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Abstract Title

Malta's changing demographics - Projecting Malta's future health system demands to 2030

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Abstract

Background

Malta's health system is constantly adapting to challenges with its capacity constantly being extended and stretched. Recent demographic changes are delineated by an ageing native population and a mass inflow of foreign workers. These economic immigrants have contributed significantly to the solid growth of Malta's economy, but have also added significant pressure on the infrastructure, including on the health care system. Investment to upgrade the public infrastructure is necessary to sustain the continued influx of foreign workers, as continued economy and population growth is expected.

Methods

Using a purely demographic model, linear projections of health care demands were built using adjusted population projections by age-group and gender until 2030.

Results

Projections for attendances at the Accident and Emergency Department, Primary Health Care Centres and psychiatric out-patient clinics will continue to increase. Cancer incidence rate is projected to increase by 22.5% by 2030 and will heavily impact the health care system, being a major health cost driver. Projected total number of births and attendances at the genito-urinary clinic are expected to decrease. Bed-

requirement projections for Mater Dei Hospital demonstrate significant medical bed shortages.

Conclusions

Malta's continuing population expansion is impacting on its infrastructure, which needs increased investment and long-term planning in various sectors. Significant health policy and infrastructure responses are likely to be required to increase capacity of the primary health sector as well as to address bed shortages, to be able to cope with Malta's changing demography sustainably.

Key Message 1

Demographic ageing and migrant workforce inflows are defining the burdens on Malta's health system

Key Message 2

Projected Cancer incidence rate increases and bed shortages will impact Malta's health care system