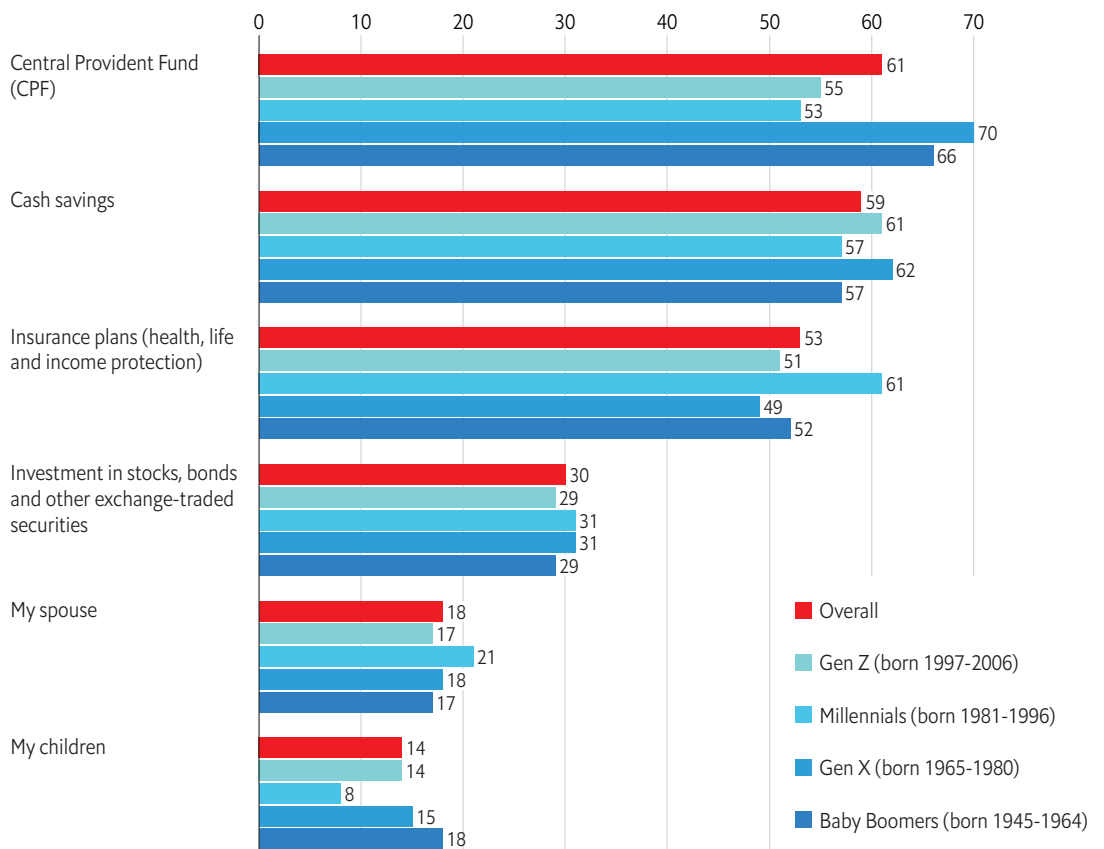
*433 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024. This data reflects the concerns of those who disagreed with the statement, “I am confident in my ability to maintain good finances to support my health needs beyond the age of 75.”

Overall, the respondents appear to be taking a fairly balanced approach to financial planning when thinking about their future healthcare needs. Figure 9 shows that 61% are planning to rely first and foremost on their CPF—a mandatory savings scheme designed to provide financial security for retirement, healthcare, and housing needs—to cover such expenses (70% among Gen X and 66% among Baby Boomers).⁶ Meanwhile 59% of respondents are relying on cash savings. And 53% look forward to having a health, life or other insurance plan to pay for future healthcare needs (61% among Millennials).

Figures 9 and 10 reveal a gap in one key area. In the latter, only 46% of respondents overall are actively accumulating savings to cover future health eventualities, which is considerably less than the 59% who in Figure 9 say they’ll be relying on cash savings for this purpose. This is a concern given the need to make out-of-pocket healthcare payments, especially for the outpatient care that is often required over the long term for chronic conditions.⁷ Indeed, experts stated that individuals should not rely solely on one source of finance (eg, savings or CPF) to meet future healthcare costs.

Figure 9: Health financing intentions tomorrow

What respondents plan to rely on most to financially support healthcare needs as they age
 % responding (respondents could select up to three). * Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation

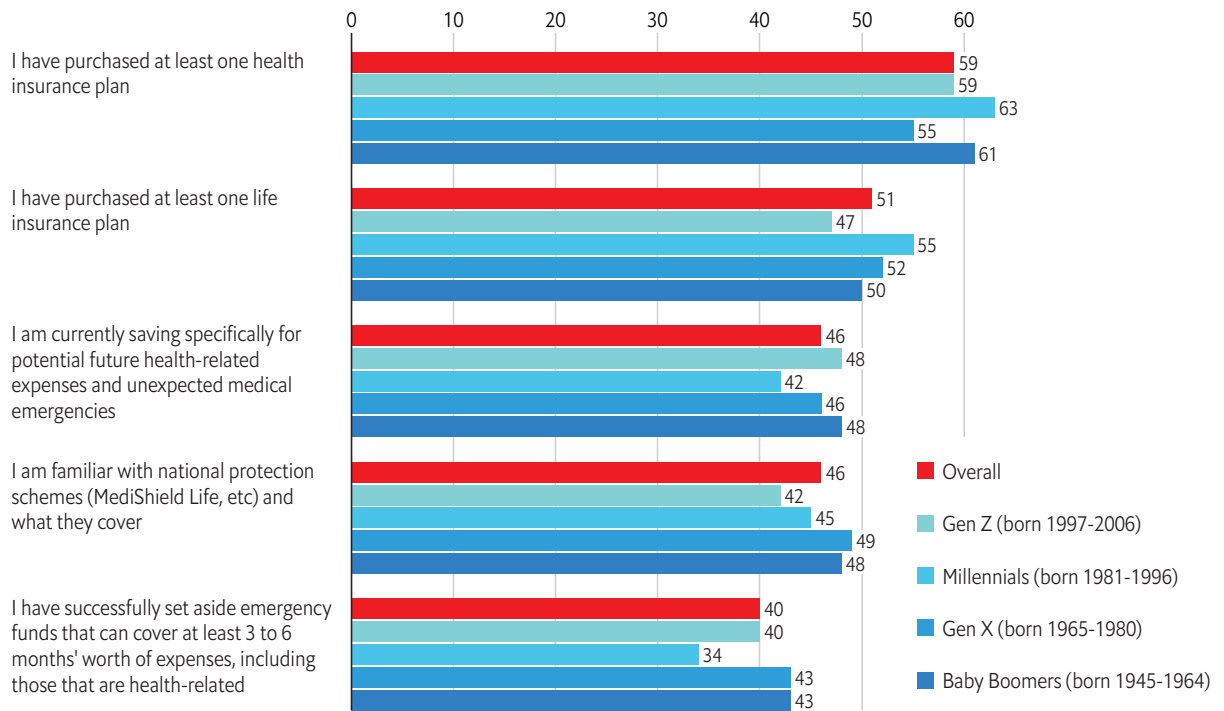


Source: Economist Impact 2024
 Graphic insight: Economist Impact

*1,014 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024

Figure 10: Health financing actions today

Statements that apply to respondents or that they agree with
% responding.* Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



Source: Economist Impact 2024
Graphic insight: Economist Impact

*1,014 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024

Financial literacy on the increase

All experts interviewed for this study agreed that Singaporeans have a better understanding today of how to plan for their financial future, including when it comes to their future healthcare needs. In this context, the experts believe that public and private sector efforts to boost financial literacy are bearing fruit, particularly among younger generations.

According to Dr Tan, such programmes need a sharper focus on “rainy day” planning to cover unexpected healthcare emergencies, but that people’s growing use of insurance as a

complement to CPF and cash funds is a sign of progress. Professor Kennedy agrees: “There’s a better awareness among all generations today of having insurance and using it,” he says.

Professor Mak underscores the need to develop financial literacy for health (and other) needs in people from a young age. “We [the government] must improve our methods of doing this,” he says. “It is not easy, but young people must be made to understand the importance of saving for the future.”

Social structures: supportive networks and environments

In some of its landmark health initiatives taken in recent years—notably Healthier SG launched in 2023, which stresses the importance of preventive health—the Singapore government has acknowledged the importance of community-based initiatives and social determinants of healthy ageing

“The **Active Ageing Centres (AACs)** should not just be places for respite care, where families bring their seniors when they’re not able to look after them. The AACs are doing a lot more organising and networking activities now, and the government is using them as a base for further outreach to help reduce seniors’ isolation.”

Kenneth Mak, director-general of health, MOH.



(see page 22).⁸ These are included in the healthspan barometer’s social structures pillar, which includes healthcare accessibility, age-friendly communities that support mobility and independence, clean and well-designed environments, good social connections, and access to health technology.

Although physical health dominates the respondents’ perceptions of what constitutes healthy ageing, many of them nonetheless view social structures as contributors to it. Asked about aspects of the built environment, for example, 32% say that free fitness facilities help them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The same percentage cite the benefits of green spaces, such as therapeutic gardens and neighbourhood parks. And 32% also highlight the health advantages of accessible public transport (emphasised particularly strongly by Gen X and Baby Boomers).

When it comes to facilities for seniors, Professor Mak says the government’s thinking is evolving as to what best supports healthier ageing and independence. This applies to its Active Ageing Centres (AACs), for example, “the role of which is expanding,” he says. “These should not just be places for respite care, where families bring their seniors when they’re not able to look after them. The AACs are doing a lot more organising and networking activities now, and the government is using them as a base for further outreach to help reduce seniors’ isolation.”

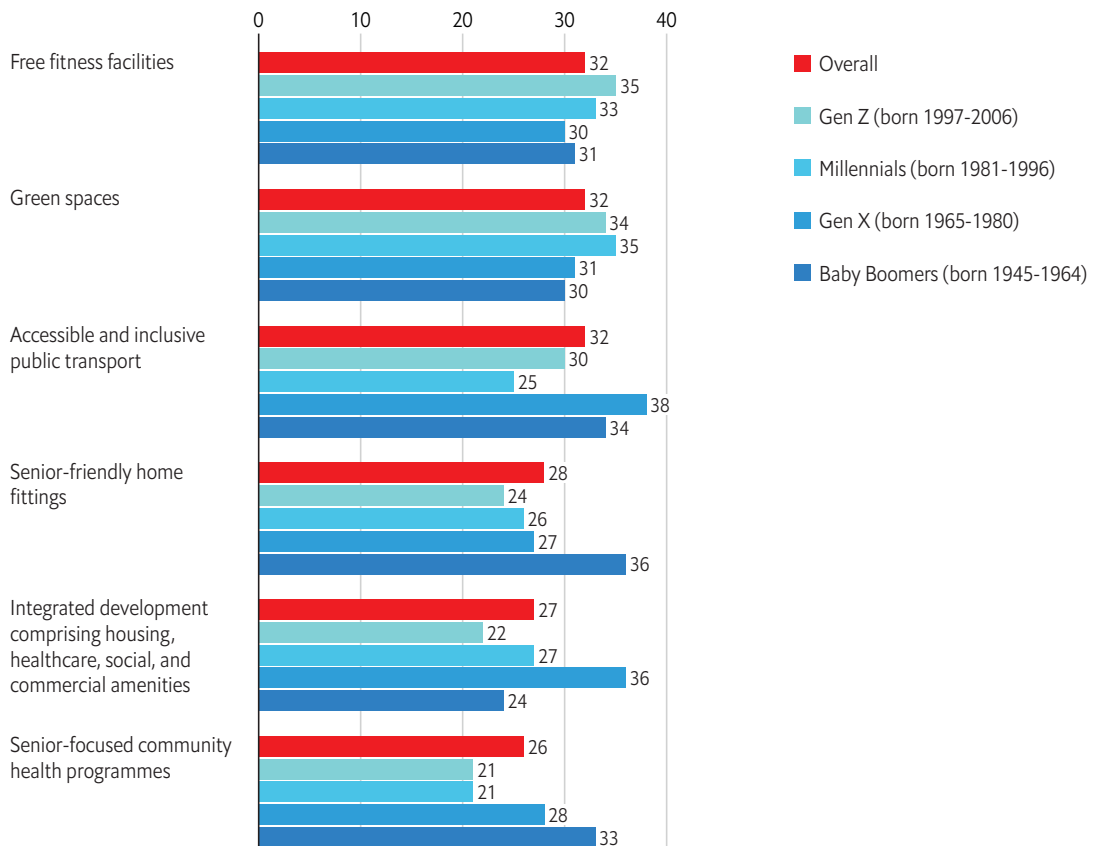
Dr Tan says that agencies such as hers, the Housing Development Board (HDB), the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and the National Parks Board (NParks) are also learning that greater localisation of healthy living initiatives is likely to result in greater adoption. “Parks and other green spaces aren’t so accessible when seniors have to walk up a hill to get there or don’t have covered walkways for protection,” she says. “With a localised approach, such as at the level of precincts rather than entire districts, we can better understand what drives people’s behaviour.”

Although few respondents deem health tech access to be vital to maintaining health as they age (compared with other factors), the majority appear to be making use of it. This is true, for example, of mobile health apps (62%), wearable trackers (60%) and telehealth services (54%). There are few differences in these responses among age groups. “We’re seeing more and more seniors being comfortable using smartphones, for example,” says Professor Mak. “That’s only going to increase as the generations progress.”

Figure 11: Components of an age-friendly environment

Aspects of the built environment that respondents find the most beneficial in helping them maintain a healthy lifestyle as they age (top responses)

% responding (respondents could select up to three). * Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



Source: Economist Impact 2024
Graphic insight: Economist Impact

*1,014 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024

Encouraging greater uptake of existing programmes

Singapore's government is among the world's most proactive in launching initiatives that help citizens to look after their health, who appear to be relatively receptive. In *Fulfilling Futures Asia*, published in 2022, 65% of respondents in Singapore found government policies and support helpful in enabling them to improve their physical health.⁹ Government incentives were also cited as the most key factor in helping them live a healthier lifestyle.

Many of these initiatives are preventive in nature, designed to encourage healthier living by people of all ages. They include the aforementioned Healthier SG and National

Steps Challenge, as well as the Enhanced Screen for Life programme, the Healthy 365 mobile app, and several others.^{5,8,10,11} Mr Lim says, "There's a positive cultural shift happening. While many still view healthcare as something to turn to only when they're unwell, I see more people moving toward a preventive approach, where tools like the Healthy 365 app are used regularly to stay healthy."

According to the survey responses, the government has done an effective job of building awareness of these programmes. For example, around 90% of the respondents claim awareness of the Healthy 365 app, the National

“Building on what’s already been done, sharing more personal stories—like how a busy professional manages fitness or how a parent uses the app for family health management—might make the experience more relatable. I think these **real-life connections** can help highlight the apps’ value and encourage deeper emotional engagement, leading to more regular use.”

Wai Mun Lim, founder and chief executive officer, Doctor Anywhere.



Steps Challenge and the HealthHub app. And between 50% and 60% say they are using these. In other cases, however, awareness has not yet translated into wide-scale uptake. Examples are MoneySense, of which 73% are aware but only 25% use, and Beyond the Label, with awareness among 62% but adoption by just 19% (Figure 12). In the case of Healthier SG, the gap could be explained by the programme’s relatively short existence, having been launched in mid-2023.

“Building on what’s already been done, sharing more personal stories—like how a busy professional manages fitness or how a parent uses the app for family health management—might make the experience more relatable. I think these real-life connections can help highlight the apps’ value and encourage deeper emotional engagement, leading to more regular use,” Mr Lim shares.

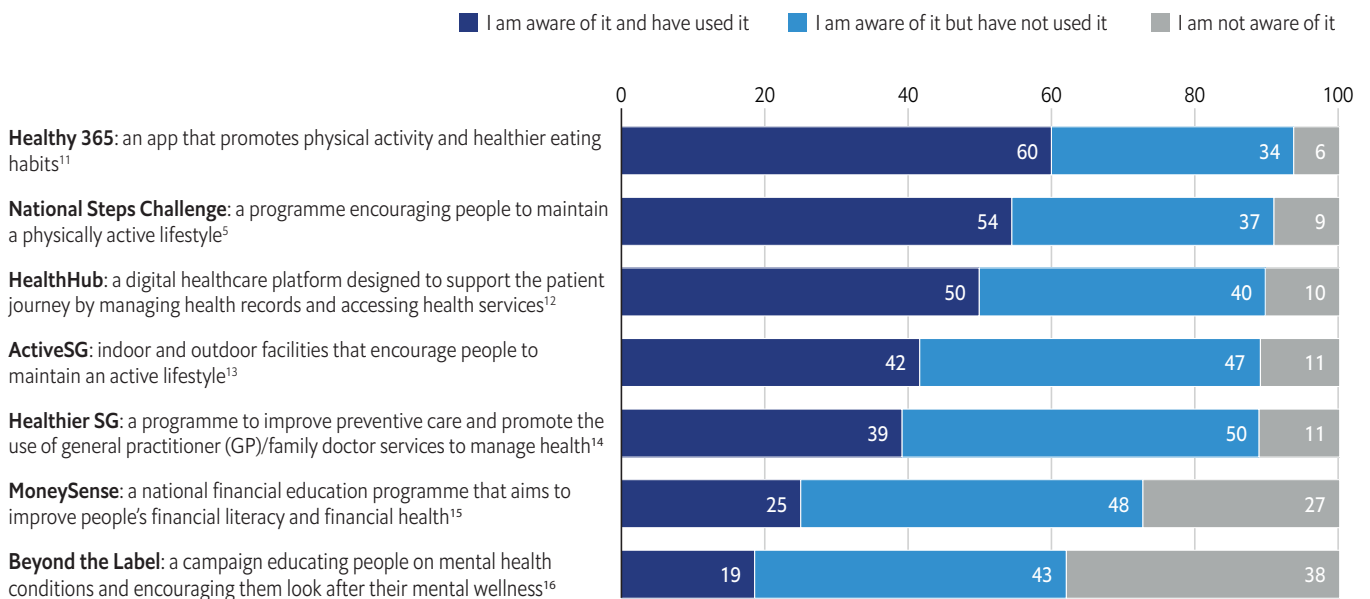
In the global context, Singapore is no exception to the existence of such gaps, says Professor Kennedy. “The challenge with all these initiatives is making them sustainable for people.”

According to Professor Mak: “The issue is that many people do not feel incentivised or motivated to access such support mechanisms.”

What can the government do to increase their adoption? For Dr Tan, part of the answer lies in greater customisation. “We are very good at mass approaches but not at customising them,” she says. “We need to dig deeper, to understand the different archetypes of people and based on that to take a differentiated approach to their needs. That will help us to better motivate people.”

Figure 12: Gaps between awareness and adoption

Respondents’ awareness and adoption of government health programmes (selected examples)
% responding.* Numbers have been rounded for ease of interpretation



Source: Economist Impact 2024
Graphic insight: Economist Impact

*1,014 respondents (residents of Singapore), July and August 2024

Next steps

Professor Kennedy, among others, has been working to popularise the healthspan concept among Singapore's main health stakeholders. He is optimistic that it will lead to a much heavier commitment to healthy longevity than has been the case. "If government commitment is there, Singapore could become a world leader in healthspan," he says.

Our healthspan barometer and the expert opinions we gathered for it suggest four areas where the government could lead efforts and work with the private sector and individuals to fulfil that vision. Such efforts would also help to reduce the gaps that the research has highlighted between awareness and adoption of healthy ageing initiatives.



Financial health literacy: Programmes to build financial knowledge among people must include a more explicit focus on future financing of healthcare needs. For example, such initiatives could introduce people to "rainy day" planning and building an emergency fund for healthcare needs to cover unexpected health crises and care costs. Schools should begin instilling the virtues of financial planning, including for health, early on in childhood.



Private sector partnerships: The government cannot address every health need on its own. While public-private collaboration in healthcare has grown in recent years, there is considerable scope for expanding it in support of healthy ageing programmes. Healthtech is a prime example, as the government seeks to build greater adoption of its digital initiatives. Financial health literacy is another area where businesses can bring more of their expertise to bear.



Community involvement: Greater collaboration with community groups and other civic organisations can breathe more life into social structures for healthy ageing. For example, government agencies could work with such groups to tap into peer networks—in community-based senior centres, in workplaces and in schools—to reinforce messages about the virtues of exercise, good dietary habits and health-oriented financial planning.



Programme customisation: A "one size fits all" approach to healthy living initiatives does not allow for understanding people's real motivations to engage in them. A key to securing greater resident adoption of healthy living initiatives is tailoring them to the needs of localities, including individual neighbourhoods and different communities.

Appendix

Methodology

Literature review

To explore healthspan in Singapore, we conducted a literature review covering the past ten years to ensure our findings are relevant. We examined the concept of healthspan, its definitions, and various initiatives in Singapore aimed at promoting healthy living and ageing. This review helped us identify three key pillars that support healthy ageing—essentially forming the foundation of “healthspan”. These pillars are:

- **Individual resilience:** This includes physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It encompasses individuals’ awareness of preventive care and the behaviours impacting health.
- **Financial planning:** This involves managing finances to achieve life goals, taking into account health, quality of life, and how the health of dependents can affect a caregiver’s financial situation.
- **Social structures:** This refers to the community factors that enhance health and well-being, such as support systems to combat social isolation, accessible infrastructure and transport, technology that promotes healthy living, community safety, and national recognition of ageing issues.

These pillars encompass both facilitators of physical and mental health, as well as health behaviours, along with broader determinants of health such as health financing, government initiatives, social support, and digital advancements.

Survey

Based on the literature review findings, we devised a survey covering each of the above pillars. The aim of the survey was to develop a broader understanding of how Singaporeans perceive healthy living and ageing and the factors they prioritise. We specifically targeted individuals aged 20 to 70 to capture insights from early career professionals to early retirees.

The survey had 1,014 respondents, spread evenly across different generations to understand varying perceptions of healthspan and its associated pillars to understand and promote healthy ageing.

Expert interviews

We also conducted five expert interviews to gain insights from professionals in the Ministry of Health, private sector leaders, and academics specialising in healthy ageing and healthspan. These interviews provided depth to our findings and helped validate our survey results.

Synthesis

Finally we synthesised the findings of the research streams: the literature review, survey and expert interviews into this brief report.

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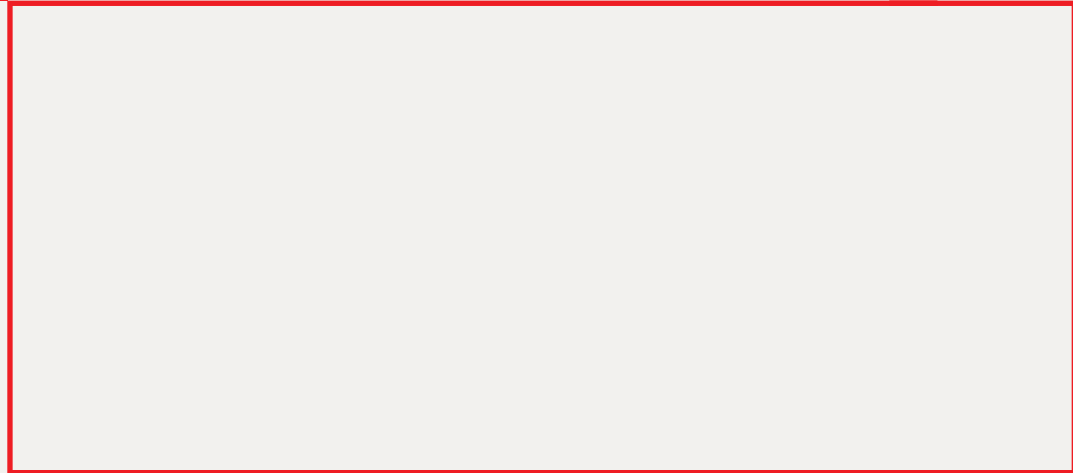
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