

a rural perspective on

The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)

John Shepherd
and
Brian Linneker

RERC/Bbk

What is ELSA?

- the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing,
- concerned with the lives of people aged 50 and over,
- covers people's health, economic situation and quality of life and how these change during the ageing process,
- modelled on the Health and Retirement Study (USA) with a parallel in the Survey of Health and Ageing in Europe (SHARE).

Who Manages ELSA?

- conducted jointly by the National centre for Social Research (NatCen), the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) and University College London (UCL),
- funded by 11 UK Government Departments (including Defra) and the US National Institute of Ageing

What Does ELSA Aim To Do?

- describe health trajectories, disability and healthy life expectancy in a representative sample of the English population aged 50+
- 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.

ELSA, the Sample Design

- sample drawn from households that had previously responded to the Health Survey for England (1998 and 2001 survey years)
- aimed to be representative of people aged over 50 in private households
- eligible sample members: people born before 29/02/52, their partners at the time of HSE survey and new partners (post HSE)

Was there a Rural Dimension?

- 312 Postcode Sectors as Primary Sampling Units to identify addresses
- Postcode Sectors with <100 PAF RDPS merged
- stratified by Health Authority and percentage of households with head in a non manual occupation (SE 1-6, 13, 1991 Census)

ELSA makes Waves

	Date	Main Interviews	Eligible Core
Wav 0	1998, 1999, 2001	19836	
Wav 1	March 2002-March 2003	12,100	11,392
Wav 2	June 2004-July 2005	9,432	8780
Wav 3	begun May 2007		

ELSA : The Rural Dimension

Added by linking ESA records to Census 2001 Lower Output Areas via the case Postcode

OA Rural Definition	Wav0	Wav0 %	Wav1	Wav1%	Wav2	Wav2%
Urban >=10 K - Sparse	75	0.4	39	0.3	30	0.3
Town & Fringe - Sparse	97	0.5	61	0.5	50	0.5
Village - Sparse	114	0.6	81	0.7	71	0.8
Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling - Sparse	63	0.3	46	0.4	34	0.4
Urban >= 10K Less Sparse	15,096	76.1	9,059	74.9	6,990	74.2
Town & Fringe - Less Sparse	2,134	10.8	1,370	11.3	1,095	11.6
Village - Less Sparse	1,624	8.2	1,026	8.5	842	8.9
Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling - Less Sparse	633	3.2	418	3.5	310	3.3
Urban	15,171	76.5	9,098	75.2	7,020	74.5
Rural	4,665	23.5	3,002	24.8	2,402	25.5
All	19,836	100	12,100	100	9,422	100

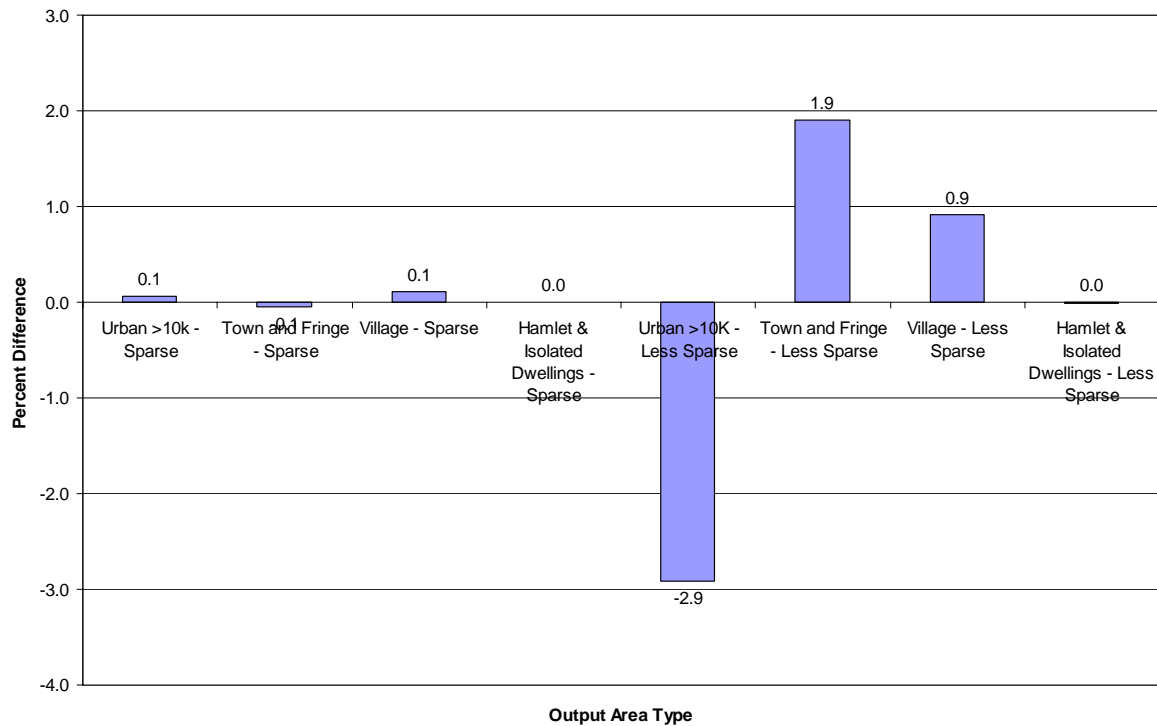
ELSA and the Population at Large

Pop2001 Output Area - Wav 0 count	Pop Aged 50 and Over		Core Geo-Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Urban >10k - Sparse	43,421	0.3	29	0.3
Town and Fringe - Sparse	96,022	0.6	49	0.6
Village - Sparse	109,586	0.7	69	0.8
Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings - Sparse	62,639	0.4	34	0.4
Urban >10K - Less Sparse	12,602,740	77.0	6510	74.2
Town and Fringe - Less Sparse	1,595,593	9.7	1014	11.6
Village - Less Sparse	1,310,120	8.0	783	8.9
Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings - Less Sparse	546,096	3.3	289	3.3
All	16,366,217	100.0	8777	100
Urban (>10K)	12,646,161	77.3	6539	74.5
Rural	3,720,056	22.7	2238	25.5

Note: 'core sample' = people aged 50 and over interviewed in Waves 1 and 2 based on Wave 2 geocodes; population data Census 2001

Small Numbers But Systematic Differences

Difference between ELSA Common Wave 0-1-2 Sample Count Percentage and 2001 Population Percentage Aged 50 Years and Over by OA Rural Definition



The Issue is Sample Attrition and its Impact on Rural Analyses

OA Rural Definition	Wav 0	Wav 1	Wav 2	Wav1-0	Wav1-0%	Wav2-1	Wav2-1%
Urban >=10 K - Sparse	75	39	30	-36	-48	-9	-23.1
Town & Fringe - Sparse	97	61	50	-36	-37	-11	-18.0
Village - Sparse	114	81	71	-33	-29	-10	-12.3
Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling - Sparse	63	46	34	-17	-27	-12	-26.1
Urban >= 10K Less Sparse	15096	9059	6990	-6037	-40	-2069	-22.8
Town & Fringe - Less Sparse	2134	1370	1095	-764	-36	-275	-20.1
Village - Less Sparse	1624	1026	842	-598	-37	-184	-17.9
Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling - Less Sparse	633	418	310	-215	-34	-108	-25.8
Urban	15171	9098	7020	-6073	-40	-2078	-22.8
Rural	4665	3002	2402	-1663	-36	-600	-20.0
All	19836	12100	9422	-7736	-39	-2678	-22.1

Does this call for a 'rural boost' to the ELSA sample?

