

Using and Improving Population and Household Statistics

Feedback from workshop 5 – Birth, marriage and death statistics from registration system

Question one: is there any need for General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) to make available on its Web site daily death figures, or more weekly death figures?

No-one felt that they needed to have any, or any more, daily/weekly figures on deaths (e.g. at local authority level) at the moment. It was recognised that any such figures might be of very limited value, because they could be subject to large percentage fluctuations (as shown, at the Scotland level, by one of the charts in Health Protection Scotland's weekly Situation Reports, which can be found via:

<http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/resp/swineinfluenza.aspx>

Question two: the proposal that Scottish Government Civil Justice Statistics become the main publisher of divorce figures (rather than GROS)

No-one voiced a view on this matter.

General Discussion

There were a number of questions on how to find particular pieces of information. Frank was able to answer these by displaying various web pages.

- Total Fertility Rate for Scotland - given in GROS Vital Events Reference Table 3.6. <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/vital-events/index.html>
- Healthy Life Expectancy - not GROS-published statistics - available from the Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) web-site. http://www.scotpho.org.uk/home/Populationdynamics/hle/hle_keypoints.asp
- Deaths from certain causes (e.g. types of heart disease) - the numbers are given in GROS Vital Events Reference Tables. <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/vital-events/index.html>
 - for each individual ICD code (e.g. "I20 - Angina pectoris") for Scotland as a whole - in Table 6.4; and
 - for groups of ICD codes (e.g. "I20-I25 - Ischaemic heart disease") for each local authority and health board - in Table 6.3.
- suicides in Scotland by people from outwith Scotland - numbers are given in Table 2 of the "Probable Suicides" section of the GROS web site. <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/deaths/suicides/index.html>

There was a discussion on breaking the heart disease group (I20-I25) down into individual ICD codes (I20, I21, etc) at health board level and providing figures for other geographies such as Community Health Partnerships (CHPs). GROS could produce tables showing the individual ICD codes for various sub-Scotland geographies if requested, but would probably not publish them on the GROS website due to potential "disclosure" issues. In theory, GROS could publish figures for deaths for individual CHP areas, but there seems little point doing so when the ScotPHO website already provides a range of statistics for CHP areas (which are available via:

http://www.scotpho.org.uk/home/Comparativehealth/Profiles/chp_profiles.asp)

The main topic of the general discussion was the (un)availability of individual records of the deaths in England of people from Scotland, to aid with Information Service Division (ISD)'s estimation of survival rates for medical studies (e.g. of people who had been treated for cancer in hospitals in Scotland, who may subsequently have moved to stay with relatives, or live in a nursing home, in England). Such data are not available at individual person level from ONS because its understanding was that the Statistics & Registration Services Act (2007) did not allow it to provide such information. ONS's view was that it could only supply the numbers of deaths (which could, of course, be broken down in various ways). However, the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) already obtains information about some of the deaths in England and Wales of people from Scotland, and hopes to be able to obtain details of all of them. NHSCR can "flag" the records of people who have had cancer, or who are of interest for other medical research purposes. <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/national-health-service-central-register/about-the-register/how-is-the-register-used-for-medical-research.html> So it was suggested that the best way for ISD to seek this information would be through NHSCR.

There were no specific suggestions in response to some of the "questions for discussion" in the final slide of the presentation:

- how should GROS improve its current publications and web site material?;
- are there points about the statistics which GROS should explain better or in more detail?
- could GROS produce statistics on a particular topic, as an ad-hoc request for a user?