



By 2050 the number of people aged 80 and over is forecast to rise to 268 million in Low-Income Countries, and 124 million in Middle Income Countries. Of these, around 90 million will be living in China. *Source: HelpAge International*



Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease. *Source: WHO*



Training lay health workers to deliver cognitive-behavioural therapy could offer a 'blueprint' for tackling the mental health crisis. The Friendship Bench, a brief psychological treatment delivered by lay health workers in Zimbabwe, was shown to dramatically improve the symptoms of patients with mental health problems.



Cogito is testing an app that creates a picture of your mental health just by listening to the sound of your voice. It picks up on vocal cues (such as tone) that can signal mood changes and uses the phone's accelerometer to figure out how active you are - a strong indicator for depression.



Virtual reality (VR) is starting to be used for soothing sensory therapy for people with Alzheimers. It allows them to experience visiting peaceful scenes, such as sunlit forests and beaches that they are unable to travel to. Patients report feeling calm and relaxed for hours after using the VR headsets.



Evernym is using blockchain technologies to create 'self-sovereign' digital identities that allow people to own and manage their own data. In a world of fitbits and smart phones, Patientory is putting personal health data into the hands of individuals and securing it with blockchain technology.

The companionship industry

It's 2030. Societies across the world are ageing and social care is a pressing problem even in developing countries. However there is also more opportunity for the active elderly to find appropriate work. There is a generational split between urban and rural areas as the young and middle-aged work in cities but elder people remain in villages. Urban lives are precarious and increasingly atomised, contributing to an ongoing global mental health crisis.



