This special issue of Pan American Journal of Public Health presents a series of papers covering multiple dimensions of the aging process. The majority of these studies use data generated by a multicenter project that was directed by the Pan American Health Organization and that was called Health, Well-Being, and Aging (the “SABE project”). The articles in this issue are the fruits of the investment made by PAHO and its funding partners to develop a new body of knowledge on public health and aging. Despite abundant evidence of increased inequity and loss of social protection during the past decade, national sociopolitical agendas have, in many cases, dealt with this situation in only a fragmented and indirect manner, without sufficient data regarding its magnitude, causal factors, and the affected populations.

**Articles**

Longevity and the quality of life: a new challenge for public health in the Americas

Building the foundations for health in old age in the Americas

Equity of access to health care for older adults in four major Latin American cities

The Health, Well-Being, and Aging ("SABE") survey: methodology applied and profile of the study population

Self-reported general health in older adults in Latin America and the Caribbean: usefulness of the indicator for determining priority public health needs

Determinants of self-rated health among elderly persons in São Paulo, Brazil

Historical and current predictors of self-reported health status among elderly persons in Barbados

Chronic diseases and functional limitation in older adults: a comparative study in seven cities of Latin America and the Caribbean

Falls among elderly persons in Latin America and the Caribbean and among elderly Mexican-Americans

The contribution of living arrangements in the provision of care for elderly persons with functional impairments in São Paulo, Brazil

Life expectancy with functional disability in elderly persons in São Paulo, Brazil

Cataract blindness in people 50 years old or older in a semirural area of northern Peru

Social inequality in health and the utilization of health services among the elderly in Latin America

**Special Issue on Physical Activity**

This issue presents landmark reports on physical activity from Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Peru. Overall, these articles report that more than two thirds of the population does not meet the recommended levels of physical activity sufficient to gain health benefits. This high level of inactivity and the resulting health risks are particularly worrisome in the face of rapid, broad changes in urban lifestyles that favor convenience and comfort in every domain of life: at work, in household tasks, in transportation, and in leisure-time activities.

**Articles**

The effect of controlled physical activity on the body composition of postmenopausal sedentary women

Factors associated with physical activity among Mexican women of childbearing age

A descriptive epidemiology of leisure-time physical activity in Brazil, 1996–1997

Sociodemographic and environmental factors associated with sports physical activity in the urban population of Peru

The Agita São Paulo Program as a model for using physical activity to promote health