The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)

Overview of the study

What is ELSA?

• ELSA is a multidisciplinary cohort study of a representative sample of people aged 50+ living in England
• Since its inception in 2002, the ELSA sample has been re-surveyed biennially (with regular refreshment samples)
Primary objective

The main objective of ELSA is to understand the complex dynamics of the ageing process. This includes the relationships between economic and family circumstances, behaviour, social participation, biology, retirement, and health and well-being.

- Findings have great use in informing policy and improving the lives of older adults

Waves and data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Modality</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Refreshment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wave 1 (2002/3)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC</td>
<td>12,099</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 2 (2004/5)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC + Nurse visit</td>
<td>9,432</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 3 (2006/7)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC + Life History Interview</td>
<td>9,771</td>
<td>HSE 2001-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 4 (2008/9)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC + Nurse visit</td>
<td>11,050</td>
<td>HSE 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 5 (2010/11)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC</td>
<td>10,274</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 6 (2012/13)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC + Nurse visit</td>
<td>10,601</td>
<td>HSE 2009-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 7 (2014/15)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC</td>
<td>9,666</td>
<td>HSE 2011-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 8 (2016/17)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC + Nurse visit (50%)</td>
<td>8,445</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 9 (2018/19)</td>
<td>CAPI + SC + Nurse visit (50%)</td>
<td>8,736</td>
<td>HSE 2014-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HSE = Health Survey for England
Wave 1 = Original sample interviewed in HSE 1998/1999/2001, age 50+ on 1 Mar 2002
CAPI = Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews
SC = Self-Completion Questionnaire
Sample types

- CORE members
- NON-CORE members:
  - YOUNG partners
  - NEW partners
  - OLDER partners
- PROXY

Measures

Demographic data
Including Ethnicity, Marital status, and Education

Income and assets
Including Earnings, Pensions, and Housing wealth

Employment
Including Employment status, Job details, and Reasons for retirement

Psychosocial factors
Including Control, Demand, Effort-reward balance

Consumption
Including Transfers, Housing, and Expenditures

Expectations
Including on Mortality, Employment, and Finance

Social and civic participation
Including Transport, Social support, and Loneliness

Physical Health
Including Mobility, Pain, and Disability

Behavioural health
Including Smoking, Physical Activity, and Sleep

Mental health
Including Psychiatric problems, General Health Questionnaire, and CES-D depression scale

Psychological and social well-being
Including Quality of life (CASP-19) and Personality

Cognitive Function
Including Memory, Literacy, and Fluid intelligence

Psychosocial factors
Including Control, and Effort-reward balance

Physical examination and performance
Including Blood pressure, Grip strength, and Balance
Data Linkage

- National Insurance contributions (ELDAC)
- Benefits incl. state pensions and tax credits
- Tax records, savings, private pensions
- Hospital Episode Statistics
- NHS Central Register (mortality and cancer)

ELSA in global research
Useful Resources

https://www.elsa-project.ac.uk/training-resources

• How to access the data
• Overview of all areas of study and measures by wave
• Self-Completion Questionnaire
• Life History Interview
• Nurse Visits
• Harmonised ELSA