

Global study finds high levels of concern about ageing and paints a negative picture for later life.

Ipsos' exclusive study, conducted in partnership with the Centre for Ageing Better, a charity, funded by an endowment from The National Lottery Community Fund, shows the negativity felt by the online public¹ across 30 countries about ageing, and how they are preparing for later life.

Optimism about later life.

- Globally, just one in three (33%) are looking forward to old age. There are some significant differences between countries, with some feeling much more positive about old age including three quarters (73%) in India and two thirds (67%) in Turkey. Only six countries are positive on balance. At the other end of the scale, people in Hungary are least optimistic; only 7% say they are looking forward to old age and people in Japan are similarly negative (10%). Broadly in line with the global average, only 30% of Brits say they are looking forward to later life.
- While people around the world recognise that there are positives to getting old, including having more time to spend with friends and family (36%), more time for hobbies and leisure (32%), more time for holidays and travel (26%) and giving up work (26%) they also identify a number of downsides. Globally, three in ten worry about not having enough to live on (30%) with a quarter worrying about losing mobility (26%) and losing memory (24%).
- Despite this, a majority of us expect to be fit and healthy in old age (57%). There is considerable variation between the countries surveyed. Nine in ten of those in Colombia, Argentina, China, Peru and Malaysia (89%, 88%, 88%, 86% and 85% respectively) agree with this sentiment. In comparison, those least likely to agree are those in South Korea (17%), France (20%) Japan (23%) and Belgium (24%).
- Taken together though, this results in high levels of concern about later life. Globally, half (52%) of us worry about old age with people in Brazil and China (72% and respectively) most likely to agree with this. Those in South Korea are least concerned; only one in six (16%) agree that they worry about old age.

When is old age, and what does it mean?

- Globally, we think old age begins at 66. The biggest determinant of what someone thinks of as being old is their own age; the older people get, the more likely they are to define 'old' as being something that happens later in life. To illustrate, those who are 16-24 believe old age begins at 61. This rises to 72 for those aged between 55-64. Variation in countries is also significant; in Spain, you will only be considered old at age 74, whereas in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, old age comes decades earlier (55 and 56 respectively).

¹ Interviews carried out online with adults aged under 65. In countries with a low level of internet penetration, the sample will reflect a more urban, educated, and higher income profile than the general population

- When asked to select words to describe old age, the most commonly mentioned term is wise (35%). Next in line is frail (32%) followed by lonely (30%) and only a quarter saying respected (25%)
- Three in five (60%) agree that people don't respect old people as much as they should. Agreement with this sentiment is highest in the LATAM countries (Brazil – 81%, Colombia – 79%, Argentina – 76%, Chile – 75%). At the other end of the spectrum, only a quarter (26%) of those in Saudi Arabia agree with this, and a third (32%) of those in Japan.

Representation in the media

- Opinion is polarised on how old people are depicted in the media. Only three in ten (31%) think that TV, film and advertising make old age seem exciting and full of potential while roughly the same proportion (29%) think that TV, film and advertising make old age seem depressing, with limited opportunities.
- Countries most positive about the representation of older people in the media include China (52%), Russia (44%) and India (43%)
- In Turkey nearly half (48%) think that TV, film and advertising make old age seem depressing, with limited opportunities. Some LATAM countries are also negative on this issue – in Chile, Mexico, and Peru roughly two in five (39%, 39% and 38% respectively) and over a third (36%) in Colombia think this.

Political power

- Globally, only three in ten (29%) agree that old people have too much influence, politically. On balance, people disagree with this sentiment (35%). However, there are some differences by age, with younger people more likely to think that old people do have too much influence politically. For instance, two in five (38%) of those aged 16-24 agree while only a quarter (27%) disagree.
- People in Romania are most likely to agree that old people have too much influence (45%), followed by Malaysia (44%) and Japan (42%). Least likely to agree are those in Australia (17%), Russia (18%) and Belgium and Sweden (both 19%).

The potential for technology

- Globally, we are techno-optimists; over half (55%) agree that technological developments will improve old age for a lot of people. Only one in seven (14%) disagree.
- There are, however, significant differences in agreement by country. Four in five (81%) people in China agree that technological developments will improve old age for a lot of people. The next most positive countries are Brazil (66%), Turkey and Argentina (both 65%).
- People in Japan are least convinced about the potential for technological developments to improve old age for a lot of people. Here, only two in five (41%)

agree with this statement. People in Belgium and France are similarly cautious (44% agree in each country).

Preparing for later life

- Around the world, two thirds (64%) think that it is possible for people to prepare for old age so that they are healthier and better able to cope.
- People in some LATAM countries seem to have most faith in their ability to prepare for old age; in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, four in five agree that people are able to prepare for old age (83%, 80% and 79% respectively). Four in five in China (79%) also agree with this.
- People in Russia (57%), the Czech Republic (51%) and South Korea (49%) feel least able to prepare for old age.
- Globally, people have a clear idea of what we should be doing to prepare for later life. The most commonly mentioned responses are staying healthy by exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet (60% and 59% respectively). Saving enough money for an adequate pension is mentioned by half (51%) and avoiding smoking, having a good circle of friends, and having a sport or hobby they practice regularly are cited by over two in five (45%, 44% and 44% respectively).
- However, there is a gap between what we know we should do to prepare for old age, and what we are doing. When asked what people are doing in order to prepare for old age the most popular answer globally is avoiding smoking, mentioned by over two in five (45%). A similar proportion also mention eating a healthy diet and avoiding too much alcohol (43% and 40% respectively). Under three in ten (28%) mention saving enough money for an adequate pension.

What about Great Britain?

- Britons are overwhelmingly negative about old age. Only three in ten (30%) agree that they are looking forward to old age, while more than double (68%) disagree with this statement. Underpinning this negativity could be our expectations of later life; only 38% agree that they expect to be fit and healthy in old age, compared to one in five (22%) who disagree with this statement.
- Levels of agreement with this decrease the closer we get to old age; while two in five (40%) of those aged 16-24 agree that they expect to be fit and healthy in old age, this figure decreases to just a third (33%) of those aged 55-64.
- This translates into relatively high levels of concern about later life. Half (50%) agree that they are worried about getting old. Only one in five (18%) say that they are not worried.
- In Great Britain, we think that old age begins at 68. Younger people are more likely to think that old age starts sooner; for those aged 16-24 old age starts at 63 yet this figure rises to 71 for those aged between 55-64.
- When it comes to the good things about old age, Britons are most likely to identify giving up work which was mentioned by two in five (42%). More time for hobbies and

leisure, and to spend time with friends and family were mentioned by around a third (37% and 32% respectively)

- On the other hand, three in ten (31%) mention losing mobility as something that concerns them about old age. Financial worries are also prevalent (29% mention not having enough money to live on). A quarter (26%) mention losing their memory.
- In Great Britain, people overwhelmingly agree that old people are not as respected as they should be. Nearly two thirds (63%) agree and this rises with age. Half (47%) of those aged 16-24 agree, this figure rises to three quarters (73%) of those aged 55-64.
- While there has been much debate about the impact of older voters in relation to Brexit, more people disagree (37%) than agree (25%) that old people have too much political influence. Young people, however, at 24%, are less likely than older people to disagree with this in comparison to 54% of those aged 55-64.
- Britons are, on balance, techno-optimists; half (51%) agree that technological developments will improve old age for a lot of people while only one in ten (11%) disagree.
- When it comes to looking after the elderly, 42% agree that as people age and require care, it is the responsibility of their younger relatives to provide this. Around a quarter (19%) disagree with this
- Britons take a dim view of the representation of later life in the media - 28% think that TV, film and advertising make old age seem depressing, with limited opportunities. In contrast, around one in five (18%) think that TV, film and advertising make old age seem exciting and full of potential.
- . Those closer to old age are the least likely to think that TV, film and advertising make old age seem exciting and full of potential; one in eight (13%) of those aged 55-64 state this.
- Two thirds of Britons think that the quality of later life is in their own hands; 68% think that it is possible for people to prepare for old age, so that they are healthier and able to cope including one in five (18%) who think that there is a great deal that they can do. One in five (22%), however, think that it is not possible to prepare including 7% who state it is all down to luck.

Ipsos spokesperson, said:

"The growth of the ageing population is one of our greatest achievements. However, it also presents society, business and brands with significant challenges as well. Our research shows that, globally, there is a great deal of negativity towards later life, with financial and health concerns prevalent. Feeding into this negativity is a sense that the media does not do enough to portray later life as a time of potential. It is therefore, perhaps, little surprise that when describing those in old age people commonly reach for terms like 'frail', 'lonely' and 'unfairly treated' along with 'wise'. There are reasons for optimism, however. More people globally have faith in the power of technology to improve the lives of the elderly. People also tend to think that there are things that they can do to ensure they are prepared for old age – though there is a gap between what we know we should be doing, and what we are doing in practice. Later life

should be our golden years – but there is clearly much work to be done for this time in our life to be seen as such.

Anna Dixon, Chief Executive of the Centre for Ageing Better, said:

There are tremendous opportunities that come from longer lives, yet just one in three people worldwide say they are looking forward to their old age. This is perhaps not surprising given the prevailing narrative across the globe is one of decline, frailty, ill-health and loneliness. These negative experiences are not inevitable. We must improve our workplaces, our housing, our health and our communities to enable more of us to age well. Changing our own and society's attitudes to later life is an essential first step

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Notes to Editors:

- For further information, please contact [Hannah Millard](#) on 0207 3473452.
- Interviews were conducted using the Ipsos Online Panel system, Global Advisor, among 20,788 online adults aged 16-64 in 28 countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and Turkey) and 18-64 in US and Canada.
- Approximately 1000+ individuals participated on a country by country basis via the Ipsos Online Panel, with the exception of Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Hungary, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and Turkey, where each have a sample approximately 500+.
- Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the general adult population according to the most recent country Census data, and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points for a sample of 1,000 and an estimated margin of error of +/- 4.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20 per country of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in that country had been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.
- 15 of the 30 countries surveyed online generate nationally representative samples in their countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and United States).
- Brazil, Colombia, China, Chile, Czech Republic, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa and Turkey produce a national sample that is more urban & educated, and with higher incomes than their fellow citizens. We refer to these respondents as "Upper Deck Consumer Citizens". They are not nationally representative of their country.

- Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses.
- Fieldwork was conducted between 24 August and 7 September 2018.