AGING POPULATION

- An ageing population is defined as a population in which the number of elderly (65+) is increasing, relative to the number of 20-64 year olds.
- An ageing population is a particular concern to MEDCs, who are at stage 5 on the DTM. These countries have an ageing population because death rate is falling and life expectancy is increasing and birth rate is falling so there is natural decrease. We are seeing these changes due to improvement in healthcare and medicine, increased leisure and recreation time, improved knowledge about the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise and the improvement of living standards and quality of life.

TO WORK OUT NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS PER 100 PEOPLE OF WORKING AGE:

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\frac{(\text{children under 15}) + (\text{elderly over 65})}{\text{(working population)}} \times 100
\]

PROBLEMS OF AN AGEING POPULATION

- Health and fitness:
  1. An increase in degenerative diseases such as heart disease. This puts pressure on the economy, as people are cared for. The burden of dementia is expected to double to £47 billion within 20 years.
- Increasing care needs:
  1. Elderly people spend longer in hospital than younger people and the increase in degenerative diseases means they require more costly medication. Many may also go into nursing homes. This puts financial pressure on the government.
- Housing:
  1. Many elderly have specific housing needs, such as homes without stairs, or living in sheltered accommodation. These need to be built.
- Pensions:
  1. As more and more people live longer, they will claim their state pensions for longer. The state pension began in 1908 when male life expectancy was 67 and the retirement age was 65. There are now more elderly people living longer and less non-dependents working. This means that taxes have to increase to pay the pension bill.
- Fewer workers and increased tax:
  1. A smaller working population pays taxes, so the individual contributions have to rise.