

Foreword

There comes a time in many people's lives when their functional and physical abilities decline. To continue to live an active and fulfilling life, people need help – from family, friends, or from people employed to help.

This report is about how countries can provide that help. Most caring is provided by family and friends out of love or duty. Some additional support to such carers can have a big effect, at relatively low cost. Workers to fill caregiving jobs can be found, as long as policy makers and employers take steps to improve the dismal image of caregiving as being low-paid, hard, and low-skilled. Providing adequate financial protection for those needing care is possible, in a way that does not unduly stretch public financing. But getting these policies right needs to start now, because the challenge to implementing sustainable, responsive and fair long-term care policies is only going to get bigger and bigger, as populations age. Learning from other countries' experiences, both good and bad, might save much money and grief.

This book is the result of a two-year project conducted between 2009 and 2010 by the OECD Health Division and Social Policy Division. The study points to key policies and strategies that can help address future demand for care and respond to the implications this will have for long-term care workforce and financing. It highlights examples of useful country experiences, but it also warns about the dearth of evidence on cost-effective policies in a number of areas, making a strong plea for advancing evidence-based research on long-term care (LTC).

The study used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative information was collected through a fact-finding and policy questionnaire covering 29 OECD countries, complemented by selected country missions. Quantitative data were gathered from OECD databases and longitudinal surveys on health, retirement and ageing in Europe, Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Korea. Projections of LTC costs were based on an update and expansion of earlier projections by the OECD and the European Commission.



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