

Optimizing Elderly Care Resources Amidst an Aging Population: A Study on Spatial Misallocation and Pathways for Improvement

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ABSTRACTS

As China advances towards a modernization underpinned by a high-quality demographic development, it is confronted with the demographic reality of an aging population. Sichuan and Chongqing, being among the first regions in China to enter an aging society, are grappling with a critical issue of spatial misallocation of elderly care resources. This study leverages data from 16 urban units within the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle from 2010 to 2021, employing a comprehensive index model to evaluate the level of social elderly care resources. Utilizing spatial autocorrelation, geographic concentration indices, and the Spatial Misalignment Index (SMI), this study uncovers several key insights: (1) This region has entered the later stages of a significant aging, with a higher density of older adults along the economic circle's development axis; (2) A significant imbalance in the allocation of elderly care resources is evident, coupled with spatial negative correlation; (3) The concentration of the elderly population exhibits a correlative yet distinct relationship with the concentration of elderly care resources, with a reciprocal causation dynamic; (4) A dichotomy of misalignment exists between the elderly population and elderly care resources, with varying degrees of mismatch across different grades, and a relatively stable misalignment index for the majority of cities from 2010 to 2020, while only a minority trend towards equilibrium; (5) The widespread and enduring misallocation issue fundamentally stems from the "Dual-Core Dominance" developmental constraints faced by the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle, an invisible influence on the misallocation issue, dubbed the "Ba-Shu Dilemma". Drawing from the international concept of 'healthy aging', this paper constructs a new framework for addressing the misallocation of elderly care resources in the Chinese context, proposing a "Ba-Shu characteristic" solution to the "Ba-Shu Dilemma." It offers tailored strategies for cities within the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle, categorized by different mismatch patterns.

Keywords: Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle; Elderly Care Resource Misallocation; Ba-Shu Solution

How to Cite

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