

**The ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES of POPULATION AGEING in TURKEY:  
A Country at the onset of Population Ageing**

**Sebnem Canpolat**

Hacettepe University,  
Institute of Population Studies,  
06100 Ankara, Turkey  
Phone (90) 312 310 79 06, Fax: (90) 312 311 81 41  
e-mails: [sebnemb@hacettepe.edu.tr](mailto:sebnemb@hacettepe.edu.tr) and [sebnemcanpolat@tuik.gov.tr](mailto:sebnemcanpolat@tuik.gov.tr)

**Abstract**

Turkey is undergoing this demographic transformation like many parts of the world. Even though the proportion of the elderly and other indicators of ageing<sup>1</sup> indicate that an age structure of Turkey is relatively younger when compared to the populations of developed countries, increase of the elderly population in "absolute numbers" is noticeable and the number of older adult is equal to total population of some small European Countries. It is projected that the population over age 65 will be 4.8 million in 2010, 7.9 million in 2025, and 17 million in 2050 in Turkey (TURKSTAT, 2006). Old-dependency ratio will probably triple between 2000 and 2050, from about 9% in 2000 to about 28% in 2050.<sup>2</sup> This means that at the end of this period each working-age adult will have three times as many older adults to support as is the case in year 2000.

In this study, firstly some social, demographic and economic characteristics of elderly population are described by using data of the latest nationwide 2003 Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) and the last population census. Primary objective of this study is to reveal economic impacts of population ageing in Turkey. Therefore, the analyses are aimed at finding out whether population ageing causes economic burden or creates demographic gift.

The changes in the share of the older population and its size have profound implications for families. In Turkey, it is often assumed that the family will automatically take on the responsibility of caring for the elderly. Other objective of this study is to determine what kind of family and household type elderly will live in,

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e. increase in median age, decrease in the proportion of children, and increase in the ratio of the elderly to children.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (online version, *2003 World Population Prospects, the 2002 Revision*, United Nations Population Division, available from <http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm>).

and what proportion of them will need institutional based care in the future. Because of that reason, family and household types are projected by using headship rate projection method. It is also planned to find out sufficient number of care centers or institutes for elderly people.