

Over 60s also use computer, tablet or smartphone, and have an internet connection

## R&D+i in ageing: opportunities for the Basque economy

Karmele Acedo Gil

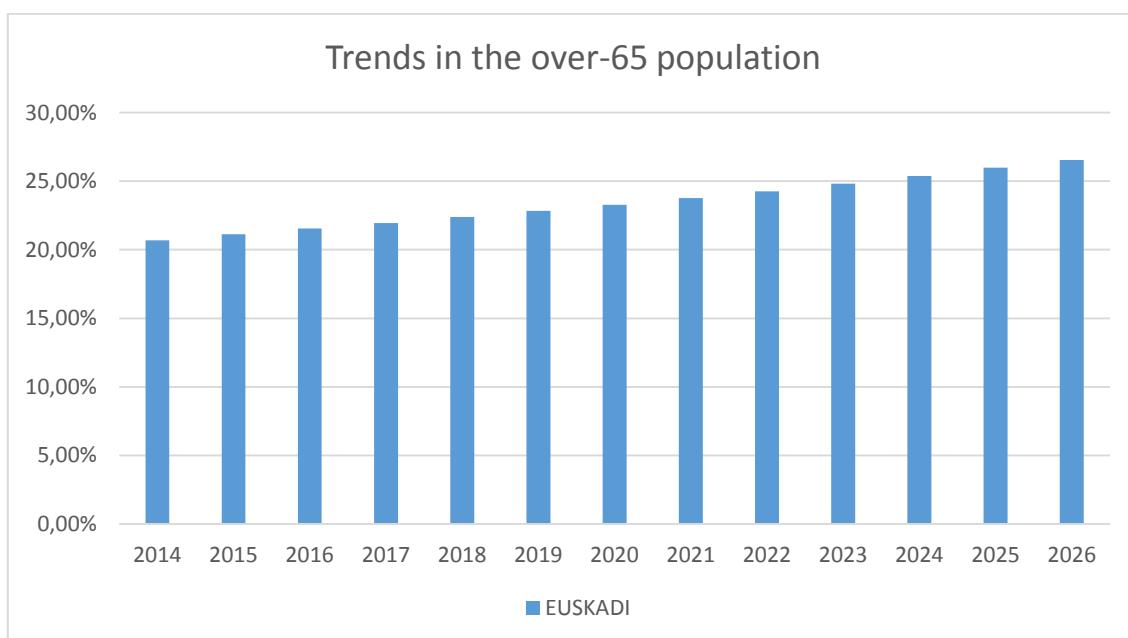
One of the main social challenges in Europe today is population ageing, a challenge that, now more than ever, is proving to be an unprecedented issue.

The drivers of the phenomenon are clear:

- The increase in life expectancy as a result of improvements in healthcare, housing and nutrition. In this sense, the Basque Country is a world leader in matters related to life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy.
- Declining birth rates.

At this stage, not only can the Basque Country not ignore this issue, but the region has the opportunity and challenge of becoming a space for testing and developing good practices that make it possible to address this phenomenon as an opportunity.

An opportunity to generate new businesses, companies and jobs aimed at providing services to meet this new social demand.



Ageing can and must be addressed, bearing in mind that it is:

- **A natural and desirable process** both on a personal and a societal and community level. We must ensure that people age free from disability and that, if disability does then occur, we have an environment in place that understands these needs, with resources, infrastructures, technical assistance and sufficient support to respond to those who have made what we have possible.

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- **Multidimensional**, that it goes beyond the health and social sector and impacts other areas, such as lifelong learning, employment, culture and leisure, values, urban planning, transport, nutrition and taxation.
- **A personal and social achievement**, with the real challenge being to “live” and “be an active part” of an ageing society, regardless of how old we are.
- **A social and economic development opportunity for the Basque Country**, which could become a great laboratory (living-lab) where innovations are developed that serve as models for other countries.

At the same time, **the profile of older people in our society has changed** and is, in turn, increasingly diverse and heterogeneous. We are talking about:

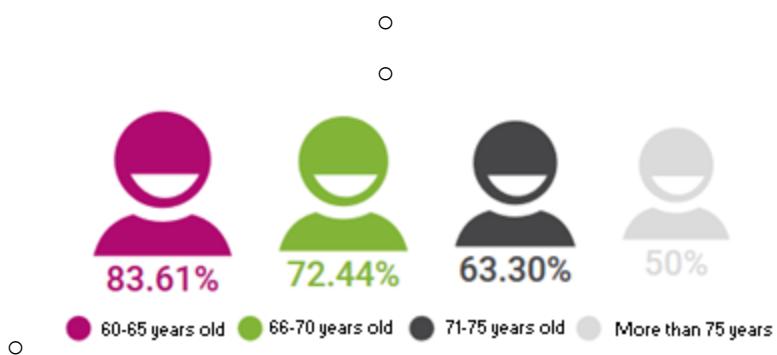
- **Different ages of old age**, 60-70-80-90...
- **Different levels of income in old age**, with increasingly diverse levels, needs and demands.

*People between 60 and 70 years old are those who most invest their savings in companies (Source National Institute of Statistics Spain 2015).*

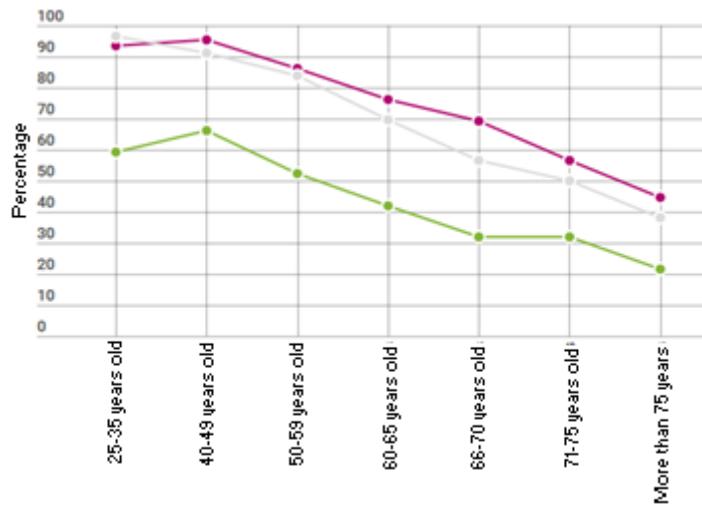


● 25 to 39 years old ● 40 to 49 years old ● 50 to 59 years old ● 60 to 65 years old  
 ● 66 to 70 years old ● 71 to 75 years old ● More than 75 years

- **Digitally competent older people who are accustomed to using IT technologies.** 68.5% of people over the age of 65 in the Basque Country have internet at home and use and operate a computer, tablet or smartphone.
- *Internet connection at home according to age range (Source National Institute of Statistics Spain 2015).*



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- **The diversity of this population's cultural interests and concerns.** The over-65 age group is one of the social groups where the increase in the cost of leisure and cultural products has had the lowest impact on consumption in the Basque Country.
- And, above all, the **determination of wanting to age actively and in one's own home.**

These are all elements that are going to have a strong impact on the behaviour of our clearly ageing society and, therefore, on the evolution of our demand and consumption. As a result of this, the real innovation challenge linked to ageing is identifying it in terms of an opportunity, in knowing how to manage age diversity in all areas and being capable of spotting the different opportunities it generates.

In order to deal with this social reality in terms of economic development and employment opportunities, a creative vision is needed that can make a virtue of the problem and turn it into a source of employment and wealth. A market emerges when demand (needs) and supply (companies that provide services to meet that demand) come together and someone bears the cost of that service (it will not and cannot always be the government, which is why new businesses, services and companies will emerge in this sector).

At national level, the emerging features pointing towards a new way of ageing need to be identified in order to help us outline a sustainable ageing model, for which innovation (in products, services, business models, policies, public-private partnership, etc.) is essential.

### Home Care Lab, R&D+i unit of Grupo Servicios Sociales Integrados

Home Care Lab, S. Coop. (hereinafter, HCL), is the R&D+i business unit of Grupo Servicios Sociales Integrados, S. Coop. (hereinafter, Grupo S.S.I.) created in 2011 and certified by the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network in 2012. HCL helps strengthen innovative capacities in the context of ageing, chronicity and dependency, by acquiring, developing and disseminating the knowledge obtained in those areas via an open and cooperative research process.

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Grupo S.S.I. is a corporate group composed of professionals whose objective is to comprehensively meet the social needs of people with a lack of independence and social support, together with their families, in the Basque Country. Quality management of social services under public responsibility, from a social economy approach, is part of its identity. Grupo S.S.I. was established in 1986 in Bilbao with a twofold objective: to care for older people with limited financial resources, and to organise self-employment for women who provided care services to people, generally in the informal economy.

Since then it has gained real experience in the division of labour and advancement of women. Thus, it is the only large-scale social cooperative managed entirely by women in Spain.

HCL is a social innovation organisation aimed at finding new solutions linked to the social and healthcare system in a rapidly ageing society, which demands innovative solutions that incorporate the potential of new technologies to deal with increasingly special and diverse growing care needs.

HCL's commercial activity includes:

- Technological, strategic and prospective monitoring.
- Developing applied research projects and technological progress.
- Providing support and services for collaborative projects.
- Testing and evaluating new products, services and/or therapies in the living-lab.
- Disseminating knowledge and experience acquired via training resources, publications, internet, etc.

And its strategic knowledge areas are:

- Technology-based health and social care at home
- Active Ageing
- NEW CAREER PROFILES AND TRAINING
- Active ageing in the community
- New care models

HCL is a unique unit within the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network, because of both the typology of its local projects and the knowledge it has incorporated into other projects from other network partners, as well as into the network itself and the Basque science, technology and innovation system during this period. Its uniqueness stems from its social and corporate origin and the fact that it has incorporated into the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network the vision, knowledge and psychosocial competencies needed to drive innovation and new development models in the health and social sector, especially in caring for vulnerable groups and people, with a clear focus on ageing and dependent people. This area of work is defined as one of the main challenges of today and the future, not only in the Basque Country, but in the EU as a whole, in the societal challenges of the Horizon 2020 programme, under the category Health, Demographic Change and Well-being.