

Series 35 - English Longitudinal Study of Ageing

Description: The ELSA study is a longitudinal survey of ageing and quality of life among older people that explores the dynamic relationships between health and functioning, social networks and participation, and economic position as people plan for, move into and progress beyond retirement. The main objectives of ELSA are to:

- * construct three waves of accessible and well-documented panel data
- * provide these data in a convenient and timely fashion to the scientific and policy research community
- * describe health trajectories, disability and healthy life expectancy in a representative sample of the English population aged 50 and over
- * examine the relationship between economic position and health
- * investigate the determinants of economic position in older age
- * describe the timing of retirement and post-retirement labour market activity
- * understand the relationships between social support, household structure and the transfer of assets

▪ **Available years:** 1998-2005 (waves 0-2)

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#35:288 – English Longitudinal Study of Ageing 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002-2005

Universe: The ELSA sample was selected from three survey years of the HSE (1998, 1999 and 2001). Households were included in ELSA if they contained at least one adult of 50 years or older in the household who had agreed to be recontacted at some time in the future when participating in HSE.

Sample size: 12,100 cases (wave 1); 9,433 cases (wave 2), inc. Ethnic (HSE 1999, not followed up) boost.

Methods: Face-to-face interview; Self-completion; Clinical measurements; Physical measurements; Performance measurements, such as the timed walk, were conducted, and Wave 2 included a nurse visit.

Sample: Multi-stage stratified random sample; weighting used.

Fieldwork: Wave 1: March 2002 - March 2003; Wave 2: June 2004 - July 2005; Wave 0 data were gathered in the 1998, 1999 and 2001 waves of the HSE, but these predate the official start of the ELSA study.

Geography: At present the ELSA team are not depositing any variables which will allow analysis by or on spatial units. However, they are developing a system by which these data could be provided to researchers who want to use it. Various methods of providing access to these data are currently being considered, including specialised datasets and data enclaves. In order to obtain access to these data, researchers will need to provide details of the analysis they wish to do and sign an agreement stating that they would use the data appropriately.

Access: SN 5050.

Alcohol consumption

Consumption: volume and frequency (12mth beverage-specific quantity-frequency (wave 0, 2); 12mth frequency (waves 1-2)).

Single occasion: binge-drinking (beverage-specific quantity on day of heaviest drinking in past week (wave 0)) and drunkenness (3mth whether drunk on a weekly basis, 3mth drunkenness frequency (wave 0)).

Other drinking

- Status (7day (waves 1-2), current, lifetime, reason why stopped drinking (wave 0))
- Timing of drinking (on which day in past wk drank the most (wave 0))
- Age of first drink
- Symptoms of addiction (CAGE questions (ever related to alcohol: wanted to cut down, annoyed by others criticism, guilty, ever drunk first thing) and whether been unable to stop drinking once they have started; whether has experienced shaking hands after drinking - wave 0)
- Self-reported change (Respondent's level of drinking in comparison to 5 years ago (wave 0); whether respondent's drinking habits have changed since they were last interviewed, how respondent's drinking habits have changed since they were last interviewed (wave 1))
- Drinking in pregnancy (Whether

respondent stopped drinking due to pregnancy (wave 0))

Other alcohol variables

- Advice to cut down (Whether felt annoyed by people criticising their drinking - waves 5-6)

Health status and behaviour:

- Mental health (Medium)
- Self-reported health (High)
- Smoking (High)
- Diet (Low)
- Fitness (High)

Other variables

- Socialising (Medium)
- Leisure (Medium)
- Caring (High)
- Personality (High)
- Cognitive skills (Medium, memory and concentration questions)
- Political opinions (Low)
- Use of services (Low)

Demographics

- Material quality of life (Low)
- Income (High)
- Household type/composition (Medium)
- Finances/taxes/benefits (High)
- Employment (High)
- Education (Medium)
- Ethnicity and religion (Medium)