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Letter to the Editor

Strengthening healthy ageing in the Caribbean through regional capacity building and ICOPE implementation

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The demographic shift towards older populations challenges prevailing health system models by exposing the limitations of disease-centered, fragmented approaches and highlighting the need for integrated, life-course oriented strategies. In the Caribbean, this transition is occurring rapidly: adults aged 60 years and older accounted for roughly 12 % of the population in 2017, a proportion projected to reach nearly 25 % by 2040, and exceeding 40 % in territories such as Martinique and Guadeloupe [1]. This demographic change unfolds against persistent social and economic inequalities, a high burden of non-communicable diseases particularly hypertension and diabetes, and structurally constrained health systems.

As ageing accelerates, Caribbean health systems face growing pressures to remain both equitable and sustainable. A strategic reorientation towards healthy ageing is therefore imperative [2]. The WHO Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) framework offers a coherent response, shifting from disease-centered care to preservation of intrinsic capacity, functional ability, and person-centered approaches [3,4]. This paradigm is especially relevant in the Caribbean, where strengthening primary health care, integrating community-based services, and improving continuity of care are essential to reducing health inequities and enhancing resilience.

Effective ICOPE implementation requires strong local governance, ownership, and capacity building [5,6]. Beyond WHO technical support, regional platforms for training and knowledge exchange provide critical leverage for embedding the framework within health systems [7]. In Martinique, for example, the Regional Health Agency has facilitated ICOPE integration into the regional health information system. Concurrently, the Caribbean Days on Ageing and Maintenance of Functional Ability (*Journées Caribéennes du Vieillissement et du Maintien de l'Autonomie*; https://congres-jcvma.com) were launched in 2025, with a second edition in 2026. These initiative and meetings include dedicated ICOPE sessions and other innovative of aging project and serve as a forum to align territorial initiatives within a shared regional strategy [8]. Establishing structured synergies between local ICOPE implementation, supported by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and regional initiatives such as the JCVMA (https://congres-jcvma.com) could accelerate the deployment of integrated, equitable, and culturally adapted healthy ageing strategies. Such alignment has the potential to transform demographic ageing from a perceived challenge into an opportunity for health system strengthening, social cohesion, and sustainable development across the Caribbean.

Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT to improve language and readability. After using this tool, the authors carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and assume full responsibility for the final version of the publication

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Nadine Simo: Writing – review & editing, Validation. **Moustapha Dramé:** Writing – review & editing. **Denis Boucaud-Maitre:** Writing – review & editing. **Maturin Tabue-Teguo:** Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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