

Analysis of Mortality Patterns in Northern Ireland: Section 75 Equality Groups

Key Findings:

- females had lower age standardised mortality rates (ASMR) than males;
- age and sex were the two biggest factors in determining mortality;
- the greatest differences were between those with a limiting long term illness (higher ASMR) and those without (lower ASMR)
- apart from age, sex and limiting long term illness, social deprivation had a bigger affect on mortality and life expectancy than Section 75 characteristics (see Figure);
- those from a Catholic community background have a slightly elevated ASMR and lower life expectancy; and
- those that were married or co-habiting experienced lowest ASMRs and highest life expectancy.

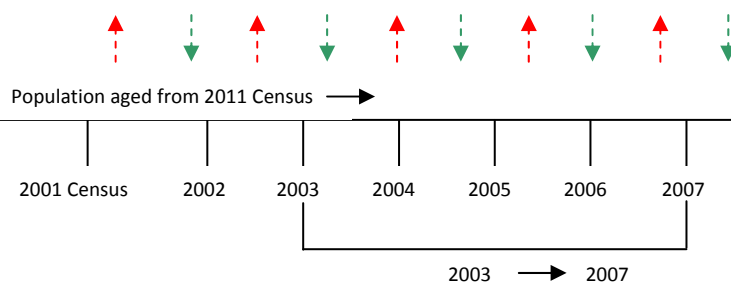
BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) has incorporated equality analyses of health outcomes as part of the NI Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System (HSCIMS). This research concentrates on all-cause mortality to provide a robust assessment of the differences in health outcomes across the various Section 75¹ equality groups in Northern Ireland using the Northern Ireland Mortality Study (NIMS). The aim is to describe differences in mortality between Section 75 groups and also examine whether such differences can be explained by social and economic disadvantage factors.

METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

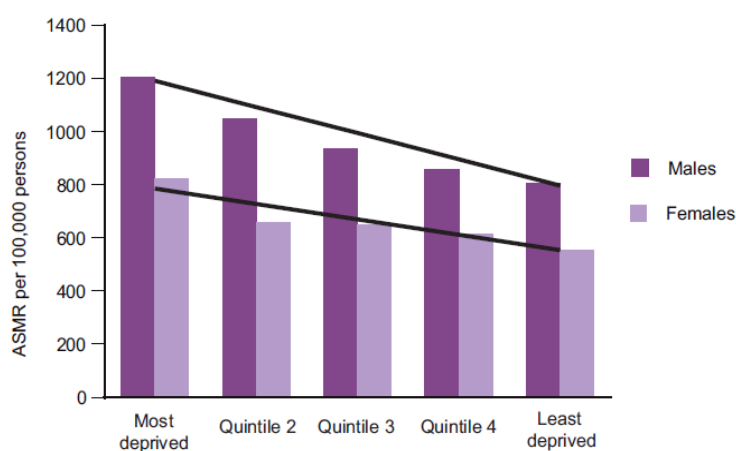
Deaths were analysed for the five year period 2003-2007 and were based on an adjusted population that was firstly 'aged on' each year from 2001 to 2007; deaths were removed and births to NI mothers were then added and apportioned Section 75 characteristics according to the 2001 Census.

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Age standardised mortality rates were produced (using direct standardisation methodology), to take account of the differences between the age structures of the groups being compared: life expectancy comparisons were also briefly examined. Logistic regression models were also developed to look at the risk of mortality associated with Section 75 characteristics as well as deprivation indicators. A deprivation variable was created based on four key census attributes: social class, car access, tenure and education.

Figure: ASMR by Quintile of Multiple Deprivation and Sex (all ages)



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The DHSSPS needs to be aware of differences in health outcomes in order to ascertain potential adverse impacts acting against these different equality groups.
- This research enables the DHSSPS to monitor and review their progress of duties within public health strategies as well as in the promotion of equal opportunity among the Section 75 groups.
- It is anticipated that an ongoing monitoring system can be established using longitudinal data: this will allow for observation of changes to mortality rates and life expectancy and include coverage of both morbidity and mortality as health outcomes.

NORTHERN IRELAND MORTALITY STUDY (NIMS)

The NIMS, a sister study to the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS), is a record linkage study which links 2001 Census returns to subsequently registered mortality data. Both studies allow exploration of health and socio-demographic characteristics to provide an insight into the status of the NI population. The **NILS Research Support Unit** provides information, advice and support for users of the NILS and NIMS databases. For further information please go to our website at www.nils-rsu.census.ac.uk.

This research brief is based on Keys, L. and Stewart, B (2012) *NI Health & Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System: A Section 75 Analysis of Mortality Patterns in Northern Ireland 2003-2007*. Project Support Analysis Branch, DHSSPS

¹ Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 contains equality legislation in relation to nine separate equality groups see: <http://www.equalityni.org>