

ABOUT MORTALITY DATA FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM

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GENERAL

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the main governmental department that provides statistical and registration services in the United Kingdom. The ONS was created in 1996 through a merger of the Central Statistical Office (CSO)—established in 1941 by the then Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, to aid the war effort—and the Office for Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS)—founded in 1970 by the Director of the CSO (ONS, 2009).

The ONS also incorporates the General Register Office for England and Wales (GRO). The GRO is responsible for the registration of all births, marriages, and deaths in England and Wales, and for maintaining a central archive dating back to 1837. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and General Register Office for Scotland are the official statistical organizations for these territories of the United Kingdom.

The HMD data cover the period since 1922. During the war period (1939-1950), this series comprises only the civilian population. During other periods, the mortality estimates from this series represent the total population.

Source of Data

All of the raw data used for the Human Mortality Database come from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), and General Register Office for Scotland.

Specific Details

We derived our estimates for the United Kingdom based on the sum of the HMD estimates (i.e., deaths, population estimates) for England and Wales (Civilian Population), Scotland, and Northern Ireland (see Appendix 1 for details). The resulting estimates for the United Kingdom are not fully equivalent to those that would be obtained by direct implementation of the HMD methodology to the raw data (i.e., official death counts and population estimates) for the United Kingdom as a whole.

TERRITORIAL COVERAGE

There have been no territorial changes since 1922.

REFERENCES

Office for National Statistics (ONS). (2009). About ONS. Retrieved 25 March 2009 (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/index.html>).

APPENDIX:

DESCRIPTION OF DATA USED FOR LEXIS DATABASE

The demographic data for the United Kingdom are collected by separate agencies for each of three regions (England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland). Thus, the raw input data (i.e., official death counts and population estimates) from these three sources vary somewhat in format and the range of years for which they are available. Consequently, we treat them as three separate sources of input data. That is, we calculate HMD estimates of deaths (by Lexis triangle to age 110+) and population as of January 1st (by single year of age to 110+) for each of the three regions. Then, we derive corresponding estimates for the UK as a whole by summing across England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Finally, we use these combined estimates to calculate life tables for the UK. The data series for the UK is restricted to the period for which data are available in all three regions (i.e., since 1922).

Notably, the combined estimates for the UK are not fully equivalent to those that would be obtained if we somehow combined the three sources of raw data into one set of input data for the UK and then implemented the HMD methodology to directly produce HMD estimates for the UK as a whole.

For a description of the input data for England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, please refer to the respective Background & Documentation files:

England and Wales (Civilian Population):

<http://www.mortality.org/hmd/GBRCENW/InputDB/GBRCENWcom.pdf>

Scotland:

http://www.mortality.org/hmd/GBR_SCO/InputDB/GBR_SCOcom.pdf

Northern Ireland:

http://www.mortality.org/hmd/GBR_NIR/InputDB/GBR_NIRcom.pdf