

SURVEY OF ADMISSIONS TO RESIDENTIAL CARE AND NURSING HOMES FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE

PSSRU

Outline of a research project funded by the Department of Health

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Health has commissioned the Personal Social Services Research Unit to undertake a survey of admissions of elderly people to residential care and nursing homes. The aim of the survey is to provide an up-to-date picture of the use of residential care and nursing homes, in order to improve the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) formulae for allocating funds to local authorities for the support of elderly people. Regular follow-up information will be collected about the people in the admissions study to examine length of stay, and its consequent financial implications, and changes in dependency over time. A complementary cross-sectional study, focusing on the characteristics of homes and their residents and the costs of homes, is also under consideration.

BACKGROUND

From 1 April 1993, local authorities have been responsible for assessing new applicants for public funding for private and voluntary residential care and nursing homes, under the provisions of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990. A phased transfer of social security funds to local authorities also began in 1993.

The community care changes introduced in 1993 were designed to enable people to live as independently as possible in the community, and are likely to lead to changing patterns of admission to residential care and nursing homes. Changes in levels of dependency among new admissions will have implications for the future population of residential care and nursing homes in terms of length of stay and turnover, and for their management and staffing.

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The **PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES RESEARCH UNIT** undertakes social and health care research, supported mainly by the Department of Health, and focusing particularly on policy research and analysis of equity and efficiency in community care, long-term care and related areas — including services for elderly people, people with mental health problems and children in care. The PSSRU was established at the University of Kent at Canterbury in 1974, and from 1996 it has operated from three sites:

Cornwallis Building, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NF

London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London, WC2A 2AE

University of Manchester, Dover Street Building, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

The PSSRU Bulletin and publication lists are available free from the unit librarian in Canterbury (01227 827773; email pssru_library@ukc.ac.uk).

Email: PSSRU@ukc.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.ukc.ac.uk/PSSRU/>

RESEARCH

The overall purpose of the survey is to improve the SSA formulae for allocating funds to local authorities for the support of elderly people. It will:

- lead to new estimates of the relative need for public financial support for residents in residential care and nursing homes under the new Community Care arrangements;
- investigate whether the inclusion of socio-demographic factors about elderly people living in an area would improve the estimate of the likely average cost of residential provision under a standard level of services.

The survey will be undertaken in a representative cross-section of 18 local authorities in England. It will include elderly people admitted to permanent care in residential care and nursing homes during a period of three months in autumn 1995, and supported financially by one of the local authorities. The survey is expected to yield some 2000 new admissions, who will then be followed up at six-monthly intervals to determine length of stay and changes in dependency over time.

Information will be collected about:

- the characteristics of publicly-funded people being admitted to each type of home, where they come from and the purpose of their admission;
- area characteristics, such as labour costs, supply and purchasing policies of local health services, and costs of community services;
- the type of home the person is admitted to;
- costs and charges to the authority and to the individual resident;
- cross-boundary flows of admissions, including the path of admissions from hospital;
- how long people stay in supported residential and nursing home care;
- destination outcomes and mortality;
- changes in dependency and financial arrangements over time.

TIMETABLE AND OUTPUTS

The admissions study is being undertaken during autumn 1995. A report of the analysis and proposals for SSA formulae will be presented to the Department of Health in May 1996, followed by reports for general circulation.

The longitudinal follow-ups will take place at six-monthly intervals, followed by suitable reports.

RESEARCH STAFF

The PSSRU staff conducting the research, to whom further enquiries should be addressed, are: Andrew Bebbington, Pamela Brown, Robin Darton and Ann Netten.

The fieldwork for the survey is being undertaken by Research Services Ltd, Harrow.