

Population And Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

Vital Events Statistics Update

1. Introduction

This paper summarises the recent developments and improvements in vital events.

2. Quarterly Births Deaths and other Vital Events and Preliminary Annual

From December 2016 onwards, (2016 Q3) the tables which provide cause of death breakdowns were expanded to include two new causes of death - dementia (F01, F03) and Alzheimer's disease (G30). They were also added to the preliminary annual publication (2016) in March 2017. There are also plans to expand some of the reference tables due to be published in August to include breakdowns for these causes.

3. Introduction of new death coding software (IRIS)

From January 2017, we have changed the software we use for coding cause of death. We previously used the Mortality Medical Data System (MMDS) and are now using IRIS. This change will bring us into line with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) who have been using the software since 2014 and will improve comparability between our statistics and those for England and Wales.

The first publication containing statistics coded using the new software will be the 2017 Quarter 1 publication on 14 June 2017. At that time we will publish a paper on our website detailing the impact of the change on our statistics. At a broad level (ICD chapter) the impact is relatively small – almost 96% of deaths remain in the same ICD chapter under either version of the software.

The main impact of the change in software is to increase the number of deaths coded to dementia (F01, F03) by around 7%. These are mostly deaths which would have been coded as respiratory diseases (in particular chest infections (J98) or aspiration pneumonia (J69)). In our analysis we also saw a small increase in the number of Alzheimer's deaths (where they would previously have been coded as respiratory deaths). A more detailed analysis carried out by ONS indicated that there was a shift towards pneumonia deaths (J12-J18) away from diseases of the nervous system (of which Alzheimer's is one). This did not show up in our analysis although this is likely to be down to the smaller numbers we were able to include.

Overall the percentage of deaths from respiratory diseases reduces by around 5%.

4. Ethnicity of the Deceased

A new section on [ethnicity of the deceased person](#) was added to our website in March.

This includes links to all of the information which has been published on the ethnicity of the deceased and an analysis paper on the quality of the data. The main conclusion of

the report was that the data is not suitable for calculating reliable mortality rates for most ethnicities, and that NRS might be able to improve the quality of future data.

**NRS: Vital Events Statistics branch
24 May 2017**