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THE ROLE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN PROMOTING HEALTHY AGEING IN PLACE

MALAYSIA

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Nationally representative data can provide up-to-date insights. The Malaysia Ageing and Retirement Survey (MARS)⁵¹ suggests that relationships and connectedness between family and community members remain strong and intact, including relationships with children through co-residence, contact, care and support.

About 91% of the respondents reported having a loving family, 94% live with their spouse and/or other family members, 84% meet in person with their children at least four times a year, while 79% talk to their children by telephone, WhatsApp or emails several times a month. The data indicate that family connectedness remains strong and promotes ageing in place.

On average, 75% of the respondents from age 60 onwards are not prepared to live in an assisted living facility such as a nursing home, suggesting that they wish to continue to live in their own homes. Significant factors influencing older people to stay at home include having a loving family, rural residence,

and receiving financial and other support from their children. Older people who are prepared to live alone, along with those who frequently participate in social outings, are more likely to want to live in an assisted living facility. Surveys of those who live in long-term care institutions should supplement these analyses in the future.

Overall, the results confirm that context matters in understanding environments and older people's preferences.

These results differ from the perception that traditional family-based care in many countries is on the decline, including in Asian countries. **Policies should be informed by nationally representative data, with incentives for family members who are care providers.** For many countries this would be more cost-effective and sustainable than building and maintaining more nursing homes and similar facilities. Home care and improved design are also in line with the majority of older people's preferences.