



# Challenges and Best Practices from a Cohort Study on Aging Research in Rural Lebanon

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Conducting cohort studies in **low-to-middle-income countries (LMICs)** poses unique challenges that require creative and adaptable solutions. This paper discusses the **key challenges** encountered in establishing the **Lebanon Study and Ageing and HeAlth study (LSAHA)**, a population-based cohort study of older people in Lebanon, and the **best practices** employed.

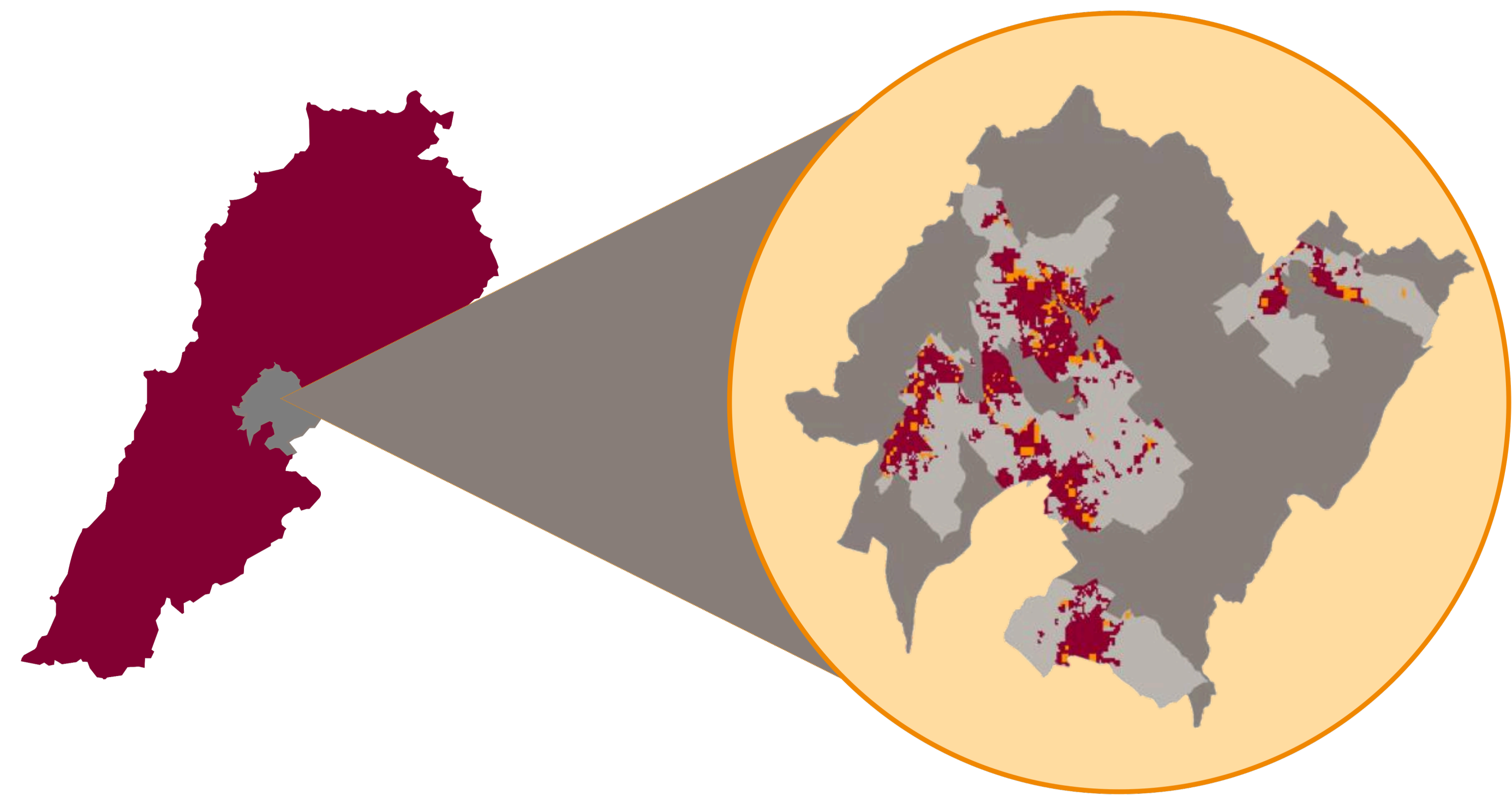
**Strengthening research capacities and tailoring methodologies** to these contexts is crucial for generating **reliable and generalizable data**.

## Methodology

The study used a **multistage gridded sampling design** and recruited

**n = 1,517** adults aged 60+

from a **rural Lebanese** district between October 2023 and January 2024



## List of Challenges and Best Practices

### 1 Methodological

#### Sampling

Challenge	Solution
Lack of a sampling frame	Used WorldPop databases for estimates
Restricted access to certain areas	Adaptive sampling protocols (i.e grid replacement)

#### Participant recruitment

Challenge	Solution
Unfamiliarity of survey studies in rural regions	Community engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with local key players during study conception and field preparation</li> <li>Distributed easy-to-read flyers in frequented areas</li> <li>Media appearances (TV, radio, newspaper articles)</li> <li>Recruited local data collectors</li> </ul>

### 2 Operational

Challenge	Solution
Security concerns in politically affiliated regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exclude area entirely</li> <li>Police escorts</li> </ul>

### 3 Participant-related

Challenge	Solution
Gender representation where a considerable number of males are unavailable	Rescheduling home visits outside of working hours

Rigorous and flexible methodological strategies are needed to implement population-based studies in LMICs.

This study highlights potential challenges and strategies for **establishing and enhancing participation in aging research** in rural Lebanon, and it **warrants further research on the applicability of these strategies** in similar settings.



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