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## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMART HEALTH AND WELLNESS INDUSTRY IN CHINA**

In recent years, China's ageing has become increasingly severe, with the number of elderly people increasing at a rapid rate year by year, showing the typical characteristics of wide distribution and aging before getting rich, which has brought greater pressure on society. With the development of information technology, China's health & wellness industry has gradually emerged as a new form of business - smart health & wellness.

Internationally, the concept of "smart ageing", also known as "intelligent ageing systems", was first developed in the UK, where the elderly can enjoy a high quality of life in their daily lives without the constraints of time and space [1]. However, there are significant differences between countries in terms of their models of wellbeing. For example, Singapore has adopted the "home care" model, Germany and Switzerland have adopted the "mutual care" model, Japan, South Korea and the United States have adopted the "migratory bird care" model, and in the highly developed United States, there is also the "relocation" model. In the United States, where the economy is highly developed, there is also the 'ageing in a different place'.

At present, the international development of smart health & wellness presents two general characteristics. Firstly, in terms of research, the research on smart health & wellness mainly tends to focus on smart home products, especially the research on

system development and smart home. Secondly, from the main research content, foreign wisdom health & wellness is more inclined to the development of guardianship system and intelligent products. In terms of platform and system development, remote sensing devices and mobile health monitoring systems are more typical; in terms of smart homes, the research is more inclined to alarm systems and telemedicine; meanwhile, foreign research on elderly robots is early and technically mature, and they have been applied to elderly care services [2].

In China, different from conventional health & wellness, smart health & wellness means from the moment it enters China: health & wellness work should make use of advanced information management technology, wireless sensor networks and other technical means to achieve information and resource sharing, cross the boundaries of time, space and people, integrate the elderly, the community, medical and nursing staff, medical institutions, the government and service organisations into an organic whole, and provide the elderly with more convenient, more diverse and better-suited services. It provides more convenient, diversified and demand-compatible services to meet the needs of the elderly from the physical and mental levels, and achieves the objective material and subjective spiritual satisfaction of the elderly [3].

With the development of smart health & wellness in China, the connotation of smart health & wellness has changed in recent years, especially in terms of the use of digital technology. In China, 2019 is known as the first year of smart health & wellness by those in the smart health & wellness industry, as it is the year when smart health & wellness is supported by stronger technology as 5G is commercially available, and national and local governments have actively introduced over 70 policies related to smart elderly care to support the development of the smart elderly care industry, which are used to implement various incentives related to smart health & wellness. The development of smart health & wellness in China is in full swing, with some success in the exploration of elderly care models and the design of elderly care information service platforms and health management systems; however, it is undeniable that China's smart health & wellness started late and is still in the primary stage of development. Nevertheless, according to China's national conditions, smart health & wellness will still be an inevitable choice for the development of China's health & wellness industry.

From the 20th century to the present day, the issue of ageing has not only been prominent in Asia, Europe and the Americas, but has developed into a global phenomenon. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in China. China, where the demographic dividend is long gone, faces great challenges in coping with the ageing problem, due to the "family planning policy", which has resulted in fewer children and longer life expectancy. Two challenges in particular are more acute.

First of all, there is an oversupply of intelligent recreation and health care professionals. According to the 2019 *Civil Affairs Development Statistics Bulletin*,

there are 25,388 people aged 60 and above in China, accounting for 18.1% of the total population, making the problem of population ageing serious. According to forecasts, in 2025, China will have 300 million people aged 60 and above, accounting for 21%, and the proportion of people aged 65 and above will also reach 13.7%, approaching a deeply ageing society. From 2020 to 2025, China's new elderly population could reach 52 million, and the total number of elderly people will exceed 300 million. By 2050, China will have 483 million people over the age of 65, which will account for 34.1% of the total population, twice the average rate of global ageing over the same period. And the 2019 *China Aged Care Services Industry Report* shows that China needs at least 10 million aged care workers, but there are less than a million actually working in the field, a ratio that means there is 1 elderly person for every 3 people. If one caregiver can take care of three elderly people, it is not difficult to conclude that the current number of caregivers needed is about 10 million, while the existing number of caregivers is only 220,000, which means that one caregiver should take care of 10 elderly people, which is 20 times different from the international standard [4], and this gap will continue to increase with the sharp increase of the elderly population. As part of the wellness industry, the huge gap in demand for talent is evident in smart health & wellness.

Secondly, the development of smart health & wellness reflects regional imbalances. Most of the projects are concentrated in economically developed cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, and only cover some communities and welfare homes, with a narrow scope of application overall [5]. Large-scale and excellent health & wellness industry resources are concentrated in public institutions, especially in large medical constitutions in urban centres, while rural areas are restricted by many conditions and health & wellness institutions are small and scattered, with low specialisation, leading to problems such as an oversupply of high-quality resources and general resources being left idle. In addition, the sources of income for older people in urban and rural China are different, with older people in urban areas having pensions as a source of income, and older people in rural areas having their children's support or working in exchange for their own labour. The different sources of income and different levels of income directly determine the consumption patterns and levels of consumption, so smart health & wellness is not yet fully accepted by society, and there is a polarisation phenomenon, which can be traced to the relatively high cost of services for the elderly, which some families cannot afford.

To this end, Chinese scholars have actively put forward numerous proposals and the Chinese government is actively responding to them. In order to better develop the smart recreation smart health & wellness industry and effectively mitigate the ageing of China, the following measures must be taken. The first step is to improve the complex workforce and promote the development, promotion and improvement of the smart health & wellness industry. It is best to start from the source of education,

combine it with forecasts of future demand, and accelerate the development of ladder-level academic education for elderly professionals to form a professional education and training system for health & wellness talents. Talents [6]. Secondly, the structure of the health & wellness industry should be optimised. China is currently experiencing a significant ageing trend and an increase in diversified and personalised demand. 2021 saw the release of key data from China's seventh national census. The data shows that China has become the country with the largest elderly population in the world, which provides a huge market for the health & wellness industry and has led to a dramatic increase in demand for health protection services for the elderly in China. Traditional means are no longer effective in responding to such a huge market demand. Smart elderly care, relying on artificial intelligence, big data and cloud computing, will become the best choice for the smart health & wellness industry by linking the elderly at home, the community, the government and service providers through technological and information-based means to achieve a full range of services such as health management, emergency assistance and life care for the elderly [7].

The acceleration of population ageing is unstoppable. As China has the world's largest ageing population, it must grasp the strategic preparation period, take smart recreation as a breakthrough point, combine advanced information technology with the recreation industry to drive the development of better smart recreation industry and services; actively cultivate recreation talents to perfect composite professionals, carry out the transformation of the structure of the recreation industry, and prepare early to meet the growing demand of ageing.

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