Area and inequality in later life

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Overview

- Better wellbeing and social outcomes were observed among older people in 2016-17 who:
  - Lived in less deprived areas
  - Lived in more rural areas
  - Lived in southern regions of England

- Over a 14 year period (2002-2016):
  - Social and wellbeing outcomes were continuously better among older people in less deprived and rural areas.
  - Outcomes declined at a faster rate among older people in more deprived and more urban areas.

- Moving into more or less deprived areas in later life impacts on mental wellbeing.
Area and inequality: introduction

• Evidence area effects on mental wellbeing might be particularly prevalent among older people.
  – Social factors
  – Environmental factors
  – Geographical factors

• Living in deprived areas is linked to:
  – poorer health and health behaviours
  – poorer social networks.

• Reasons for moving in later life influence its effects
  – Chosen (e.g. to enjoy retirement)
  – Forced (e.g. too expensive to remain, needing care)
Definitions: Area and inequality

- **Three measures of area:**
  - Government Office Region
  - Index of Multiple Deprivation
    - Income, employment, health and disability, education and skills, barriers to housing, living environment and crime.
  - Urban/rural indicator
    - Urban, town and fringe, village, hamlet or isolated.
    - Urban populations >10,000
Definitions: Area and inequality

• Inequality
  – Social engagement
    • Social and civic engagement, cultural engagement, close contacts, volunteering.
  – Transport
    • Car access, public transport use.
  – Work and Employment
    • Economic status, working beyond SPA, effort-reward imbalance.
  – Mental wellbeing
    • CES-D score.
Wealth

Social and civic engagement

Poorest quintile  2nd quintile  3rd quintile

4th quintile  Wealthiest quintile
Index of Multiple Deprivation: 2016-17

Poor work quality

Social and civic engagement
Index of Multiple Deprivation: 2016-17

Cultural engagement

- Least deprived
- 2nd quintile
- 3rd quintile
- 4th quintile
- Most deprived

CES-D score

- Least deprived
- 2nd quintile
- 3rd quintile
- 4th quintile
- Most deprived

- Least deprived
- 2nd quintile
- 3rd quintile
- 4th quintile
- Most deprived

- All people
- Men
- Women

- 2+
- 1
- None
Changing inequality: 2002-2016

- Do outcomes change differently over time on the basis of area type?
  - Does social and mental wellbeing decrease faster among some areas compared with others?

- **Longitudinal mixed models**
  - Index of Multiple Deprivation (quintiles)
  - Urban/rural indicator
  - Models adjust for age, gender, marital status, wealth quintile and self-reported health.

- **3,573 core sample members at wave 1**
  - 8 observations across waves
Changes in inequality:
Index of Multiple Deprivation

Social and civic engagement

No car access
Changes in inequality:
Urban/rural indicator

Social and civic engagement
Cultural engagement
Changes in area deprivation

• Does moving into an area with higher or lower deprivation affect wellbeing and social engagement?

• 6,107 core sample members responding to at least 2 consecutive waves of ELSA.

• Three comparisons:
  – Moving into higher deprivation vs. not moving
  – Moving into lower deprivation vs. not moving
  – Moving into higher deprivation vs. lower deprivation

• Regression using pooled data.
  – All models control for baseline outcome.
  – Adjusted models control for baseline outcome, gender, age, marital status, wealth quintile and self-reported health.
Changes in area deprivation

CES-D score

- More deprived vs. not moving
- Less deprived vs. not moving
- More deprived vs. less deprived
Changes in area deprivation

Social and civic engagement

- More deprived vs. not moving
- Less deprived vs. not moving
- More deprived vs. less deprived
Changes in area deprivation

Cultural engagement

More deprived vs. not moving

Less deprived vs. not moving

More deprived vs. less deprived
To conclude...

- Inequalities in mental wellbeing and social outcomes persist across the life course and often widen as individuals age.
  - More deprived and urban areas associated with poorer outcomes.

- Lower social and cultural engagement in more deprived and urban areas.
  - Smaller and less useful social networks.
  - Greater prevalence of crime.
  - Poorer individual wealth and health circumstances.

- These factors may also lead to further poorer mental wellbeing.
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