


# Chapter 8

## Potentials of Digital Healthcare for Healthy Aging: Empowerment for Self-Management

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### ABSTRACT

*The elderly population faces higher prevalence of chronic diseases that require long-term, complicated treatment regimens. Patient non-compliance in the aging population poses a significant challenge for the healthcare industry as it can exacerbate the burden of disease, increase healthcare costs, impair quality of life, and erode patient-provider trust. Addressing noncompliance requires a multifaceted approach that considers the challenges and needs of elderly patients. Digital advancements like telemedicine, wearable devices, and home monitoring hold immense potential in transitioning from conventional medical practices to remote healthcare by maintaining health, well-being, autonomy, and providing dignified care. But*

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*major elderly patients are devoid of these benefits due to non-adoption and non-availability of the solutions like lack of awareness, trust, confidence, clarity can be addressed through life-long capacity building and empowerment for a sustainable and effective adoption.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

WHO defines patients as elderly if they are 65 years or older, but depending on socioeconomic conditions, different countries have defined old age differently (WHO, 2024). Aging is a normal and natural phenomenon and indicates a positive society with fewer factors causing premature and unwanted mortality. Through scriptures and stories passed down through generations, people have known that individuals have lived for longer years amidst difficult environments centuries before. Are we returning to that healthy environment? That's the question. Considering the epidemiological transition of disease burden, with aging comes the complexity of handling chronic disease management and cure. Despite the growing advances in medical care and economic growth worldwide, the healthcare ecosystem is not well-equipped to handle the situation. This is a major problem, especially among developing and underdeveloped countries. The increasing population of older people brings in many challenges both at social and economic levels for themselves and for society. The elderly population poses a challenge to the provision of health services, as most chronic diseases increase with age and treatment costs are very high.

As per the Government of India, persons above 60 years of age are termed "Senior Citizens" or old age persons. The older adult population has increased significantly in India from 24.7 reported in 1961 census to a projected 137.9 million and 158.7 million for the 2022 and 2025 censuses, respectively, accounting for 11.1% of the overall population (Ministry of Statistics & Program Implementation, 2021; Jana & Chattopadhyay, 2022). The India Aging Report 2023 has estimated that by 2050, there will be 20.8% old age population (WHO, 2024). The United Nations Population Fund and Help Age India had predicted old age population would increase to 173 million by 2026, but by 2001 (Aggarwal, 2012), India had surpassed that percentage (7.47%) and is predicted to reach 12.6% by 2025. The trend is expected to increase. Figure 1 highlights the projected decadal growth of older population in the country.

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