

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

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

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

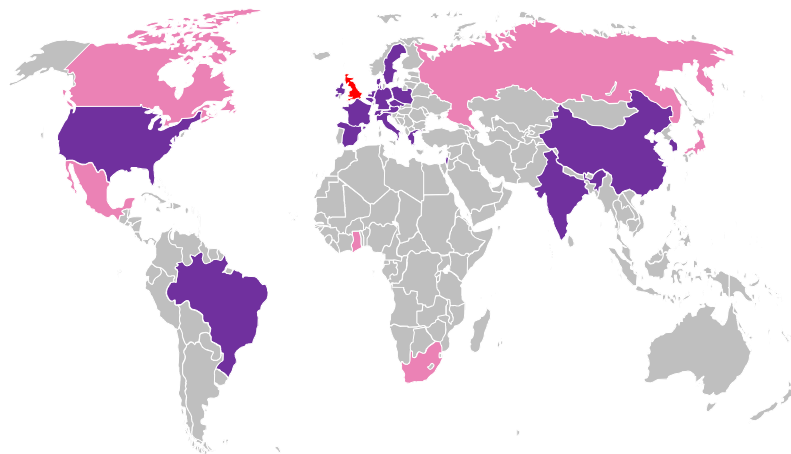
Physical examination and performance

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