ELSA's Impact

■ Over the past five years ELSA data has been used in over 100 published studies around the world on a huge range of topics, from predictors of health and wellbeing for future generations to investigations into the economics of ageing.

■ In the last year at least 10 studies have been published using the genetic data collected from ELSA on topics including physical capability, heart disease and diabetes.

■ ELSA continues to help shape national policy. Most recently ELSA findings were used in the Dilnot Commission's report "Fairer Care Funding" looking at the funding of social care, which is now being considered by the government. In the upcoming sixth wave of ELSA there will be some new questions on social care, which will help increase understanding of this important and under researched area.

ELSA's Sixth Wave

Our interviewers will be visiting you again between summer 2012 and spring 2013. We would like to include as many participants as we possibly can. This sixth wave will include a visit from a nurse, very similar to those in previous waves. An interviewer will be in touch with you soon to make an appointment. If you have any queries before then please contact us.

New to ELSA

Welcome to those of you who have become ELSA study members for the first time. Every few years we invite a small group of people to join the study to make sure that all ages are represented.

Please keep in touch!

You are a valuable and irreplaceable member in this study and we are very grateful for your continued participation in ELSA. Please let us know if you have recently changed your contact details or have any questions about the study. You can call us for free from a landline on 0800 652 4575; write to us at ELSA study, King's House, 101-153 Kings Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 4LX; or email us at elsa@natcen.ac.uk

www.natcen.ac.uk/elsa

Meet the team

James Banks is Deputy Research Director at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Professor of Economics at the University of Manchester. He was one of the founding ELSA investigators and is still involved in all aspects of the management and design of the study. His research looks at the economics of retirement, pensions and wealth, as well as issues surrounding the determinants of health and wellbeing at older ages.

Stephen Jivraj is a research associate at the University of Manchester and is part of a small team of researchers examining the socio-demographic aspects of the survey. Currently he is investigating the relationship between measures of life satisfaction and the ageing process.

Here are some of the big team at Natcen Social Research working on ELSA; they deal with everything from the questionnaire and data to answering calls from you, interviewers and nurses.

2012-2013
ELSA Update

Welcome to the latest update from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA). We bring you news and some of the many valuable findings emerging from data collected from respondents since 2002.

ELSA is not only a study of health but covers many aspects of ageing. The focus of the study is to explore relationships between health and activity, social networks and economic position, as people plan for and move into retirement.

The last wave of ELSA which ended in May 2011 was a great success with over 10,000 people taking part. We would like to say a big thank you to all those of you who participated in the study and we hope as many as possible will be able to continue to take part in future.

NatCen Social Research that works for society

UCL

Institute for Fiscal Studies

MANCHESTER 1824

New findings from the study!

In this update we describe some of the highlights from studies carried out using ELSA's previous waves. These findings are from research carried out by researchers at NatCen Social Research, University College London, the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the University of Manchester.

Diabetes and Waist Measurements

Diabetes is almost twice as common in the USA as in England. ELSA researchers have used ELSA data and a linked American study – *the American National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey* – to help explain this sizeable difference. Using the waist measurement data taken during ELSA nurse visits, they were able to show the higher rates of diabetes in the US were in part linked to the higher waist measurements in the USA compared to the UK.

Waist measurement is related to certain health conditions, and recent research suggests it is easier to accurately measure than hip-to-waist measurements. This is why at this wave ELSA nurses will be measuring waist only.

GRAPH: Average waist circumference in inches for respondents aged 52-85 years (England and USA).

■ England ■ USA

	Men (inches)	Women (inches)
England	40	36
USA	41	38
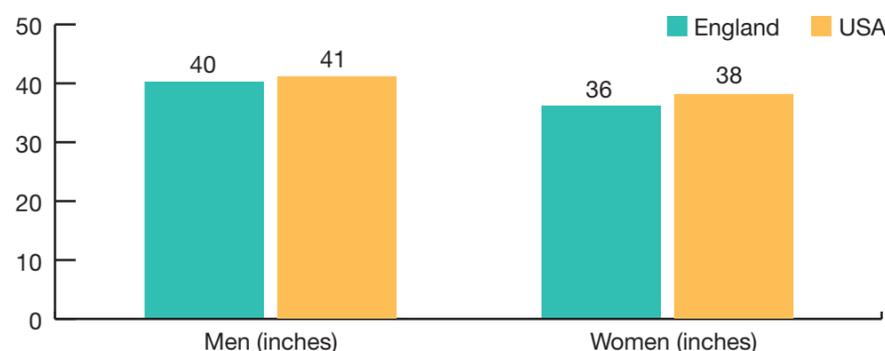
Why Do People Retire Early?

With the population working longer ELSA respondents are increasing understanding of the issues facing older workers. Poor general health has long been known to cause forced early retirement; but using ELSA data, researchers have been able to show specific symptoms and diseases linked with early retirement. This means support for older people in employment can be planned more effectively. ELSA researchers found mobility difficulties, especially those from lower leg pain, as well as symptoms of depression were highly linked to early retirement. However, pre-existing health conditions and certain types of back pain were not shown to be closely related to early retirement.
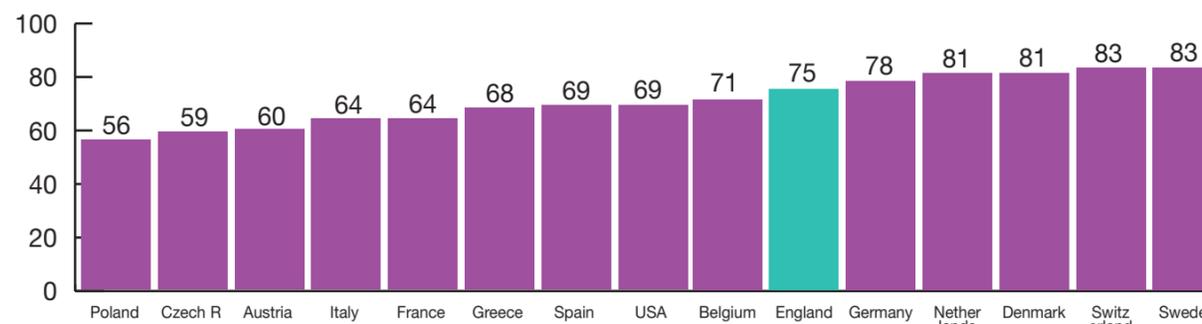
Physical Activity Levels across Countries

Physical activity plays an important role in health and wellbeing. Using ELSA and data from linked studies in Europe – *The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)* – and the USA – *The Health and Retirement Study (HRS)* – researchers compared how many respondents performed moderate or vigorous activity at least once a week. The highest were Sweden and Switzerland with 83% of respondents and lowest was Poland with 56%. The ELSA data shows that in England 75% of respondents take part in physical activity at least once a week.

GRAPH: Perentage of adults age 50 or older who report being moderately or vigorously physically active at least once per week.

Country	%
Poland	56
Czech R	59
Austria	60
Italy	64
France	64
Greece	68
Spain	69
USA	69
Belgium	71
England	75
Germany	78
Netherlands	81
Denmark	81
Switzerland	83
Sweden	83

Sleep Patterns

Researchers have shown the average sleep duration of ELSA respondents is 6 hours and 51 minutes per night. The graph shows how many hours of sleep on average ELSA respondents get per night – over half get 6 to 8 hours per night. Less than 1 in 10 get more than 8 hours of sleep per night.
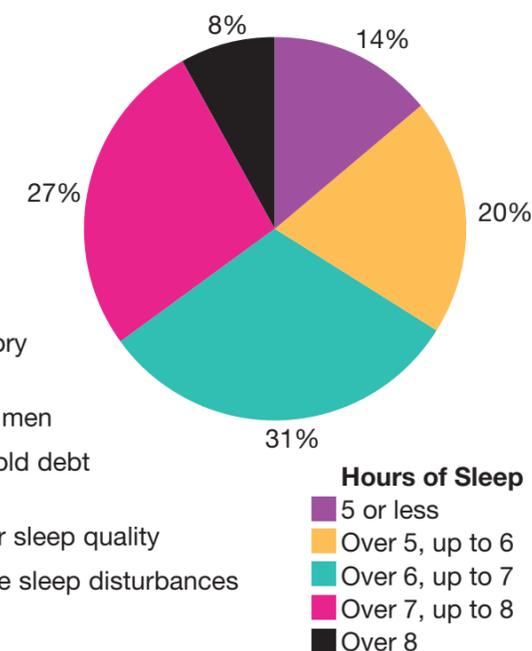
Using ELSA data researchers have found some common things that relate to poor sleep quality:

■ **Poor health:** those in pain, with heart-disease, respiratory disease and high blood pressure have poorer sleep

■ **Gender:** women have fewer hours of quality sleep than men

■ **Household debt:** whatever the amount, having household debt is linked to poorer sleep

■ **Low life satisfaction and depression** is related to poor sleep quality

■ **Partner poor health:** those with an ill partner have more sleep disturbances

Pie chart values: 14%, 20%, 31%, 27%, 8%

Hours of Sleep
■ 5 or less
■ Over 5, up to 6
■ Over 6, up to 7
■ Over 7, up to 8
■ Over 8

You and ELSA…

We asked you why you enjoyed and continued being part of ELSA and this is what you had to say:

I took part in it before. I **feel part of it** now and like to know how I am doing.

I **thoroughly enjoyed her visit.** I will be happy to do it again in two years.

It is a **benefit to me and other people,** we are all getting older.

I just think it is a good thing because the **country needs to know what is going on.**