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## Umami increases food taste for elderly

**JAPAN** may be the first country that faced an "elderly boom," but this segment of the population is increasing all around the world. From France, where a quarter of the population is over 60 years of age to the countries of Southeast Asia, where the average reached 9.6 per cent in 2016, the world is turning its attention to the care of its most senior members.

According to Ajinomoto Company, Japan has spearheaded the concept of the healthy lifespan of nurturing the idea of longevity where the elderly can be happy, active, productive and self-sufficient. However, countries like Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia are considering how to keep food appetising for their elderly members who experience a decrease in appetite.

Umami, the basic taste of monosodium glutamate (MSG), may help by increasing the palatability of food which encourages greater uptake of nutrition. It helps digestion of protein, such as by regulating salivation and gastric juice and helps stimulate viscous salivation which helps with swallowing and relieves "dry mouth." 