Health Inequalities – the Northern Ireland context

Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer
DHSSPS
“That Poverty is associated with ill health must always have been obvious, except to those who did not care to look or wish to see.”

Douglas Black
Healthy life expectancy for females is lower in NI than in the rest of the UK, for males is similar to Scotland and Wales.

Healthy Life Expectancy – at birth 2002

Source: DHSSPS
20% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland
Life Expectancy
Gap between most deprived areas and NI overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-01</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-02</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-03</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002-04</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-05</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-06</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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The rate of premature deaths among the long term unemployed is three times that of people in managerial occupations.

Source: NISRA, Northern Ireland, the data is the average for 2002 to 2005.
Nearly one in five people in Northern Ireland claim some form of out-of-work benefit - the highest rate in the UK

Proportion of working-age people in receipt of a key out-of-work benefit (%)

Source: Client Group Analysis, DWP (GB) and from the Department of Social Development (NI); the data is for February 2005

Scope: UK
Year: 2005
Updated: Jun 2006
## CHALLENGES - INEQUALITIES

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>CREGGAN</th>
<th>CULTRA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Deprivation rank</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free School Meals (2006)</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aged 3-5 registered with Dentist (2005)</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births to unmarried mothers (2004)</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Northern Ireland has a poor record in the dental health of young children (on Western European/UK standards)

Estimated Average decay experience (Decayed, Missing and Filled Teeth) in Young Children

Source: WHO/Childrens Dental Health/ National Dental Inspection Programme of Scotland
Note: Age of children varies from 5-7
Other health inequality indicators

Infant mortality rate

- Deprived: 7.5, 7.1, 7.5, 7.0, 7.4, 6.5
- NI: 5.7, 5.5, 5.5, 5.2, 5.5, 5.3

Std Death Rate (U75) - Circulatory diseases

- Deprived: 180.6, 172.9, 160.1, 150.6, 144.0, 137.5
- NI: 131.5, 124.2, 116.6, 110.0, 104.6, 100.1

Std Death Rate (U75) - Respiratory diseases

- Deprived: 62.8, 59.4, 58.6, 55.6, 49.2, 47.5
- NI: 39.0, 37.3, 36.1, 33.6, 30.7, 30.0

Std Death Rate (U75) - Cancer

- Deprived: 175.7, 172.9, 169.3, 165.2, 159.9, 157.7
- NI: 129.1, 128.7, 127.9, 128.1, 126.9, 127.0
In Northern Ireland and Scotland the death rate due to coronary heart disease is relatively high albeit improving in recent years.

Coronary heart disease deaths per 100,000 population – all males

NI coronary heart disease deaths per 100,000 population (under 75)

Approximate 55% reduction between 1995 and 2005

Source: OECD Health Data 2005, DHSSPS/GRO
Note: Data not available for NI for all years

Source: DHSSPS/GRO
Note: Data standardised to European Population
Health inequalities – access to health services

• Intervention rates of Coronary Artery Bypass Grafts (CABG) or angiography following heart attack were 30% lower in lowest socio-economic group (SEG) than the highest.
• Hip replacements 20% lower among lower SEGs despite 30% higher need.
• A one point move down a seven point deprivation scale resulted in GPs spending 3.4% less time per consultation
• Lower uptake of screening & immunisation programmes in lower SEGs
Childhood obesity is a significant and increasing problem in NI with 1 in 5 children classified as overweight and does not compare favourably with some European countries.

Source: Child Health Systems - DHSSPSNI & International Association for the Study of Obesity
Note 1: Overweight includes obese and severely obese
Note 2: Northern Ireland data is for 5 year olds 1999-2000, other years and ages of children vary by country – from 1998 to 2001
Note 3: Overweight and obesity measured according to IOTF standard measurement
Physical Activity - NI males have the lowest proportion in the UK meeting recommended physical activity levels; a higher proportion of NI and Scottish females meet the recommended levels than in England and Wales.

A higher percentage NI’s population, both male and female, drink above sensible limits of alcohol than in other UK regions.

Source: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA & General Household Survey, ONS
Men and women in Northern Ireland are more likely to show signs of a possible mental health problem than their counterparts in England or Scotland.

Male suicide is on the increase

Mortality caused by intentional self-harm trend: Males

Source: OECD Health Data 2005
Note: Data not available for NI for all years
Suicide rate (per 100,000 persons)

Classification

DEPRIVATION
(20% worst SOAs)

ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION
(20% worst OAs)

URBAN/RURAL INDICATOR

Deprived | Non-deprived | . | Economically deprived | Non-economically deprived | . | Rural | Urban

All persons | Male | Female
Health inequalities

- 6500 fewer people would die prematurely each year across Ireland if death rates matched European average (3000 in Northern Ireland)
- Death rates for CHD, cancer and stroke for lowest SEG more than twice that of highest SEG
- Unemployed twice as likely to have mental health problems
- Children from poorest families;
  - 4 times more likely to die before 20 yrs
  - 15 times more likely to die in house fire
  - 5 times more likely to die in accidents
Dr J McKenna, CMO (1992)

“When data about the number of beds or of operations or of prescriptions written ... are confined to dusty, unopened files ... history will ask rather what successes were recorded in this decade in eliminating the inequalities, in reducing the morbidity and in improving the health of the population of Northern Ireland.”