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***Announcement: Growing Older in Africa and Asia –
new research a significant advance on previously available information***

27 Sept 2010, Stockholm: Co-Action Publishing joins the Umeå Centre of Public Health Research in Sweden in announcing the publication of a collection of reports on “Growing Older in Africa and Asia: Multicentre study on ageing, health and well-being” in the peer reviewed journal *Global Health Action*. For the first time, the self-reported health, health status, functioning and well-being of adults and ageing adults on these two continents has been investigated and compared. In his Guest Editorial, Richard Suzman, director of NIA’s Division of Behavioral and Social Research, points to the significance of the research saying, “The results from the standardised data for the four African and four Asian country sites presented in this Supplement represent a significant advance on previously available information for charting the evolution of the demographic and epidemiological transitions in low-income countries.”

Growing Older in Africa and Asia collates reports from researchers from 13 different nations, presenting data from eight INDEPTH Health and Demographic Surveillance Sites (HDSS) in eight countries, four in Africa and four in Asia: Agincourt, South Africa; Ifakara, Tanzania; Nairobi, Kenya; Navrongo, Ghana; Filabavi, Viet Nam; Matlab, Bangladesh; Purworejo, Indonesia; Vadu, India. Data was collected using an abbreviated version of the WHO Study on Global AGEing and adult health (SAGE) Wave I instrument, and linked to longitudinal information available from INDEPTH HDSS databases. The pooled sample consisted of 46 000 individuals, aged 50 and above. All data will be made publicly available from the *Global Health Action* website to enable further investigation and analysis.

On both continents elderly men self-report better health than elderly women but face a shorter life expectancy. Gaps in the health scores observed between men and women could not be explained by the same factors across the sites. While in South Africa and Kenya such things as household socioeconomic levels, age, education levels, marital status and living arrangements explained 82 and 71% of these differences, respectively, these factors were not significant in Bangladesh. Indeed, the reports show wide variations in the role different socio-demographic and economic characteristics play in explaining the self-reported health status of older men and women at the sites studied.

With the UN projecting that those aged 65 and over will out-number those aged under five in just a few years, greater attention and research is being paid to this demographic shift. *Growing Older in Africa and Asia* can be viewed against the backdrop of such nationally-representative longitudinal studies, such as the Health and Retirement Study USA (HRS), the English Longitudinal Study (ELSA), and the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). Under NIA leadership, comparable and coordinated national surveys in countries such as Mexico (MHAS), China (CHARLS), and in earlier stages, India (LASI) are also being developed. The INDEPTH- WHO SAGE study carried out in Africa and Asia provides current input and a needed basis for future longitudinal studies in these countries, while demonstrating the importance and potential of the INDEPTH network’s health and demographic surveillance work.

The National Institutes of Health/The National Institute on Aging in the United States provided key funding for the study. Core institutional support to INDEPTH was provided by the Wellcome Trust, Sida/GLOBFORSK, Rockefeller Foundation, Gates Foundation and Hewlett Foundation, as well as the Swedish Council for Social and Work Life Research (FAS), which provided funding to the Umeå Centre for Global Health Research as well as the Indonesian and Vietnamese sites.



The publication is the result of collaboration that began between the WHO-SAGE and the INDEPTH group several years ago. During the course of collaboration, analysis workshops have been held at the Umeå Centre for Global Health Research in Sweden, at the Harvard Centre for Population and Development Studies in the United States, as well as by the WHO and the School of Public Health at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.

The supplement was edited by Senior Editor Richard Suzman, NIA/NIH, and by Nawi Ng, Umeå Centre for Global Health Research, Kathleen Kahn and Stephen Tollman, Leader for the INDEPTH Adult Health and Aging Working Group based at University of Witwatersrand, South Africa.



About the co-operative partners:

World Health Organization (WHO) Study on Global AGEing and Adult Health (SAGE). SAGE is a multi-country study that addresses health and health-related outcomes and their determinants in populations around the world with a focus on low- and middle-income countries. The emphasis is on common methodological approaches to ensure cross-population comparability. SAGE country studies aim for a longitudinal cohort design with the inclusion of populations 50 years and over along with a comparative cohort of persons aged 18_49 years. The first round has recently been completed in China, Ghana, India, Mexico, Russia and South Africa. <http://www.who.int/healthinfo/systems/sage/en/index.html>

INDEPTH Network: The International Network for the Demographic Evaluation of Populations and Their Health in Developing Countries (INDEPTH) is a global network of members who conduct longitudinal health and demographic evaluation of populations in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). INDEPTH aims to strengthen global capacity for Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems (HDSS), and to mount multi-site research to guide health priorities and policies in LMICs, based on up-to-date scientific evidence. Researchers associated with the INDEPTH HDSS collected the data presented and analyzed here. <http://www.indepth-network.org>

Umeå Centre for Global Health Research – The UMGHR is a Centre of Excellence within Umeå University, set up in 2007 through a grant from FAS, the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (grant no. 2006-1512) and supported by co-funding from Umeå University. Our mission is to engage with a global agenda on health research, addressing critical issues in global health and facilitating interaction and collaboration between Northern and Southern partners. The UCGHR is home to the editorial team for Global Health Action. www.globalhealthresearch.net

School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand – acts as satellite secretariat for the INDEPTH Adult Health and Aging Working Group. More information on the various programs is available at: <http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/Health/PublicHealth/>

National Institute on Aging – The NIA is a component of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It leads the Federal effort supporting and conducting research on aging and the health and well-being of older people. For more information on research and aging, go to www.nia.nih.gov.