

Meeting Notes

Excess Winter Mortality

Wednesday 26th September 2018, 10.30 am - 12Noon.

Present Jim McMenamin (Chair) JMCM, Elaine Daly (ED) – Notes, Chris Robertson (CR), Colin Ramsay (CR), Gerry McCartney (GMCC), Julie Ramsay (JR), Lynda Fenton (LF), Martin Taulbut (MT), Diogo Marques (DM)

Teleconference Andrew Riley (AR), Arlene Reynolds (AREy), Colin Fischbacher (CF)

Apologies None

Background

JMCM gave background on meeting purpose and the drafting of a Terms of Reference with a view to more formal quarterly meetings discussing the components we are working on in excess winter mortality. The media interest generated has reminded us that this is an area of interest to very many people about life expectancy, and comparatively speaking how we are doing when we contrast our experience in Scotland to others – and is an important for us to be collaborating on.

Chairmanship

JMCM chairing today but asked the group for thoughts on a rotating chair.

CF – dependant on focus and agenda of the group in that some members interested in winter mortality and others in longer term mortality trends. GMCC - no preference to Chair but stated it is pre cursor for Public Health Scotland in cross-departmental working. Good to have JR and government involved.

JR – share Colin's view and does seem to be two strands and this group set up to focus on spike in winter but has grown to look at mortality in general.

AR highlighted 3 key areas – Scotland's concern about explaining governmentally the excess mortality issues (focus on winter pressures last year) and explaining the infectious diseases element certainly ties in and being able to sub divide and explain as best we can, eg. Winter pressures, life expectancy and excess mortality. As long as we cover these issues, no preference to Chair.

JMCM – If there are particular points of focus then it might be good to have someone as an alternate chair to discuss other topics as they come up.

Draft Terms of Reference

GM – thanks to Lynda for her work on drafting the document. Due to time constraints today perhaps we could invite edits and comments over the next couple of weeks. However, some points can be raised today to see if we can reach a consensus.

Quarterly suggestion to meet – members agreed.

Membership – present members accepted. Two groups that Lynda thought about we might invite – academics or other national groups eg. A representative from the SDsPH?

JM – DPH delegation and that they are kept abreast and GMcC happy to square off with Andrew Fraser (AF)

ACTION – members agreed to offer an update after each meeting to the SDsPH Group through update to AF.

The group also suggested additional academic representation as well as PHE.

ACTION – JMCM to contact Jonathan Van-tam, Deputy CMO to request delegate.

JR – ONS is another suggestion as they do a lot of analysis that we might do, perhaps some informal link with them.

ACTION - contact Division Head for population stats (JR to confirm the name).

Academic representation – JMCM suggested Punam Mangtani and will contact to invite.

GM – accountability, secretariat and publishing routes to be clarified.

ACTION for GMcC to contact AF to clarify.

Working and Hurting Report Update

MT – gave an overview of the report highlighting two chapters, one that summarises literature exploring the reasons for the changes in mortality. Further analysis of all cause mortality broken down by age group.

JMCM – thanks noted to Martin for summarising the report.

Update on Life Expectancy Trends

LF gave update and background on work over the last few months looking at mortality trends generally and the approach was to look at what we need more descriptively – namely where to go for our explanations. The recent BMJ paper included UK with international comparison.

Planned Further Descriptive Analysis

LF – planning to do some work on the decomposition of life expectancy which allows you to see between two periods or two groups and how much different causes account for differences in life expectancy between those two periods or two groups. And the contributions to the change in different causes.

LF happy to pick up by email a copy of my planned work.

Proposal for Workshop to identify hypotheses and coordinate Testing

GMcC – Propose we have some time (half day) and invite Lynda, Julie etc to present in a workshop format. GMcC happy to organise and share names of people who we could invite along, perhaps end of year.

JR – timescale for publishing this work? GM happy to try and bring forward to November. Pre publication website.

Public Health England Report on Mortality Trends

CF – two separate, one at link here and another PHE is working on that examines slower decline of mortality in England. Publication date not known.

Work on Flu Contribution to Mortality Trends and CMO Request

JMcM – CMO request for us to contribution of influenza to the excess mortality rate in the 2017/18 season. Correlation between clinical and laboratory data and relationship with what we have seen and with best correlation in the elderly at age groups for that data. DM doing the work with valuable contribution from CR. We had a suggested timeline to complete by end September and will produce a draft summary of findings.

Jen Bishop has been looking at overall rates of infection of either clinical or lab testing. Also looking at relationship between SMR1 data and laboratory data on any person testing for influenza, and Other respiratory pathogens to check temporal relationship.

Good correlation of timing between the influenza increased detections and excess mortality compared to what we would expect. A very clear relationship that we can see there but not when we look at other respiratory pathogens.

ACTION - JMcM to share the Euro Surveillance publication (due out tomorrow) with the group.

JR – we would publish monthly death counts and generally compare those to the average over the last 5 years generally looking at all cause mortality. In addition this publication (coming out in October) compares all cause mortality from December to March.

JMcM the overall number of deaths that were reported in January 2018 compared to the previous time points that were available is higher than at any one time since 2000, JR – at an earlier meeting there was discussion of linking hospital data with mortality data, to try and identify if a proportion of them were flu related – has that been done as part of the work mentioned earlier?

ACTION – JMcM will ask Jen for update on where she has got with that data

AR – any report if it can help explain the complexities would be helpful – certainly the proportion of attribution of influenza excess mortality

Action –proportion of excess mortality of influenza JMcM to share reporting when available (possibly by October school holidays)

Date of Next Meeting - TBC