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Ageing Aussies are driving the next wave of healthcare growth

Health & Biotech | 6 hours ago | Eddy Sunarto



The business of ageing is stretching out, from life-saving tech to quality-of-life solutions. Pic: Getty Images

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- Ageing is quietly becoming a massive healthcare opportunity
- From stroke to lungs to memory, the cracks are showing
- LTR Pharma taps into the part no one talks about

Australians are getting older, but this isn't a generation easing into quiet retirement with a garden hose and a crossword.

They want to travel, stay fit, stay social and stay sharp. They want to live well, not just live long.

And to be fair, they've earned it.

People are living longer than ever, and most older Australians still rate their health as good.

But here's the catch: nearly all are carrying at least one long-term condition. On the surface things look fine, but underneath, cracks are starting to show.

The heart, the joints, the lungs, the brain. The senses, and even intimacy.

None collapses overnight, but each can chip away at independence and quality of life.

And that's where the modern healthcare opportunity sits.

When the heart starts playing games

If there's one system that carries the most weight as we age, it's the cardiovascular system.

According to **recent stats**, somewhere between 16% and 26% of Australians over 65 are dealing with heart or stroke-related conditions.

Even heatwaves become a test. The heart has to cool the body while still supplying vital organs – a balancing act that can fail under duress.

And when it doesn't, stroke risk rises.



In the first hour, doctors need to know: clot or bleed? The wrong call changes

As ageing drives a surge in cardiovascular disease, this is shaping into a massive healthcare market where access and early detection can mean the difference between life and death.

EMvision Medical Devices (ASX:EMV) is building its Emu device – a bedside stroke detection system using radiofrequency imaging.

Instead of waiting for CT access, it brings early diagnosis to the patient. This is critical in hospitals without 24/7 imaging.

Its First Responder unit pushes this even earlier, into ambulances and remote settings.

Micro-X (ASX:MX1) tackles the next step, making imaging itself mobile.

By using carbon nanotube technology, it strips out heat-heavy components, shrinking X-ray and CT systems.

Its head CT system is designed to confirm whether a stroke is a clot or a bleed, the decision that determines treatment.

The slow squeeze of ageing

Not everything hits like a heart event; some creep in more gradually.

Breathing becomes harder as lung function declines, often unnoticed until the damage is already there.

This is where companies like **4D Medical (ASX:4DX)** are stepping in, using advanced lung imaging to show how air and blood actually move through the lungs, helping detect diseases like COPD earlier and more accurately.

The brain can also start to slip. A forgotten word here, a missed detail there.



Instead of chasing amyloid like much of big pharma, **Actinogen Medical (ASX:ACW)** is targeting excess cortisol in the brain with its drug Xanamem, going after a key driver of memory decline.

Actinogen's latest trial is already clearing a key futility hurdle.

And... the senses could fade too. Hearing drops, conversations blur into background noise and social settings become more effort than enjoyment.

This is where technology is starting to improve the experience.

Audera (ASX:AUA), for example, is a hearing tech company that focuses on AI to filter noise and personalise sound in real time.

The part people avoid talking about

Meanwhile, sex doesn't retire just because people do.

Most older Aussies still want intimacy, connection, a sense of closeness. Those just don't go away.

But the body changes, and things don't always work the way they used to.

Erectile dysfunction (ED) becomes increasingly common with age, particularly alongside conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension.

Globally, more than 50% of men over 40 experience some degree of ED, and prevalence rises sharply with age.

But ED isn't just a quality-of-life issue. It's often an early warning sign.

The same vascular and metabolic problems that drive heart disease tend to show up in erectile function first. Sometimes years before a cardiac event.

In that sense, it's not an isolated condition, but an early indicator of underlying disease.

Treatment for ED today is dominated by oral tablets – effective, but not perfect. They require planning, can take time to work, and don't always align with how intimacy actually happens.

That's the gap **LTR Pharma (ASX:LTP)** is targeting.

Its lead product, SPONTAN, is a fast-acting intranasal spray designed to bypass the digestive system and enter the bloodstream more quickly.

In early studies, absorption was around five times faster than standard oral treatments, helping reduce the delay between intent and effect.

Importantly, it's not about "fixing" ED. It's about helping in the moment, reducing the awkward wait, and making things feel more natural again.

Because when the moment's there, it either works... or it doesn't.

LTR has now completed recruitment for its Phase II study, with a meaningful proportion of participants aged 65 and over – the group most affected but often underrepresented in trials.

Early observations also suggest the product may extend beyond older men, with potential use in younger patients dealing with performance anxiety.

Read more here: LTR Pharma's Spontan ED nasal spray shows positive outcomes in addressing performance anxiety in young men

For investors, the angle is broader than just ED.

It sits at the intersection of ageing, cardiovascular health and quality of life. This is a space that's large, under-discussed and still evolving.

Because as populations age, the goal isn't just adding years. It's preserving the parts of life that make those years worth living.



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