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Ageing society in Baltic States: A comparative study

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Abstract. This paper provides a comprehensive overview of the problems and solutions related to the ageing society in the European Union, highlighting the need for a coordinated response that encompasses various sectors and stakeholders. The case study was developed to assess the situation and main challenges of the ageing society in the Baltic States. The framework of indicators characterising ageing society was developed based on the availability of data. The comparative study focused on Baltic States to reveal country differences and develop policy recommendations based on good practises for similar countries in the same geographical region. Future research should continue to explore innovative approaches to address the challenges posed by an ageing population, ensuring that the needs of older adults are met in a rapidly changing demographic landscape in the EU.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Eurostat (2024) data from 2002 to 2022 shows an increase in the share of people aged 65 and above in all EU Member States from 16% to 21%. The most significant rise was witnessed in Finland (8 percentage points), while the smallest was recorded in Luxembourg (1 percentage point). In 2022, the share of people aged 65 and above was the lowest in Ireland and Luxembourg (15%) and the highest in Italy and Portugal (24%) and Finland and Greece (23%), respectively.

As the population structure shifts in the EU, critical socio-economic implications affect labour markets, healthcare systems, and pension schemes. For instance, the old-age dependency ratio, which measures the number of elderly dependents per working-age individual, has steadily risen across the EU, indicating growing financial and social pressure on working-age populations (European Commission, 2022).

Despite these challenges, the ageing population also presents opportunities for policy innovation and societal transformation (Al-Omoush et al., 2023). Developing age-friendly communities, fostering social

inclusion, and leveraging technology to enhance healthcare delivery is critical to addressing these demographic changes (World Health Organization, 2021). Furthermore, the increasing importance of health literacy and digital inclusion among older adults highlights the need for tailored interventions to bridge gaps in their access to social services (Gatulyte et al., 2022; Najda-Janoszka & Sawczuk, 2024).

There are several important studies dealing with problems of an ageing society in the EU mainly focusing on problems revealed during Covid 19 outbreak (Arnault et al., 2021; Tzouganatou, 2022; Tvaraes, 2022; Potančoková et al., 2021; Thalassinos et al., 2019; Schelkle, 2022; Balachandram et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2022). There are just a very limited number of studies for Baltic States covering specific issues of this problem like health care literacy (Gatulyte at al., 2022; Zemaityte, 2024; Rapoliene, 2024), the health situation of the elderly (Kadastik-Erme et al., 2018), social services available for older people (Rapoliene, Kordusiene, 2022), longer working lives (Aidukaite, Balziene, 2021).

However, research exists on the specific demographic and socio-economic conditions of the Baltic States linked to the problems of an aging society. The differences in health outcomes, pension structures, and social dynamics within these countries warrant a more profound examination. While studies often explore individual indicators—such as life expectancy, pension expenditures, or dependency ratios—there is a lack of integrated frameworks that provide a holistic understanding of the problems of an ageing population and their multifaceted impacts.

The main objective of this paper is to address these gaps in scientific literature and to contribute to the current debate on the problems of an ageing society by developing a case study for selected EU countries on the challenges of an ageing society and possible solutions. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: the literature review is provided in section 2, and methods and data are described in 3. The case study is presented in section 4, and conclusions with implications are listed in section 5.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current imbalance in the structure of the population owing to the increase in the elderly population in the European Union (EU) is now considered the most problematic social and economic issue (Massetti, Exadaktylos, 2022). In 2020, 20 % of the total population of the EU was aged above 65 years, and the estimate for this old age population by the year 2050 is around 30% (EUROSTAT 2024). Such demographic patterns do not come without several challenges, including the rising costs associated with delivering proper medical and social care, the strain on retirement funds, the social isolation of aged people, etc.

An important socio-economic issue resulting from an ageing population in the EU is the viability of pension systems. This becomes more problematic if the number of retirees grows as a proportion of the workforce in the EU in the future. Studies argue that the need to support older people in the EU will tend to increase considerably in the future, leading to a rise in the burden on the state and pension systems (Potancokova et al., 2021; Aidukaite, Blaziene, 2021; Cordeiro et al., 2023). The standard scheme of pension systems would soon become obsolete. And urgent calls practically demand that a switch be made to new schemes. In particular, countries in the European Union have already begun experiencing a "greying" of their population as more and more citizens are aged 60 and above. This could largely be attributed to a decline in the average birth rate, as well as the increase in life expectancy, skewing the balance between working-aged citizens and retired citizens. The consequences of these population shifts have proven to be complex. They have an impact on the economy, society, and healthcare. It is expected that in the next decade, the EU's population will continue to age, with median ages becoming lower than they had ever been before. European Commission's (2022) projection indicates that the share of the population aged 65 years and over is anticipated to increase from 20 percent in 2020 to 30 by the year 2050. This is a big threat to labor markets, social security systems, and, quite notably, health services. Tzouganatou (2022), on the other

hand, explains the more significant problem faced in pension systems where fewer and fewer workers support a surge in the number of retirees. The other compelling factor from this demographic transition is economic, particularly the problem of governing authorities where the attention would turn to the sustainability of pension schemes and adequacy of social welfare provisions.

The political and economic impact of an ageing population is also seen in increased productivity and altering work environments (Lyeonov et al., 2025). Jakubowska (2024) elaborates on how depressive disorders can decrease the work performance of the older population. Economies that are highly developed, especially the EU, incur substantial economic costs due to the loss of productive manpower as a result of such mental health issues. Therefore, it is paramount that cognitive issues are given prominence as an integral part of the ageing demographic transition. In addition, many issues of the ageing population will be a concern for the healthcare systems of the EU.

In the context of a global increase in the proportion of older adults, one fundamental aspect that needs addressing is the imminent need for provisions that the healthcare system will offer these older adults. As remarked by Tzouganatou (2022), it is essential to change healthcare policy to cope adequately with providing care for the elderly. This entails prevention, integration of healthcare systems, and development of social welfare, such as healthy aging programs encouraging older people to be active.

Social implications of an ageing society for the EU is an equally important area of focus pertaining to the sociology of ageing (Bartkute et al., 2023). The dissolution of the traditional family increasingly leads to divorce and an increase in the number of single-parent families. The alarming increase in the population of older adults leads to a population that is largely socially unengaged with a higher propensity for both isolation and loneliness, two prevalent issues in modern society that have been proven to negatively impact both the physical health and mental well-being of people. Research conducted by Horbovyy and Khaletska (2019) focuses on the importance of social inclusion and community participation for the older population. Creating age-friendly communities can reduce isolation barriers and enhance the quality of life for older persons. The emigration of the younger generation from rural areas increases the aging population number in rural areas and intensifies social and economic gaps. Grodzicki and Jankiewicz (2022) contend that rural area development in the European Union context is characterized by the migration of the younger population towards cities in search of higher living standards. Such patterns of out-migration, geographical mobility, or even rural-to-urban shifts lead not only to the surplus in employment in the relevant sectors but also to the compromised social structure of rural areas, which require specific attention. Consequently, it is necessary to implement proactive measures to bolster service provision and enable older people to remain active and involved in their respective communities.

To cope with the threat of the older society, there were attempts in several studies to come up with solutions. For example, Tzouganatou (2022) claims that the EU lacks direction in terms of large-scale internal migration programs seeking to implement multi-faceted lifts regarding the economy, society, and health, which resonate with the older people within them. The policies to address these problems include lifting of age limits for retiring, encouraging older workers' changing views on work through further education and training, and sufficient welfare programs geared towards the elderly. Strengthening age-friendly neighborhoods will also help solve the other problems of older people. Horbovyy and Khaletska (2019) support the idea of creating age-friendly initiatives and social and other active involvement through assisting the aged people out.

Improving the living standards of older people through social and economic activities is a great way to improve the quality of life. In particular, in this regard, communities strive to develop infrastructures that are sensitive to the demands of the elderly.

The EU's growing older population is linked to many problems and opportunities. Włodarczyk and Tambor note that the EU employs soft methods to entice its members to pursue healthy ageing policies,

namely, providing directions or sharing good practices rather than imposing rules. The paper aims to address the differences that exist in the various needs of older people in different countries and the level of capacity that these countries have to meet these needs (Włodarczyk & Tambor, 2019). The authors suggest that great attention should be paid to raising awareness and encouraging other stakeholders to take the initiative as they will improve the overall welfare of the elderly. In a study by Thalassinos et al. (2019), it is noted that active ageing policies are crucial, adding that without regular scrutiny and review of policy focus and proper strategies, older persons will be relegated to the peripheries of social and economic life.

Several studies looked at the problems of the ageing EU from a wider perspective; for example, migration patterns constitute another factor that affects the demographic composition of the EU. As Potančoková et al. (2021) have pointed out, migration expansion among various EU regions may increase the vulnerability of those staying in the sending countries, facing population ageing and declining labor supply challenges. The authors argue that the migration processes would be further reinforced, and the age and educational composition of the working population would be improved in the EU; however, other cultural problems would arise (Mishchuk et al., 2024; Privara, 2025). Similar findings are obtained by Oliinyk et al. (2022) in a study of intellectual migration to the EU. Hočevar and Krilić (2019) further discuss the implicit link between immigration and demographic change in the EU, as they contest the general narrative on the topics and suggest that it tends to highlight the more simplistic views on the issues (Hočevar & Krilić, 2019; Kot, 2025).

These demographic changes in the EU can also be regarded as relevant from the perspective of economic growth and labor markets. The analysis of demographic policies within the EU highlights the need for civil society to be further involved in the elaboration and realization of policies, making them more inclusive and allowing local solutions to the problems to emerge. This involvement is of paramount importance in ensuring that the demographic policies developed do not stray too far from the needs and goals of society, given the increasing number of elderly citizens (Zacharenko, 2023). This study of long-term care policy describes the trend of an increasing older population as leading to the need to tackle the problems of the promotion of work-family reconciliation policies that promote women's labor-force integration and family care (Zacharenko, 2023).

In a few European countries, low fertility rates, childbearing thresholds, and changing family structures can be reasonably combined with high immigration rates. Ironically enough, such immigration, which has been increasing over the years, has not reversed the declining trend in European fertility rates but enhanced it (Berde & Remsei, 2025; Sobotka, 2021). The alarming implications of such structural changes are the services that combine social welfare with parenting decisions regarding childbirth.

Gomez-Roman et al. (2022) have highlighted the challenges specifically aimed at older adults in finding a proper balance across member states within the EU framework, which involves elements of gender and education and where certain types of advertising dominate, particularly for the impoverished elderly.

Considering the global trends of using technologies in the health and social spheres, it is necessary to stress their importance in dealing with the problem of the ageing population. For example, Elena-Buea et al. (2020) showed how the digital revolution could facilitate the access of older people to services and the delivery of those services. Appropriate use of technology can assist healthcare organizations in better communicating and serving older patients so that the latter would improve their experience by receiving a better service. Moreover, there are online self-help tools that can enhance the social contacts of older adults, decrease their feelings of loneliness, and improve their mental health. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth services began to receive increased attention because they are a handy way for elderly people to be treated without physically going anywhere (Goniewiz et al., 2020; Rudawska et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2022). This invention can solve the problem of lack or excess mobility and minimize the pressure on

healthcare institutions. Likewise, older adults will also be able to use modern wearable health technologies to help monitor their health and avoid illnesses, all of which would help achieve better health results.

Therefore, the elderly population issue in EU societies is a new complex challenge that has to be solved in detail, providing multiple approaches and implementing new policies. The demographic transformation should be considered from an economic, social, and health perspective and requires cross-cutting policies and reforms, direct community engagement, and innovative technologies. By being more responsive to the requirements of older people and developing supportive structures, the European Union will be on its way to building a society that respects and cares for its elders. More investigation should focus on good practices and case studies that address the issues of the elderly and enable them to remain active and engaged in society.

3. METHODS AND DATA

The primary approach followed in this article is the application of an indicators framework to measure the problems of an ageing society in EU countries and the development of a comparative case study on eldering society in the Baltic States, which enables us to find the differences and similarities and the main reasons for these differences.

3.1. Ageing society indicators

Analyzing indicators and frameworks set for aging societies is a relevant exercise to comprehend the adapting issues and opportunities related to ageing societies in developed world countries. These frameworks are usually created by considering health, social, economic, environmental and other aspects that affect the formulation of policies on aging nations.

Hsu & Ding (2021) developed a framework to assess health promotions in elderly people. This study uses Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP) to establish and select indicators that should be used for health promotion targeting the aged populations. The authors provided a case study for considering practices of several countries to help develop robust health-promoting policies. The paper highlights the requirement for the applicability of multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) methods in health promotion in older populations.

Liu (2023) provides insight into the planning and mobility of older people in urban settings but concentrates only on the issue of mobility of older people. The article analyzes a transport index that attempts to quantify the mobility requirements of elderly persons, stressing the importance of public transport for the functionality and healthy aging of elderly individuals. This research addresses how some indicators can help create policies that seek to improve the well-being of older people, especially those who live in urban areas where mobility is problematic.

Comincioli et al. (2021) analyzed the cultural perspectives of aging and its influence on society. They developed a framework that calls for the need to consider both quantitative and qualitative indicators to have a deeper understanding of the growing number of elderly and the factors that are associated with the aging process. Their study contributed to the Natural Hazard Risk Screening Index and dealt with community capacity, which can be fine-tuned to take care of the needs of elderly people, particularly their vulnerabilities and capacity. This method points to the relationship between the social, economic, and ecological dimensions contributing towards the resilience of societies comprising a large proportion of aged people.

Calvo-Sotomayor and Atutxa (2022) scrutinize the presence of older adults in the social and economic systems and their effects. They articulate a perspective that appreciates the care work done by older persons and assumes that these activities are commons that may benefit both the present and future generations.

They analyzed the changes brought about by technological innovations that reverse the tendencies towards a more aged society.

Marston et al. (2020) introduce age-friendly technological ecosystems. This framework treats technology as an integral part of the creation of support environments that place age as the primary focus, as well as shows the other players that are central to achieving such goals. The framework calls for the development of proxies that will evaluate technology's role in increasing the well-being of older people. Also, people's perspective regarding resource distribution among older people during emergency situations, such as during the COVID-19 outbreak, is addressed by Kersan-Škabić & Vukašina (2023). The study by Farrell et al. (2020) showed that even among elderly individuals, there is an inequality of access to resources, which implies that appropriate measures have to be developed and indicators used to address the inequity. It thus demonstrates the relevance of ethics in the new policies that concern the older population.

To sum up, the analysis of the review of indicator frameworks for aging societies it can be stressed that different approaches towards addressing the health, social, economic as well as environmental concerns of the ageing society are available. However, there is no agreed framework of indicators that can capture the multi-faceted issue of ageing society, which is necessary for developing inclusive policies for the welfare of older people. With the increasing ageing population across the globe, the continued refinement and implementation of these frameworks will be critical in promoting environments that are intergenerationally resourceful and beneficial.

Therefore, it is necessary to develop an indicator framework based on available data sources that reveal the problem of aging in the EU countries, both challenges and opportunities. These merits and demerits need to be taken into account by the policymakers while formulating plans, policies, and measures on how to tackle the problems of the elderly.

3.2. Ageing society indicators framework

The indicators of an ageing society were selected for the case study based on a review of various available indicators, and data available for the EU, including the Baltic States, are provided in Table 1. The main reason for the inclusion of indicators in the developed framework is that they present various challenges and opportunities in addressing the problems of an ageing society. These indicators range from demographic to socioeconomic ones and capture multifaceted issues of an aging society in the EU.

Table 1

Ageing society indicators

Indicator	Measure	Description
Population Aged 65 and Over (%)	%	This demographic indicator is expressed as a percentage, representing the number of individuals aged 65 and older out of the total population.
The average life expectancy at birth	Years	Life Expectancy at Birth is a most important demographic indicator that estimates the average number of years a newborn is expected to live, assuming that the age-specific mortality rates at the time of their birth remain constant throughout their lifetime.
Old Age Dependency Ratio	%	This indicator represents the number of individuals aged 65 and over per 100 working-age individuals (typically aged 15 to 64).
Pension Expenditure (% of GDP)	%	Pension expenditure, expressed as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), indicates the proportion of a country's economic output allocated to pension payments.
Median age of population	Years	The median age of a population is the age that divides the population into two numerically equal groups: half the population is younger than this age,

		and the other half is older. It is a statistical measure used to indicate the age distribution of a population.
Gender imbalance for people aged 65 and over (Ratio of woman to man)	Ratio	Gender imbalance for people aged 65 and over is a demographic measure that compares the number of women to the number of men in the population aged 65 and older. It is typically expressed as a ratio, such as the number of women per 100 men.

Source: created by authors based on (EUROSTAT, 2024)

These indicators are available from the EUROSTAT database from 2004 to 2021-2023 years.

4. CASE STUDY ON ELDERING SOCIETY IN THE BALTIC STATES

For the case study on aging society in the Baltic States, the data was collected from Eurostat based on 2004 (since EU accession) and for the newest available data, which is from 2023 (see Table 2).

Table 2

Ageing society indicators of the Baltic States and EU average in 2004 and 2023

Indicator	EU-27 average		Estonia		Latvia		Lithuania	
	2004	2023	2004	2023	2004	2023	2004	2023
Population Aged 65 and Over (%)	16	21.3	16	20.9	15	22.2	14	21.2
The average life expectancy at birth (Years)	78.5	81.5	72.8	79.0	70.9	75.9	72.2	77.3
Old Age Dependency Ratio (%)	25.4	33.4	23.5	31.9	24.0	30.8	22.8	30.8
Pension Expenditure (% of GDP)	10.6	12.9 (2021)	6.7	8.5 (2021)	6.2	8.5 (2021)	6.0	7.1 (2021)
Median age of population	38	44.5	38	42.8	38.0	44.0	38.0	45.0
Gender imbalance for people aged 65 and over (Ratio of woman to man)	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.65	1.55	1.6	1.5

Source: created by authors based on (EUROSTAT, 2024; World Bank, 2024).

The numbers in Table 2 show that the population of Baltic countries is changing as the percentage of elderly (aged 65 and above) grows, which is expected to continue in that fashion. Notably, the number of elderly people is expected to increase in the next several years as life expectancy rises, owing to the improvements in the standards of care and quality of living.

Estonia is at the top in terms of life expectancy at 78.5 years, which is higher than Latvia and Lithuania, which have a life expectancy of 75.5 and 77.0 years, respectively. Estonia in 2023 has an old age population dependency ratio of 31.9%, and Latvia and Lithuania are reported to be 30.8% and 30.8%, respectively, in the same year. This vital indicator is called the 'old age dependency ratio', and estimates the average ratio of people aged above 65 against the average working population. It shows that it is ever more challenging for the working population to contribute generously to social security and welfare upon witnessing such

old-age dependency ratios. The pension expenditure (% of GDP) indicator shows the increasing burden on state finance for providing social pensions for retired people.

In summary, Latvia showed the highest growth in the elderly population and old age dependency ratios, while Lithuania exhibited the sharpest increase in median age. Estonia led in life expectancy improvements, reflecting superior advancements in healthcare and social conditions. Estonia and Latvia spent more on pensions relative to GDP, while Lithuania maintained a more restrained approach. Also, the persistent gender disparities highlight a common issue across the Baltics, with slight reductions over the years.

The proportion of elderly people has grown significantly across the EU and the Baltic States, indicating increased longevity and declining birth rates. With the rising old-age dependency ratios and pension expenditures, the financial and social pressures on governments are growing in the Baltic States. A higher ratio of women to men among the elderly suggests additional challenges, such as social isolation and healthcare needs for elderly women. Improved life expectancy allows us to expect similar trends due to increasing living standards and medical advancements.

These ageing society indicator trends emphasize the unique challenges faced by each Baltic state in managing its aging populations and the need for tailored policy responses.

5. DISCUSSION

The demographic structure of Baltic countries focuses on population characteristics, health issues, and the implications of population aging. All these countries are in transition towards having an older population structure. In that context, a large number of research studies speak about the various issues associated with the fast-aging population structure, which includes the burden of chronic diseases, disparities in health literacy level, and also the socio-economic conditions of older people.

The results of the case study were compared with other studies analyzing demographic, health, and social support issues of aging societies in the Baltic States to find explanations of differences indicated in a case study of ageing societies in the Baltic States.

Estonia, with a slower increase in the elderly population, has a superior life expectancy and the most significant improvement in it during the 2004-2023 period compared to its neighbors. Estonia also has the slowest increase in median age. Therefore, Estonia consistently achieved the best or near-best results in multiple indicators of an ageing society, including life expectancy, slower growth in the elderly population, lower median age, and improved gender balance. Despite slightly higher pension expenditure and dependency ratio compared to Lithuania, Estonia's gains in life expectancy and demographic health are notable.

However, studies showed the growing number of old populations in Estonia is coupled with an increase in chronic diseases, with Parkinson's disease being one of the examples. The study by (Kadastik-Eerme et al., 2019 suggests that there is a significant increasing trend in the age-adjusted prevalence rates of tonal schizophrenia and neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson's etc., which can be linked to the increase in the ageing population in Estonia. This trend is seen in the statistical record of gastric cancer, which is more spread among elderly people (Pärn et al., 2019). Health in Estonia is further compromised by the fact that a significant proportion of the aged suffer hip fractures, and the trend is concerning nonoperative treatment, which results in a very high one-year mortality rate (Prommik et al. 2019). Therefore, there is a clear need for improving focused healthcare solutions that would suit older people by taking into account the prevailing health problems of the Estonian elderly population.

The case study showed that Lithuania performs well in fiscal management (lowest pension expenditure) and old age dependency ratio, but it has the highest median age, indicating faster aging. Studies like Stumbrys et al. (2020) conducted in Lithuania portray a challenging simulation in that there exist discrepancies

regarding the mortality rate associated with alcohol addiction and abuse. One of the aggravating factors of this issue is the increasing life expectancy that comes with a higher risk of alcohol abuse, particularly among older adults. Also, a study by Dolskas et al. (2021) stressed that the increased rate of skin melanoma, especially in older adults, requires public health policies to address this critical health problem. The demand to address social services and care systems is paramount as the older population relies on the family but can fail to do so owing to the current emigration patterns of the youth in Lithuania (Rapoliene & Kordusien, 2022). This situation needs to be addressed by interventions in a public health system that revolve around reducing the burden of chronic diseases and increasing the standard of life of the elderly. In addition, the socioeconomic profile of the population in Lithuania also changes due to elderly people who live alone. Because of that, they struggle to access basic care and social networks. According to Zemaitaityte 2024, certain phenomena, such as more precarious economic status and higher social solitude, are some of the social threats people face during the period of ageing in Lithuania.

The case study showed that Latvia faces the most challenges, with higher growth in the elderly population and slower improvements in life expectancy. The health literacy problem of the ageing population is critical for Latvia, according to a study by Gatulyte et al., 2022). The health surveys conducted in Latvia show a low involvement of elderly people, and these omissions in survey coverage have impacted the formulation of effective methods for any targeted health program. This holds especially true as older demographics have low literacy in health information, which negatively impacts their health and access to the healthcare systems.

The digital realm in the Baltic region's context of aging remains yet another crucial component. Rapoliene et al. (2024) describe how older adults cannot utilize information and communication technologies (ICT) as they would like to. There is indeed lacking emphasis on the gap in digital literacy amongst the elderly populations of the Baltic States. This lagging technological knowledge of elderly people clearly hampers the integration of IT in services linked to health and social protection systems.

Consequently, it can be said that the problems of the elderly across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are interconnected with the issues of health, economic status, health literacy, and the geography of health services. Considering those mentioned above, a perspective focus is on applying comprehensive health and social policies designed for older adults within the context of these countries by considering the most important problems revealed in these countries. Aimed at the aging population, policies such as improving access to health care, increasing the level of health literacy as well as promoting social inclusion, and developing old age-friendly communities are crucial in enabling the elderly to lead better and more active lives.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research show the most important demographic changes in the population of the Baltic States, significantly a notable increase in life expectancy and old-age dependency ratio, are key indicators that point to the rise in the proportion of elderly people in the region. Pensions as a percentage of GDP in these states have also grown since 2004, turning 2023. The challenges of these trends are seen through the political and socio-economic lens of the state contemplating a rapid change in its population structure.

Comparative analysis performed in the case study shows that life expectancy in Estonia is the highest among the three Baltic States due to the Estonian population's better health indicators and higher life standards. A peculiar finding of the studies was that the skewed ratio of aging males over females in all three countries raised more concern over females' extended life expectancy. Estonia stands out as the best-performing country overall. It consistently achieved the best or near-best results in multiple indicators,

including life expectancy, slower growth in the elderly population, lower median age, and improved gender balance. Despite slightly higher pension expenditure and dependency ratio compared to Lithuania, Estonia's gains in life expectancy and health are notable. Lithuania performs well in fiscal management (lowest pension expenditure) and old age dependency ratio. Still, it has the highest median age, indicating faster ageing, and Latvia faces the most challenges, with higher growth in the elderly population and slower improvements in life expectancy.

Lack of access to healthcare because of social isolation and inadequate computer literacy among older adults emerged as essential factors owing to the young moving to urban areas, all of which warrant state intervention for the elderly and aged population. The use of new digital technologies to ensure a higher quality of health services (Korzyński et al., 2023), social support, and social inclusion are challenges that need to be addressed by state policies providing various supports and training for the older population. Further, research and advancement of marketing and sociology disciplines would provide better solutions for dealing with ageing societies in the Baltic States.

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