ELSA: English Longitudinal Study of Ageing

Health Survey User Group Conference

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Background
Key Facts

- People aged 50 and over and their partners
- Multi-disciplinary - health, economic and social circumstances
- Longitudinal
- Comparative - USA (HRS) and Europe (SHARE)
- Part of growing family of studies internationally
Collaborators & funders

Collaboration between

NatCen
Social Research that works for society

Consortium of UK government departments

NIH
National Institute on Aging

Funded by…

UCL

Manchester 1824
The University of Manchester

Institute for Fiscal Studies
History of ELSA

2002/3
Wave 1 - 12,099
Original sample interviewed in HSE 1998/1999/2001
Age 50+ on 1 Mar 2002

2004/5
Wave 2 - 9,432
Nurse visit 7,666
Refreshment sample HSE 2001/02/03/04
Age 50-52 on 1 Mar 2006

2006/7
Wave 3 - 9,771
Life-history 7,855
Refreshment sample from HSE 2006
Age 50-74 on 1 Mar 2008

2008/9
Wave 4 - 11,050
Nurse visit 8,641
Refreshment sample from HSE 2009/10/11
Age 50-55 on 1 Mar 2012

2010/11
Wave 5 – 10,270
Risk module 1,065

2012/13
Wave 6 - 10,601
Nurse visit
ELSA: future plans

2014/15
Wave 7

2016/17
Wave 8
Nurse visit

Refreshment sample from HSE 2011/12
Age 50-51 on 1 Mar 2014

Refreshment sample HSE 2013/14/15?
Age 50-74 on 1 Mar 2016
Where we are now

- Wave 6 data have been archived – UK Data Service
- Wave 6 report to be published in October 2014
- Wave 7 fieldwork started June 2014 to May 2015
- Wave 8 planning will start in spring 2015
For most ELSA Existing Sample Members...

Main Interview (Private HH or institution)

→

Self - Completion Questionnaire

→

Nurse Visit (Core Members) Every two waves

Proxy interview (Private HH or institution)
Interview Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>Household demographics - completed by 1 person in HH</td>
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<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Individual demographics</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Social participation</td>
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<td>WP</td>
<td>Work and pensions</td>
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<td>IA</td>
<td>Income and assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>HO</td>
<td>Housing and consumption</td>
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<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>Cognitive function (assessment)</td>
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<td>EX</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
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<td>Effort and reward</td>
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<td>FQ</td>
<td>Final questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Contact Block</td>
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<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Timed walk (assessment)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Plus Self-Completion
New Data from Wave 6

- **Social Care**
  - Types, who from, amount, costs etc
  - More detail on provision
  - Housing adaptation questions changed
  - Nursing homes and long term care expectations

- **Financial**
  - Inheritances and gifts

- **Fluid intelligence**
  - Numeric problem solving

- **Sexual activities**
  - Self completion on attitudes, experience and function
Nurse Visit: Wave 6
Content of Nurse Visit

Blood pressure
Grip strength
Blood sample (fasting if possible)
Height
Weight
Waist circumference
Lung function
Balance tests
Leg raise
Chair rises
Hair sample (cortisol)
What have we analysed?

- Fibrinogen
- Total & HDL cholesterol
- LDL cholesterol
- Triglycerides
- Ferritin
- Haemoglobin
- C-reactive protein
- Fasting lipids, glucose & glycated haemoglobin
- Vitamin D
- IGF-1
- White cell count (WCC)
- Mean corpuscular haemoglobin (MCH)
- NOT tested for viruses such as HIV (AIDS)
- Genetics – permission to analyse if not collected yet
Nurse data changes for Wave 6

Hair
- For cortisol instead of saliva
- Not yet in dataset. Being analysed

Lung function
- New spirometer which affects comparability with Wave 4
- Better quality measurements
- Comparable with HSE

Drugs
- Drug coding for multiple medicines
End of Life Interview

- Separate 30 min CAPI interview
- Purpose of interview:
  - To complete the information we have about respondent
  - Important period of time - e.g. their use of services
- Carried out at waves 2, 3, 4 and 6
- Wave 6 already archived, earlier waves to come
Wave 7
Wave 7 fieldwork

- June 2014 to May 2015
- Interviewer visit, NO nurse visit
- Small refreshment sample to include 50-51 years
  - 6% of sample
- Focus on respondent communication
Advance letter

We’ll be calling again soon

Dear [name],

Thank you for being part of ELSA – 50+ Health and Life, a groundbreaking study about the health and lives of people aged 50 and over in England.

The time you’ve given us so far has been really valuable and we’re writing now to ask for your help with the current stage.

What’s next?
Your interviewer will telephone or visit you in person to invite you to take part and, if you agree, arrange a convenient time to do the interview.

Why you are so important to us
Without the ongoing commitment of people like you, ELSA could not continue. Last time we asked, 8 out of 10 people in the study agreed to continue taking part. We really appreciate the time you give to ELSA.

£20
Thank you. As a thank you for taking part, we will give you a £20 gift card, which you can use at a range of high street shops.

We hope you enjoy speaking to one of our interviewers again.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Paulina Burga
Senior Project Coordinator
MakCen Social Research

[Signature]

Professor Andrew Steptoe
Director, Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care
University College London

If you’d like to know more, see the enclosed leaflet, call us free on 0800 652 3174 or visit our website www.makcen.ac.uk/elsa. Your interviewer will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

You can spend your gift card at a range of high street shops, including Argos, B & M, Matalan and Boots.
Study leaflet

Who is carrying out the research?
NatCen Social Research is carrying out the study alongside some of the UK’s leading research organisations - University College London, the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the University of Manchester. The ELSA team also has close links with Researchers from the University of East Anglia. Together we make up the ELSA Research Team.

NatCen have been carrying out high quality social research for 40 years. We are a non-profit organisation, independent of all government departments and political parties.

For more information
If you'd like to know more, or have any concerns or complaints, call us free on 0800 682 4074 or visit www.natcen.ac.uk/whatiselsa

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Our responsibilities to you
We respect your wishes
Taking part is voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you don't want to.

We answer your questions
Your interviewer will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study.

We ensure your safety
All our interviewers carry photographic ID cards and have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (previously Criminal Records Bureau).

We guard your privacy
We will treat information you give in the strictest confidence under the Data Protection Act 1998. The results collected are used for research purposes only.

NatCen
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What is the research about?
By 2020, it is estimated that around half the population of England will be over 50. We are carrying out this research to find out more about the lives of people in this age group, who are becoming more influential.

Why is ELSA different?
ELSA is unique. We are the only major study in England talking to people from 50, right up to 100 years old, and beyond, at the same time. That's why we're coming back to the same people every few years, to help us understand in detail how things are changing for people in this age group.

Who is listening?
Thanks to our unique information, the government, universities and charities are taking notice of what ELSA members are saying. The government has already used what we say to inform their decisions on pensions and social care policy.

Thank you
As a thank you for taking part, we will give you a £20 gift card, which you can use at a range of high street shops including Argos, Debenhams and Boots.

Staying sharp
ELSA discovered that smoking, being overweight and having high blood pressure aren't just bad for your physical health. They also affect how well your mind is in later life. Organisations like Alzheimer's Research UK are using this information to support their campaigning work.

Healthy comparisons
ELSA has helped find out how life in England for people aged 50 and over is different from experiences in other countries. We've shown that middle aged people in England are healthier than people of the same age in the USA. It's helping doctors, the NHS, and people working in government understand how to help us stay well as we get older.

Don't worry, be happy
While the newspapers recently reported that a 105-year-old's secret to a long life was eating bacon on a daily basis, data from ELSA has shown that simply enjoying life can have a positive effect on life expectancy.

Find out more about the study and the impact it is having on the lives of people across the country.

50+ Health & Life

Will it make a difference?
Here are just a few examples of how ELSA has had an impact on people's lives in its 12 year history.
New content for Wave 7

- **Hearing**
  - Hearcheck test
  - Self assessed hearing

- **Cognitive function**
  - Questions to identify early signs of dementia

- **Social care funding**
  - Awareness of social care funding and costs
Hearcheck

• Place device over **LEFT** ear

• Press button – a green light flashes 3 times

• Three tones at 1,000Hz

• Ask respondent to **raise a finger** when they hear a tone

• Press button **WITHIN 20 SECONDS** for next three tones at 3,000Hz – light flashes 9 times

• Three tones at 3,000Hz

• ...Repeat process for **RIGHT** ear
ELSA data and reports
Publications

- Reports from Waves 1-5
- Over 200 academic publications listed
- Searchable by type, subject matter, author etc

www.ifs.org.uk/ELSA
Data

- All available from the UK Data Service for free on-line
  http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/series/?sn=200011
- User Guides and weights etc provided
- Ongoing archiving and documenting process
Data available

- Waves 1-6 main interview data
- Wave 0 (HSE data)
- Waves 2,4,6 nurse data
- Wave 6 end of life with Waves 2,3,4 to follow
- Financial derived variables
- Non-financial derived variables
Sample sizes

**Wave 6 sample**
- Took part in Wave 6
- 10,601

**Wave 6 Core members**
- Took part in Wave 6 and are core members of sample
- 9,169

**Wave 6 longitudinal sample**
- Core members who have taken part in every wave of ELSA Waves 1-6
- 4,766
Special data requests 1

- Types of data
  - Geographical variables
  - Date based variables
  - Text data for special analysis
  - Linked administrative data: health, economic
  - Genetics data
Special data request 2

- Data Release Panel
- Permission from data owners for linked data – special processes
- Data Enclave at NatCen
- Charges apply, depending on the nature of the request
- Can take time
Thank you

If you want further information or would like to contact the author,

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