

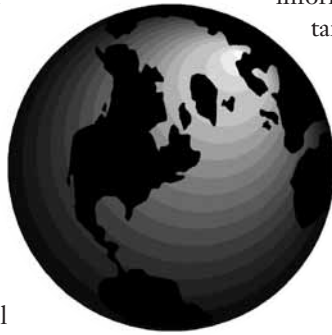
Global Aging Reflects U.S. Trending

Census Study Finds Rapid Growth Of Oldest Old

Within the next decade, planet Earth will be inhabited by more people aged 65 and older than children under five, according to a recent report from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the U.S. Census Bureau. What's more, this will be a historical first for the globe.

Titled, "An Aging World: 2008," the report concludes that the proportion of older people will double from 7 percent to 14 percent of the total world population in just over 30 years.

Challenges and opportunities will accompany this aging boom, according to



the report, which looks at demographic and socioeconomic trends associated with the findings.

Included in the report is detailed information on life expectancy, health, disability, gender balance, marital status, living arrangements, education and literacy, labor force participation and retirement, and pensions among older people around the world. "Aging is affecting every country in every part of the world," said Richard Suzman, director of NIA's Division of Behavioral and Social Research.

"While there are important differ-

ences between developed and developing countries, global aging is changing the social and economic nature of the planet and presenting difficult challenges."

The report also sheds light on how long term care facilities are utilized around the globe.

Although there is no universal definition, long term care facilities typically include nursing facilities, assisted living/residential care facilities, and sometimes hospice centers.

Institutional use is associated with marital status, prior living arrangements, older people's health, and the economic resources of older people and their adult children, the report says.

Results of a longitudinal study in England and Wales showed that older ►

Respirators Best Protection, IOM Says

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommends that health care workers who interact with patients infected with the H1N1 influenza virus wear fitted N95 respirators to protect themselves against infection, according to a report released in early September.

The recommendation includes workers in non-hospital settings such as long term care facilities.

"Based on what we currently know about influenza, well-fitted N95 respirators offer health care workers the best protection against inhalation of viral particles," said committee Chair Kenneth Shine, executive vice chancellor for health affairs at The University of Texas System and former president of IOM.

"But there is a lot we still don't know about these viruses, and it would be a mistake for anyone to rely on respi-

rators alone as some sort of magic shield," he said. "Health care organizations and their employees should establish and practice a number of strategies to guard against infection, such as innovative triage processes, hand washing, disinfection, gloves, vaccination, and antiviral drug use."

As of Aug. 28, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had reported 8,843 H1N1 influenza hospitalizations and 556 deaths in the United States.

Janice Zalen, senior director of special programs for the American Health Care Association (AHCA), points out that IOM was only evaluating personal protective equipment designed to guard against respiratory infection specifically and did not consider economic or logistical issues when making the recommendation.

The report also does not take into consideration whether health care workers are immunized with the H1N1 vaccine.

Zalen says AHCA is checking into the availability of N95 respirators, which seem to be in limited supply.

IOM also said that wearing the respirators "should be only one element of workers' and health care organizations' infection control strategies."

"In the event that the new pandemic virus creates a surge of patients during the upcoming flu season, it will be critical to protect health care workers from infection, given their central role in treating sick people and lessening the pandemic's overall impact," IOM said.

Facilities interested in vaccinating their employees can find more information at: www.cdc.gov.

—Suzanne Struglinski