Israel Gerontological Data Center's (IGDC) Newsletter
November 2010

In This Issue

- From IGDC's Head
- About IGDC
- Introductory note
- Background
- Recent News
- Publications news
- Older Israelis in comparison to their European counterparts: SHARE data
- Some aspects of the Israeli older cohort
- Conferences and Workshops
- Highlights of findings on Aging in Israel based upon data available from the IGDC

About the IGDC

Introductory note:

This edition of the Israel Gerontological Data Center Newsletter is published in English in order to acquaint members of the international gerontological community with the work of the IGDC. The current issue highlights several important developments in the work of the Center over the past year as well as reporting selected items of interest. It is our hope that readers will find this information to be informative and useful. Readers are invited to visit the IGDC website at http://igdc.huji.ac.il/Home/Home.aspx for further information on the study of aging in Israel.

Background:

The Israel Gerontological Data Center (IGDC) at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was founded in 2003 to address the challenge of population aging. The center's goal is to provide a comprehensive infrastructure for gerontological research, to promote better understanding of the aging process and to make relevant data available to investigators and policy makers so that they may better address the challenges of population aging and its social, economic and health-related concomitants. IGDC services are provided through an accessible and interactive website, including three main avenues of activity (1) bases of linked data, (2) up-to-date statistical tables and (3) a comprehensive bibliographic data base. A fourth realm in which the IGDC is involved is the execution of the Israeli sample of SHARE, the Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe. The SHARE-Israel project is currently examining a wide range of health-related, social, familial and economic factors that will shape the future well-being of Israelis age 50 and over. The data gathered in SHARE-Israel allow important insights into the aging of the Israeli population as well as comparison with the trends that are becoming evident in many different European countries.
work at the Center is supported by grants from several sources, including the National Institute of Aging, the European Union and the Israeli National Insurance Institute.

In this English language version of our newsletter, we highlight various aspects of the work of the Center in order to allow members of the gerontological community around the world to get to know us better. Access to IGDC services, offered in Hebrew and English, is possible through our website http://igdc.huji.ac.il/ at no cost. We warmly invite you to visit the website, to learn about our several undertakings in the realm of gerontological research, and to share with us your impressions about our work. We also hope that you will pass on this newsletter to others who might be interested.

Sincerely,

Howard Litwin

Conferences and Workshops

The 18-th Biennial Meeting of the Israel Gerontological Society was held in February on the theme: Aging in the 21-st Century: Theory and Practice for Older People and their Families. A special session was dedicated to the latest studies based on SHARE data.

A Methodological Workshop was held in October in the Hebrew University campus in Jerusalem.

Recent News

In March 2010 the IGDC signed a three year contract for receipt of support from the Ministry for Senior Citizens. The agreement enables the IGDC to continue its core functions and to develop new projects. We note with pride that through this contract, the Ministry has recognized the continuation of the longitudinal survey of persons aged 50+ in Israel (SHARE-Israel) as a necessary and worthy goal. The Executive Committee that will guide this joint venture includes Prof. Jacob Gindin from Haifa University, chair, Prof. Dov Shmotkin from Tel Aviv University and Prof Miri Cohen from Haifa University. Ex officio members of the Committee are Prof. Howard Litwin, the head of the IGDC and Mrs. Zohara Cohen, the head of the Health and Welfare Department of the Ministry for Senior Citizens.

The Ministry for Senior Citizens was established as an independent government ministry in July 2007. The Ministry develops various projects in health, nursing, welfare and leisure fields, and operates a hotline with the goal to provide relevant information and to assist with practical solutions for issues and concerns raised by Senior citizens.

The IGDC was recently awarded a 4-year R01 grant from the National Institute of Aging at the American National Institutes of Health. The grant allows the completion of the second wave of data collection in SHARE-Israel, and the execution of a third wave in 2012-2013. Other institutional supporters of SHARE-Israel include the Ministry for Senior Citizens, The National Insurance Institute and the European Union.

The IGDC will be a participating member in a new project to be funded by the European Union's FP7 framework. Members of the IGDC will develop and test a social network screening instrument for use in the fourth and subsequent waves of the entire SHARE-project. The screening instrument will be based upon a name-generating mechanism. The grant will commence in January 2011 and is expected to continue for 4 years.

Older Israelis in comparison to their European counterparts: SHARE data
Among the workshop presentations were:

Age-Related and Death-Related Changes in Emotional Complexity: Evidence from SHARE-Europe, HRS, and CALAS – by Dr. Amit Shrira, Department of Psychology, Tel Aviv University.

The Prevalence and Predictors of Passive Death Wishes in Europe – by Dr. Liat Ayalon, Bar Ilan University.

---

**Publications news**

Several recent publications are based upon data made available through the IGDC. These include:


**Highlights of findings on Aging in Israel based upon data available from the IGDC**

- Liat Ayalon found that Israeli Jews who survived exposure to the Nazi regime were not at greater risk for death than the general population of Israeli Jews in later life. It is unclear whether these individuals represent a particularly resilient group or whether the risks of psychological trauma on mortality were mitigated over time.


- Howard Litwin and Elazar Leshem showed that late-life immigrants who had never worked in the host country had a significantly greater risk of death than their immigrant counterparts who had ever worked (or were still working).


- Using linked data files, Howard Litwin found that early versus normative exit from the workforce is not related to survival. Respondents who had prematurely exited the labor force did not benefit from disproportionately longer lives when compared with the respondents who retired 'on time'.