

## Older Singaporeans Support Healthier SG, but Lifestyle Habits Still Lag Behind

- *New SMU research reveals critical gaps in preventive health, lifestyle habits, and continuity of care as Singapore transitions into a super-aged society.*
- *Despite strong pro-health policies, everyday adoption - especially among older adults - remains limited.*
- *Bridging this gap requires environmental nudges that make healthy choices easier, more intuitive, and part of daily life.*
- *The upcoming symposium will explore these challenges and spotlight opportunities to strengthen pro-health behaviours.*

**Singapore, 19 November 2024 (Wednesday)** – A new study by the Singapore Management University (SMU) [Centre for Research on Successful Ageing \(ROSA\)](#) has revealed that while older Singaporeans strongly support the national Healthier SG initiative and use its clinical services, many wellness services however are underutilised. Moreover, many may not understand the importance of relying on one consistent primary care physician.

The findings underscore a growing challenge for policymakers: as Singapore's population ages rapidly, awareness alone may not be enough to ensure that seniors stay healthy and independent in their later years.

Underscoring the importance of these findings, **Professor [Paulin Straughan](#), Director, ROSA** said: "Our research shows that older adults want to take charge of their health, but they need the right systems and surroundings to do so. Healthy ageing isn't only about medical care, it's about building neighbourhoods, communities and routines that make living well part of everyday life."

### Ageing in a Super-Aged Society

Singapore is on track to become a super-aged society by 2030, when one in four residents will be aged 65 or older. The study's findings underscore that building a healthier ageing population will depend on more than medical access. It will require sustained engagement across homes, communities and the food environment.

Researchers at ROSA polled 7056 Singaporeans between the ages of 53 to 80 (inclusive) in August 2025. The study, "*Living Well: The Built, Lived, and Social Determinants of Well-being*", draws on data from the [Singapore Life Panel® \(SLP\), a nationally representative longitudinal survey that has been conducted since 2015](#). The study was made possible through the generosity of The Ngee Ann Kongsi and the support of the Ministry of Education.

### Key findings and practical implications for society:

#### a) **Support for Healthier SG and utilisation**

- 53.49% of participants have enrolled in Healthier SG, and a further 21.46% intend to do so.
- For those who did not sign up, 40.38% indicated that they are satisfied with their existing healthcare arrangements.

- The survey asked respondents whether they support the Healthier SG initiative, and more than 90% indicated they slightly agree to strongly agree to support the initiative.
- Among those who signed up, 70.26% indicated that they used HealthierSG for annual screenings, and 62.21% used health and medication review services at least once since enrolment (note respondents can pick more than response).
- Referrals to allied-health professionals, community exercise or wellness classes, and lifestyle or nutrition advice appear underutilised.

**b) Health behaviours**

- Aligning with the promotion of preventive care under Healthier SG, 82% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that regular health screenings are important.
- While Healthier SG also encourages continuity of care by allowing individuals to choose a family doctor, more than 80% of respondents agree to strongly agree that they will still seek other doctors even if they enrolled.
- For participants who agree that they will see more than one doctor, the top two reasons are to get a second opinion (51.91%), and to get specialised care for various health conditions (35.57%).
- 50% of study participants indicated they have a regular family doctor that they visit to treat most of their care needs.

**c) Lifestyle and dietary behaviours**

- On physical activity levels, the survey revealed that 38.83% of respondents do not engage in vigorous physical activity, and 28.73% do not participate in moderate activity over the past week (note those who are unable to walk were excluded).
- On average, excluding those who indicate difficulty walking, respondents walk about 4 days per week.
- When respondents were asked about Nutri-grade labels, 82.36% responded that they are aware of these labels. Of those who are aware of the labels, about 80% indicated that the labels had an influence on their choice of beverage.
- On average, respondents dine at hawker centres five times a week, with fast food consumption reported at a frequency of once per week.
- 85.3% of respondents indicated they are aware of healthier choices (i.e., less oil, salt, sugar, more vegetables, wholegrain options). Of those who are aware of healthier options, ROSA followed up by asking if the eateries they visit offer healthier food choices. 46.3% of respondents indicate that the places they visit offer healthier food choices some of the time, followed by about 25.94% who indicated most of the time.
- When making dietary requests, sugar reduction is the most requested option, with 53.3% of respondents requesting less sugar most times to all the time. Conversely, the least frequently requested item is wholegrain alternatives, with 22.08% of respondents saying they request for it most times to all the time.

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual ROSA Symposium on Successful Ageing**

The findings of this new study were discussed at ROSA's fifth annual Symposium on Successful Ageing. Hosted on 19 November 2025 on SMU campus, the event was attended by close to 200 members of government, academia and industry.

SMU Provost, Prof [Alan Chan](#), launched the Symposium with an opening address and Dr Wu Chiaw Ching, Vice-President of The Ngee Ann Kongsi graced the Symposium as Guest-of-Honour.

Discussions at the symposium were framed in the context of Singapore's national [Age Well SG](#) programme, to support seniors in ageing well in their homes and their communities, as well as the [Healthier SG](#) programme, a national initiative by the Ministry of Health (MOH) focusing on preventive health.

The Symposium served to analyse the concerns around ageing in place, and facilitated ROSA's efforts to continue translating its applied research, drawn from its [Singapore Life Panel](#), into evidence-based policy interventions.

### **The Singapore Life Panel (SLP)**

By 2030, almost 1 in 4 Singaporeans will be over the age of 65<sup>1</sup>. ROSA's applied research aim to shed light on the optimal ways to enhance the well-being of older adults in Singapore and promote successful ageing.

ROSA's studies are drawn from a rich repository of data known as the [Singapore Life Panel®](#), a national longitudinal survey of Singaporeans that started in 2015. The SLP has an average response rate of about 7,200 respondents per month and is web-based. With the SLP, ROSA undertakes one of the largest high-frequency surveys in the world, collecting data on a monthly basis to understand ageing trends in Singapore.

Housed within SMU, ROSA's research focuses on addressing areas of pressing societal need and reflects the University's SMU2030 vision to create meaningful impact and transform lives through education, research and partnerships.

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<sup>1</sup> [Speech by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong](#) at the book launch of 'Singapore Ageing: Issues and Challenges Ahead'.

**About the Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA)**

ROSA is a multidisciplinary research centre based in SMU. It was established with an MOE Tier 3 social sciences research grant, as well as the generous support of The Ngee Ann Kongsi. Research at ROSA seeks to define and measure a holistic construct of well-being and to identify the factors that impact Singaporeans' well-being as they progress through the later phases of life. Through close collaboration with government and other partner agencies, ROSA also aims to translate research insights into policy innovations that advance the well-being of older adults holistically and promote successful ageing in Singapore. ROSA brings together a diverse team of leading international and local researchers in ageing and age-related issues from various disciplines. Through empirical evidence derived from a longitudinal methodological approach, the multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research team advances propositions that promote successful ageing in Singapore.

**About Singapore Management University**

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) is recognised for its disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research that addresses issues of global relevance, impacting business, government, and society. Its distinctive education, incorporating innovative experiential learning, aims to nurture global citizens, entrepreneurs and change agents. With more than 13,000 students, SMU offers a wide range of bachelors, masters and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with six of its eight schools - Accountancy, Business, Computing, Economics, Law and Social Sciences. Its seventh school, the SMU College of Integrative Studies, offers degree programmes in deep, integrative interdisciplinary education. The College of Graduate Research Studies, SMU's eighth school, enhances integration and interdisciplinarity across the various SMU postgraduate research programmes that will enable students to gain a holistic learning experience and well-grounded approach to their research. SMU also offers a growing number of executive development and continuing education programmes. Through its city campus, SMU focuses on making meaningful impact on Singapore and beyond through its partnerships with industry, policy makers and academic institutions. SMU celebrates its 25 years of meaningful impact this year, and remains committed to its vision of driving innovation, transcending boundaries and transforming lives. <https://www.smu.edu.sg/>