

# Inflation and Health

*Exploring whether high inflation countries also see lower life expectancy*

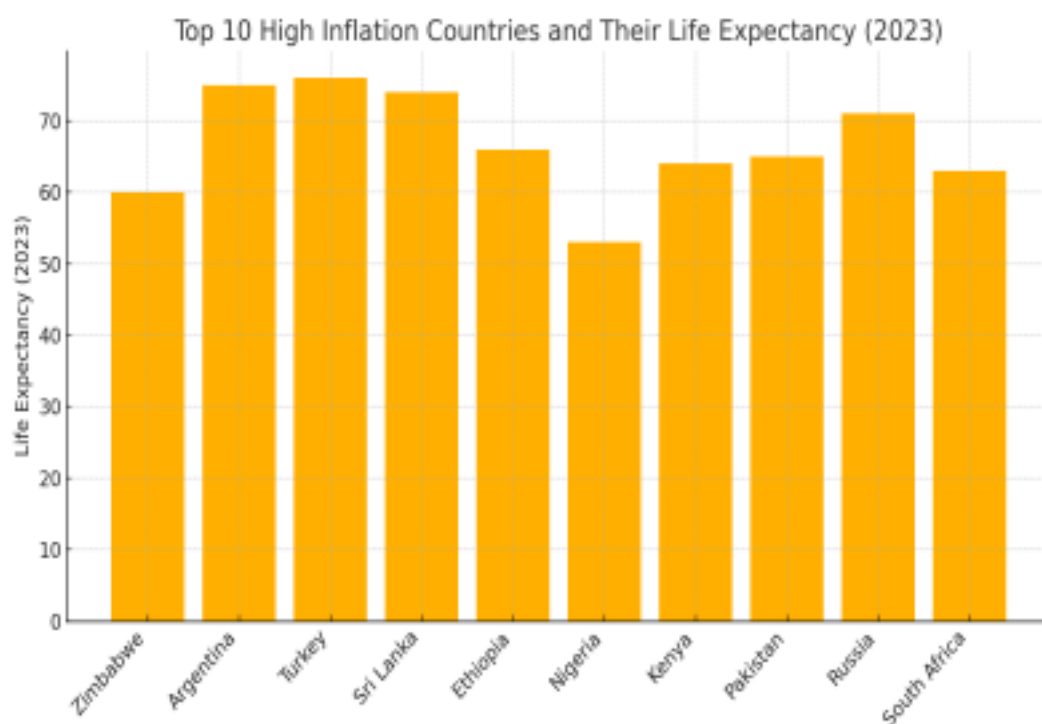
**By Akshyata Bhooshan**

Inflation has returned to the global stage with a vengeance. From 2020 to 2023 countries across the world face soaring costs of food, fuel and medicine. While economists debated policy moves, ordinary families made daily sacrifices. This story examines a vital question. Do high inflation countries also see lower life expectancy

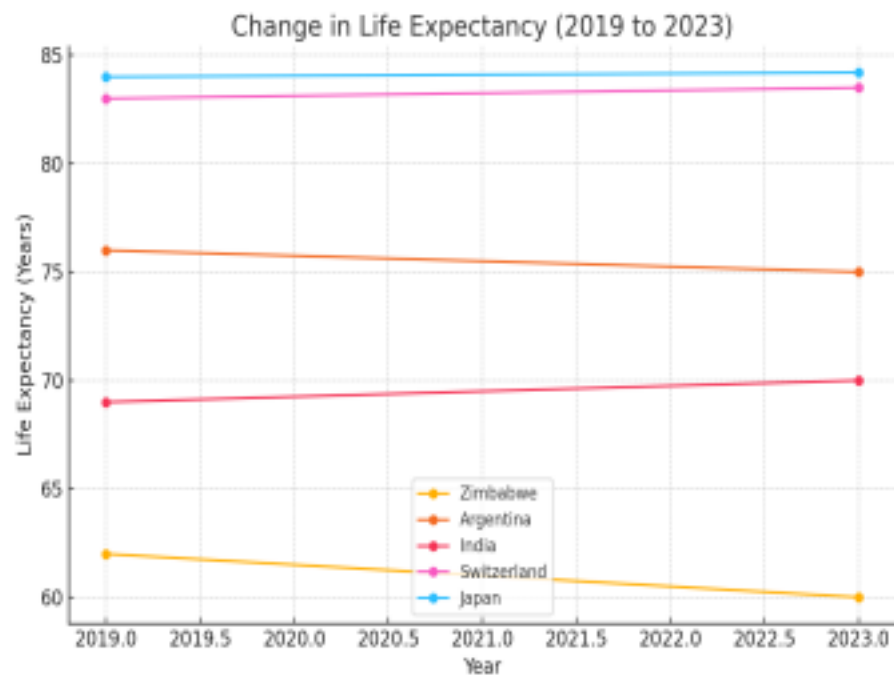
It matters because inflation is not felt evenly. For the affluent inflation is an irritation. For the poor it is devastating. A household forced to skip meals or delay treatment is paying with health, not just money. In fragile health systems especially across the Global South inflation can directly translate into fewer years of life. The story is therefore not just about economics but about human survival.

The numbers reveal the divide starkly. Zimbabwe, Argentina and Turkey with runaway inflation recorded life expectancies far below stable economies such as Switzerland and Japan. Nigeria, South Africa and Ethiopia all suffered both high prices and fragile public health. Meanwhile rich countries cushioned their citizens with safety nets and subsidies. The contrast is plain. When inflation climbs, longevity declines.

The lesson is clear. Inflation is not just an economic index. It is a public health issue. Countries that treat it as a matter of survival are better positioned to protect their citizens. Governments must ensure food and medicine remain accessible during inflation shocks and expand public healthcare to shield the vulnerable. Otherwise price rises will continue to rob people not only of their savings but of their years. When prices rise years fall.



Top 10 high inflation countries and their life expectancy in 2023. Source: World Bank



Change in life expectancy between 2019 and 2023 for selected countries.  
Source: World Bank