

Women's Health Policy and Economic Enablement: Frontiers in Reproductive Health and Technology

Integrating Women's Health into Domestic Demographic Strategy

August 2025



The Hidden Healthcare Need Behind Demographic Decline

Barriers in access to fertility care and maternal health is an under-recognized driver of demographic challenges

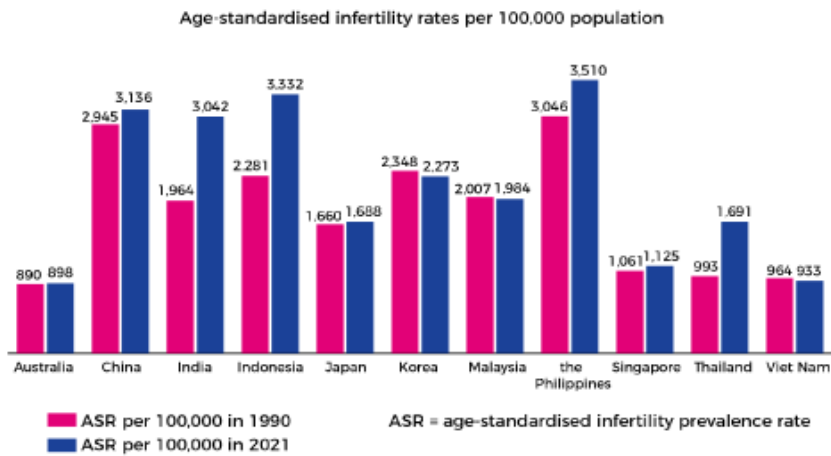
- **The Fertility Gap:** Completed fertility consistently below intended family size across developed nations
- **Average age of first-time mothers has risen to over 30 years** in high-income economies, reflecting broader global trends in delayed childbearing among women pursuing careers and education
- **1 in 6 people globally** affected by infertility at some point in their lives
- **WHO Recognition:** Infertility classified as a disease since 2009, yet many governments don't treat it as such



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Infertility Prevalence Across the APAC Region



Source: Luo, Y. et al. (2024). Trends and Distribution of Infertility – Asia Pacific Region, 1990–2021. China CDC Wkly 6, 689–694.

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Economic Cost of Inaction

The economic burden of demographic decline far exceeds investment in women's health.

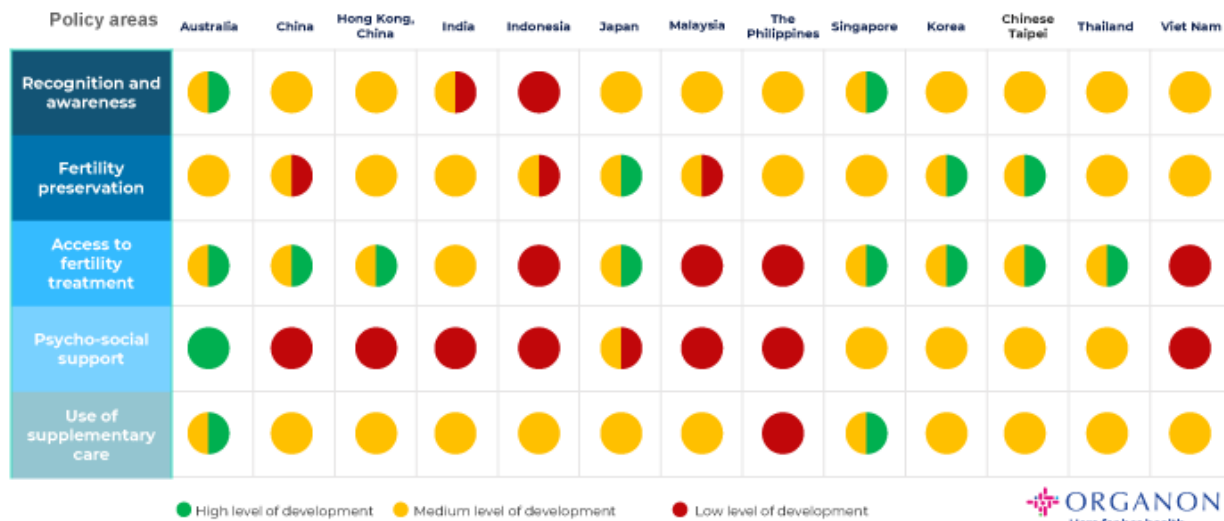
- **Korea Example:** \$7.4 trillion economic cost over 30 years
- **Annual Losses:** \$456M in pension funds, \$588M in tax revenue (2022)
- **Patient Financial Burden:** 21-29% of families spend >50% of disposable income on IVF
- **Global Opportunity:** \$1 trillion annual economic boost possible by 2040 through women's health investment



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Heatmap of policy development in the APAC region: A mixed picture



Current Policy Gaps - The Access Crisis

Systemic barriers prevent optimal reproductive healthcare access.

- **>50% of economies** lack funding for IVF or fertility treatments
- **Recognition Gap:** Infertility not classified as disease in healthcare policymaking
- **Geographic Disparities:** Rural populations face significant access barriers
- **Reimbursement Restrictions:** Age, BMI, marital status, cycle limits create inequity



Level of Funding and Policy Support:

High Support: Australia; Japan; Korea; Chinese Taipei

Medium Support: Hong Kong, China; Singapore; Thailand

Low Support: China; Indonesia; Malaysia; the Philippines; Viet Nam

The Five Pillars of Comprehensive Women's Health Policy

Effective demographic strategy requires holistic approach to women's health

PILLAR 1:

Recognition & Awareness

- National fertility education campaigns
- Infertility recognition as disease

PILLAR 2:

Treatment Access

- Universal fertility care coverage
- Geographic equity in service provision

PILLAR 3:

Psychosocial Support

- Integrated mental health services
- Patient engagement tools

PILLAR 4:

Innovation & Quality

- Evidence-based supplementary care
- Technology integration

PILLAR 5:

Cultural Adaptation

- Inclusive policies for diverse family structures
- Ethical framework alignment

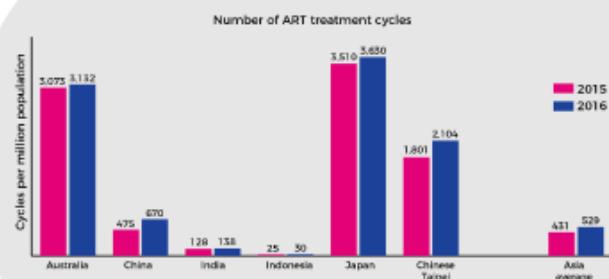
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Policy Success Stories - Learnings

Proven policy models demonstrate impact and scalability




- **Denmark:** Public funding for 3 IVF cycles → 1 in 10 births involve ART
- **Japan:** 70% ART cost coverage + paid fertility leave → 1 in 14 births via IVF
- **Australia:** Comprehensive fertility counseling + Medicare rebates
- **France:** Expanded access to single women and same-sex couples (2021)



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Policies that impact patients' access to fertility preservation and ART treatment

Recognition and awareness 	Recognition of infertility as a disease	Public awareness and education on fertility
Fertility preservation 	Medical egg freezing policies	Social egg freezing policies
Access to fertility treatment 	Access to treatment centres	Public funding and services
Psycho-social support 	Availability and reimbursement of psychosocial care	
Use of supplementary care 	Preimplantation genetic testing	Non-validated "add-ons"

Source: CRA Analysis

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Technology and Innovation Frontiers

Emerging technologies require supportive policy frameworks

- **Precision Medicine:** Personalized fertility treatments
- **Digital Health:** AI-powered patient support platforms
- **Cryopreservation:** Fertility preservation for cancer patients
- **Telemedicine:** Rural access expansion
- **Policy Need:** Regulatory frameworks for innovation adoption



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Economic Investment Framework

Strategic financing mechanisms can accelerate policy implementation

- **Government Investment:** Universal fertility coverage programs
- **Private Sector:** Employer-sponsored fertility benefits
- **Insurance Innovation:** Risk-sharing models for fertility care
- **International Cooperation:** APEC knowledge sharing mechanisms
- **Sustainable Financing:** Results-based funding models



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Call to Action - The Demographic Imperative

The time for action is now - demographic challenges require immediate response

Immediate Actions:

- Recognize infertility as disease in domestic health policies
- Establish comprehensive women's health strategies
- Increase funding allocation for reproductive health

Medium-term Goals:

- Double global ART access within a decade
- Implement universal fertility care coverage
- Create innovation-friendly regulatory environments

Long-term Vision:

- Demographic resilience through reproductive choice
- Economic sustainability through population health
- Regional leadership in women's health policy

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APEC economies support prioritizing and investing in women's health to ensure prosperity and sustainability



Addressing the women's health gap could potentially boost the global economy by at least **\$1 trillion annually by 2040**.

Closing this gap would not only enhance women's health but also bolster workforce participation, leading to a **1.7% increase in per capita GDP**.



Investing in women's health can yield significant returns, **for every \$1 invested, approximately \$3 in economic growth** could be generated globally.

Source: <https://www.apec.org/meeting-papers/sectoral-ministerial-meetings/health/2024-apec-high-level-meeting-on-health-and-the-economy>

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Thank You

Investing in women's health is not just a moral imperative - it's an economic necessity for sustainable demographic futures

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