

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million (1990–2000) and is projected to increase by a further 1.5 million by 2020 (Office for National Statistics 2001). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 2.5 million by 2020 in the USA (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop strategies to meet the needs of the ageing population. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a 'Global Strategy on Ageing and Health' (WHO 1999) which aims to ensure that older people are able to live in safety, health, dignity, independence, participation in society and fulfilment. The WHO has also developed a 'Global Strategy on the Prevention of Falls in Older People' (WHO 2001) which aims to reduce the incidence of falls in older people. The WHO has also developed a 'Global Strategy on the Prevention of Falls in Older People' (WHO 2001) which aims to reduce the incidence of falls in older people.

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