

People aged 65+ living at home in Hackney and Braintree, Essex.
Analysis by age and area.

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Background

Three samples of elderly people have been recently interviewed in City and Hackney and Braintree, Essex in a study of health and social service needs. One sample consisted of 662 people aged 85+ (total census) living at home in City and Hackney, who were interviewed in 1987. The second sample was a random selection of 465 people aged between 65<85 also living at home in City and Hackney, who were interviewed in 1989. The third sample consisted of a random selection of people aged 65+ living at home in Braintree, Essex. As only three people in the Braintree sample were aged 85 and over these were excluded from the analyses presented here. In the three studies the proportions of males and females interviewed, respectively were: 19%: 81%:, 40%: 60%, and 32%: 68%.

The detailed results are presented in three separate reports, which are available from the authors. Analyses by age and area are presented here in relation to the major variables.

The two areas studied are contrasting in relation to standard social deprivation indicators, with City and Hackney scoring high on deprivation indices and Braintree scoring fairly low.

Essex had a higher proportion of people in social class II.

Table 1. Occupational Class

	<u>Hackney</u>			<u>Essex</u>	
	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85
	(n=465)		(n=662)	(n=288)	
I	2	1	*	5	3
II	9	11	13	20	14
IIIInm	11	13	10	8	8
IIIm	56	52	47	46	56
IV	10	8	18	12	10
V	8	13	11	8	8
Other	4	2	1	1	1

Classified according to the Registrar General's Classification of Occupations.

Social Network Support and Activities

Table 2 shows that there were differences with age, place of residence and likelihood of living alone. More of those aged 65<74 lived alone in Hackney than in Essex.

The younger age group were more likely to say they wanted to move, although those in Essex were far less likely to want to move than those in Hackney.

There were no significant differences with marital status and area of residence, although the older age groups were more likely to be widowed.

Life Satisfaction

The Neugarten Life Satisfaction Scale was administered to measure overall life satisfaction. The scores range from 0 to 20, the higher the score the greater the life satisfaction. Table 3 shows the replies to the individual 20 items of the scale. This shows that, in particular there was an increase with age with the proportion of Hackney respondents who felt the present is "dreary" and in the proportion agreeing that they "felt old" and somewhat "tired", among both Hackney and Essex respondents. There was a decrease with age in both areas with the proportion who felt "interesting and pleasant things would happen" to them in the future; and a decrease with age among Hackney respondents only, with the feelings that their current activities are as "interesting as, they ever were". Essex respondents tended to have more positive ratings than Hackney respondents.

Table 4 shows the overall life satisfaction scores. There were no statistically significant differences between the two younger age groups in either area, although those aged 85+ living in Hackney had slightly lower life satisfaction.

Table 3. Neugarten Life Satisfaction Scale:

	Hackney			Essex		
	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	
As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be	50	54	54	63	62	Agree
I have had more luck in my life than most people I know	50	48	56	62	65	Agree
This is the dreariest time of my life	73	62	50	83	80	Disagree
I am just as happy as when I was younger	44	42	43	73	63	Agree
My life could be happier than it is now	45	42	48	59	68	Disagree
These are the best years of my life	18	20	20	39	24	Agree
Most of the things I do are boring and monotonous	85	85	71	87	86	Disagree
I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future	71	63	44	65	51	Agree
The things I do today are as interesting to me as they ever were	80	76	64	83	80	Agree
I feel old and somewhat tired	70	60	43	79	59	Disagree
I feel my age but it does not bother me	44	55	66	52	62	Agree
As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied	85	89	89	91	91	Agree
I would not change my past life even if I could	67	71	71	76	74	Agree

Table 3 Cont: Neugarten Life Satisfaction Scale

Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life	75	78	72	72	73	Disagree
Compared to other people my age, I look smart when I am dressed to go out	82	90	82	85	77	Agree
I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now	51	43	20	40	26	Agree
When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the things I wanted	68	66	54	63	49	Disagree
Compared to other people I get down in the dumps too often	82	82	77	84	86	Disagree
I've had just about what I expected out of my life	63	74	76	68	76	Agree
In spite of what people say, the life of the average person is getting worse not better	47	57	36	52	53	Disagree

Table 4. Neugarten Life Satisfaction Scale

		% of respondents Hackney			Essex	
		65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85
0 - 10	low satisfaction	27	28	32	15	23
11 - 13	average satisfaction	29	31	34	30	26
14 - 20	average to high satisfaction	44	42	34	56	51

Delighted-Terrible Faces Scale

The delighted terrible faces scale was used as a further measure of satisfaction with the quality of aspects of life. Again, this has been shown to have good reliability and validity. Respondents were shown seven faces (A to G) to depict how they felt about aspects of their lives:- 'Here are some faces expressing various feelings. Below each is a letter. Which face comes closest to expressing how you feel about.....
.....? Table 5 shows most people scored at the 'delighted' end of the scale choosing happy ('delighted') faces to portray their feelings about their life as a whole, their accommodation, activities, independence and loneliness. Few scored at the 'terrible' end of the scale.

Table 5 also shows that there were no significant differences between age groups and satisfaction with life as a whole, accommodation, social activities, independence and loneliness.

However, there were area differences: respondents in Essex were more likely to select 'delighted' faces to depict their feelings than respondents in Hackney.

Table 5. Delighted - Terrible Faces Scale

% selecting Faces

	Hackney												Essex																						
	(Delighted)				(Neutral)				(Terrible)				(Delighted)				(Neutral)				(Terrible)														
	65 A	75 B	85+ C	75 A	85+ B	65 C	75 D	85+ E	65 F	75 G	85+ H	65 I	75 J	85+ K	65 L	75 M	85+ N	65 O	75 P	85+ Q	65 R	75 S	85+ T	65 U	75 V										
Life as a whole	9	28	40	13	34	34	14	28	30	12	11	16	6	2	3	4	1	3	7	4	2	21	37	34	20	27	32	4	14	3	-	1	5	1	1
Accommodation	14	23	32	16	32	25	21	30	25	17	12	11	7	1	6	5	3	6	7	3	2	37	29	24	31	20	27	5	6	4	-	1	2	2	2
Activities	12	29	40	10	33	33	10	20	29	10	13	19	5	2	2	5	3	3	11	7	4	23	23	35	17	20	34	10	13	7	1	1	11	2	4
Independence	19	30	31	17	26	35	15	20	11	8	13	18	8	3	1	4	1	4	11	6	4	32	27	23	28	24	23	10	9	6	1	1	8	6	4
Loneliness	17	32	26	17	26	25	18	23	20	11	18	16	9	3	1	8	4	4	12	6	5	37	23	21	34	21	17	7	14	7	3	2	7	5	3

Mental Health

Goldberg's General Health Questionnaire was administered to measure anxiety/depression.

The first sub-section consists of seven items relating to feelings about health, the second sub-section consists of seven items relates to nerves/anxiety; the third sub-section consists of seven items relates to feelings of self-worth; and the final consists sub-section of seven items relates to depression/suicidal feelings. The scoring system used was the version which gives a score of 1 to admission of problems/more problems than usual and 0 to no problems/no more than usual. The scores are summed to give a range of 0 - 7 for each subsection, and 0 - 28 overall. A score of 6 or more indicates a case of psychiatric disturbance.

Table 6 shows that there were few age differences with GHQ subtotal scores, except after age 84 with the subsection (A) which indicated a decline in reported health status with older age.

There were no significant area differences with subsection scores, although the table reveals slightly lower scores for respondents in Essex for health (A) of nerves/anxiety (B). This is reflected in the overall scores which shows that Essex respondents were more likely to have lower overall scores.

Table 6 shows that the most notable age differences with reported symptoms was after age 85 (Hackney).

Health

Table 7 shows reported current health problems and consultations with GPs by problem. There were clear trends with age in the case of most symptoms.

The trends with consultations with GP over each symptom was less consistent. The likelihood of consultation increased consistently with age among Hackney responders only for poor eyesight, urinary incontinence and piles. Likelihood of consultations sometimes increased and sometimes decreased up to age 75 and this unclear pattern was repeated up to age 85. It is not clear why this inconsistency should occur. Among Essex responders, the trend was also inconsistent although only the two younger age groups were included in the sample.

Table 6. General Health Questionnaire Score Mental Disturbance

<u>Scores for A (health)</u>					<u>Scores for B (nerves/anxiety)</u>					
Hackney			Essex		Hackney			Essex		
65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
0	73	64	51	81	73	76	73	71	76	85
1	8	10	12	7	4	10	9	9	12	4
2	7	8	11	4	9	5	9	8	4	4
3	3	8	8	4	2	4	2	4	2	3
4	6	6	11	2	8	2	3	5	3	1
5	2	1	4	1	2	1	2	2	2	-
6	1	1	2	-	1	1	1	1	1	2
7	-	2	*	1	1	1	1	-	-	1

<u>Scores for C (self worth)</u>					<u>Scores for D (depression/suicidal thoughts)</u>					
Hackney			Essex		Hackney			Essex		
65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
0	68	59	51	66	51	95	88	85	92	91
1	14	15	17	16	22	4	4	5	5	3
2	6	9	9	8	11	-	3	3	1	3
3	4	6	7	4	6	1	3	2	1	3
4	5	3	5	1	7	-	*	2	*	-
5	1	2	4	3	3	-	-	1	*	-
6	1	4	2	2	-	1	1	1	-	-
7	1	2	5	-	-	-	*	1	-	*

Total score

			Hackney			Essex		
			65	75	85+	65	75	
			<75	<85		<75	<85	
			%	%	%	%	%	
0	-	3	77	70	62	77	79	
4	-	5	11	8	11	7	9	
6	-	9	9	13	13	9	6	
10	-	16	2	7	11	5	5	
17	-	28	1	2	3	2	1	

Table 7. Health Problems and Consultation With GP

	Hackney						Essex			
	% with problem			% of those seen GP about it			% with problem		% of those seen GP about it	
	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	Age 75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	65 <75	75 <85
Aches/pains, stiffness in muscles/joints	63	61	70	82	74	80	64	64	73	74
Poor eyesight (+ with glasses on)	16	32	52	81	84	88	12	23	63	85
Trouble with feet	33	41	45	74	86	77	27	32	74	68
Poor hearing (+ with aid in)	19	20	40	55	82	65	13	24	86	57
Sleeplessness	32	37	37	60	63	61	29	22	73	64
Forgetfulness	13	14	35	31	18	19	29	31	19	19
Nerves/stress/ depression	28	24	33	62	60	52	23	17	66	50
Constipation	6	14	33	69	75	76	10	10	75	75
Giddiness	23	38	33	80	75	64	17	32	68	72
Indigestion/ heartburn	13	14	26	79	63	67	26	25	62	73
Urinary incontinence/ lack of control	17	18	29	71	76	82	11	20	83	88
Bronchitis	23	23	21	87	96	90	15	16	88	95
Chest pains/ other heart trouble	21	26	21	96	92	93	22	16	91	89
Headaches	17	18	17	72	73	66	21	7	76	63
Loss of appetite	10	14	16	64	57	45	6	6	5/9 (People)	3/7

Table 7 Cont. Health Problems and Consultation With GP

	Hackney						Essex			
	% with problem			% of those seen GP about it			% with Problem		% of those seen GP about it	
	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	65 <75	75 <85
Confusion	7	5	16	53	15	35	3	8	20	30
Abdominal pain/ discomfort	12	12	14	85	87	77	9	6	9/13*	6/7*
Piles	5	5	8	67	71	78	5	3	6/8*	1/4*
Alternatively constipated/loose	2	5	5	83	67	87	3	3	5/5*	3/3*
Passing blood or tar motions	2	3	4	50	67	91	1	1	2/2*	1/1*

* People

Contact with GP

Just over a quarter (27%) of Essex respondents had not seen their GPs for a year or more; there were no differences with age. Sixteen per cent of Hackney respondents aged 65-84 and a smaller proportion, 14%, of Hackney respondents aged 85+ had not seen their GPs for a year or more. Thus Hackney respondents were far more likely to be in more recent contact with their doctors. There were no clear area differences.

Table 7 shows reported symptoms and contact with GP.

Contact With Other Professionals

Use of health and social services generally increased with age, as Table 8 shows. The most notable exception to this trend was with opticians services, where among the Hackney and Essex respondents there was a clear trend in the opposite direction, and in Hackney with contact with a hospital doctor. Essex respondents were more likely than Hackney respondents to receive optician and dentistry services; they were slightly less likely to receive nursing services and far less likely to receive home help services and to be in contact with a hospital doctor.

Table 8 also shows also shows that few respondents in any age group wanted more services. The most frequently reported desire for a service was chiropody in both Hackney and Essex.

Table 8. Contact With Professionals

<u>Professional</u>	% of sample receiving service					% would like service				
	Hackney			Essex		Hackney			Essex	
	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85	65 <75	75 <85	85+	65 <75	75 <85
Health visitor	3	6	9	1	2	3	1	*	1	1
District nurse	7	9	17	2	5	2	*	4	-	2
Other nurse	1	3	4	-	-		*	4	-	
Bathing service	1	5	12	-	-	2	3	3	-	-
Carer relief	1	3	2	2	1	1	*	1	-	-
Social worker	7	7	13	4	2	6	3	-	2	2
Occupational Therapy	4	2	5	1	2	1	-	1	-	-
Physiotherapy	7	5	5	2	1	-	*	1	-	-
Optician	48	32	37	66	60	1	*	1	-	-
Dentist	31	15	15	36	23	1	*	1	-	-
Meals on wheels	5	12	19	1	7	1	*	1	-	-
Home help	13	30	54	3	18	5	3	6	2	4
Chiropodist	21	33	44	13	31	7	7	17	6	12
Incontinence laundry	1	3	4	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
Hospital doctor	32	33	27	16	20	-	-	-	-	-
Voluntary worker	3	9	10	5	2	7	4	12		12

* Less than 1%

Functional Ability and Help Given

Respondents were asked whether they could perform a range of daily living tasks with "no, mild, moderate or severe difficulty" or whether they could only perform them "with help" or "not at all".

Table 9 shows the severest categories of ability levels and whether help was given to those with difficulties.

Table 9 compares those with severe or more difficulties with tasks with a study by the author (AB) of applicants for residential care in Hackney in 1984, using the same measures. Applicants for care had far higher functional disability levels, despite their average age of 83 (they were younger, but frailer, than sample aged 85+). They were also less likely to receive help. The table also shows that Essex respondents were much less likely to report having severe difficulties with tasks.

There were few differences between Hackney and Essex respondents with any degree of difficulty, in likelihood of having help. The most marked exceptions, where Essex respondents were more likely to have help, were with odd jobs, and getting about outdoors.

Relatives were the sole helpers for both Hackney and Essex respondents, in each age group, except with cutting toe nails, where professionals alone or in with relatives provided most help.

For example, In the case of 50%-100% of tasks of daily living helped with relatives were the main helpers (friends helped in less than 14% of cases). For a number of tasks, the base number of people who had help were less than 20, and therefore too small to analyse by source of help and age group. Comparative analyses were possible with some tasks, and these showed that among people aged 65<75 and 75<85, relatives were more likely to be the sole helpers in Essex than in Hackney: for example 83% and 54% of people aged 65<75 and 75<85 in Essex who had difficulties with laundry and who had help, were helped solely by relatives in comparison with 55% and 31% in Hackney; The comparative figures for shopping were: 92% and 86%: 80% and 73%. Also, relatives were less likely to be the sole helpers with increasing age of the respondent.

This was evident in both the Hackney and the Essex samples, and the trend was consistent with the older age group in Hackney. For example, of Hackney respondents with difficulties with laundry and who had help, 55% of these aged 65<75 had help from relatives only, 31% of those aged 75<85 and 24% of those aged 85+ had help solely from relatives. Similarly, of those Hackney respondents with difficulties shopping, 76% of those aged 65<75, 64% of those aged 75<85 and 45% of those aged 85+ had help solely from relatives.

Table 9. Comparison Of All Respondents With Respondents To Earlier Survey Of Applications To Residential Care : Difficulty With Activities With Daily Living And Help Received.

Activity of daily living:	Hackney			Essex			Hackney			Essex		
	65 ≥75	75 ≥85	Applicants for care (x age:83)	65 ≥75	75 ≥85	Applicants for care (x age:83)	65 ≥75	75 ≥85	Applicants for care (x age:83)	65 ≥75	75 ≥85	Applicants for care (x age:83)
Get in/out of bed	3%	4%	29%	1%	1%	29%	31%	28%	22%	2/5*	29%	
Rise from chair/ wheelchair	2%	5%	22%	1%	6%	22%	18%	19%	17%	18%	17%	
Climb steps/stairs	13%	28%	51%	7%	17%	51%	27%	23%	21%	20%	22%	
Use toilet/commode	2%	3%	16%	1%	2%	16%	29%	30%	27%	2/5*	6/7*	
Wash self	2%	4%	19%	2%	1%	19%	26%	28%	38%	3/6*	2/9*	
Bath self	11%	21%	47%	8%	18%	47%	38%	38%	45%	42%	30%	
Get in/out of bath	15%	32%	63%	9%	22%	63%	29%	26%	35%	28%	20%	
Dress self	2%	5%	23%	1%	4%	23%	38%	27%	36%	43%	42%	
Brush/comb hair	-	1%	12%	1%	1%	12%	3/6*	3/14*	48%	2/2*	3/9*	
Wash hair	5%	13%	46%	5%	18%	46%	76%	76%	81%	9/12*	25%	
Cut toe nails	18%	40%	69%	11%	33%	69%	64%	70%	80%	70%	77%	
Manage teeth/dentures	2%	1%	12%	1%	1%	12%	60%	33%	81%	2/2*	2/3*	
Eat/cut up food	1%	5%	20%	1%	1%	20%	3/5*	5/15*	57%	2%	5%	
Prepare/cook food	7%	14%	59%	4%	5%	59%	77%	83%	78%	8/9*	56%	
Housework	14%	30%	65%	6%	15%	65%	81%	89%	93%	86%	85%	
Laundry (sheets etc.)	13%	31%	77%	4%	19%	77%	83%	87%	91%	81%	85%	
Shopping	14%	35%	67%	13%	28%	67%	89%	90%	95%	100%	94%	
Handle pension/money	10%	20%	41%	2%	7%	41%	82%	87%	92%	7/7*	90%	
Get about indoors	3%	5%	30%	1%	3%	30%	32%	26%	17%	3/8*	18%	
Get about outdoors	9%	21%	61%	5%	17%	61%	43%	42%	42%	58%	66%	
Use public transport	13%	30%	68%	9%	29%	68%	39%	33%	12%	26%	33%	
Odd jobs	34%	49%	76%	18%	32%	76%	69%	77%	91%	98%	91%	

★ People

Summary

The distribution of commonly identified 'vulnerability or 'risk' factors for elderly people are summarised by age and area in Table 10. In summary, emotional well-being and mental health were worse in City and Hackney than in Braintree, Essex. This may reflect a better quality of life available to elderly people outside large inner city areas, certainly far fewer people in Essex wanted to move. Respondents in Essex undertook more social activities outside the home, were slightly less likely to report loneliness and had bigger social networks which were more likely to be composed of relatives. The latter findings has implications for their potential use of health and social services; as the main surveys reported that relatives are more likely to provide practical help when needed, than friends. However there were no differences by age and area in the proportions who identified main helpers or confidantes.

While most sample members did appear to be well supported, and the image they presented of old age is positive rather than negative, there were substantial minorities who had mental health problems (10-27%), who reported loneliness (8-23%), who had low life satisfaction (15-32%), who had been bereaved in the last 12 months (16-25%), and who had experienced a major health problem in the last 12 months (21-40%). Many of these problems increased with age. In addition, poor eyesight, even when wearing glasses, increased markedly with age, as did problems with hearing.

Respondents who were effectively housebound constituted 51% of people aged 85+, again this increased markedly with age. Uptake of services was generally low, with relatives providing most care. Separate reports on the burden on carers are available.

Further research on the acceptability of service provision to elderly people is being undertaken, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust.

Table 10. Comparison of Risk Groups In Each Age Group

In the past 12 months experienced:	Hackney			Essex	
	65-74 %	75-85 %	85+ %	65-74 %	75-85 %
Major illness/accident/ fall/operation	34	40	36	21	27
Death of someone close	16	20	25	21	25
Widowed	8	2	3	2	1
Moved home	1	1	2	4	3
Not seen GP	18	15	14	26	28
Difficulty seeing	16	32	52	12	23
Difficulty hearing	20	20	40	13	24
Childless	21	28	29	16	19
Lonely often/most/ all the time	11	15	23	9	8
Severe difficulty with cannot do:					
Cook/prepare food	7	14	28	4	5
Housework	14	30	61	6	15
Get outdoors	9	21	51	5	17
Self reported nerves/ stress/depression	28	24	33	23	17
GHQ score over the threshold	13	22	27	10	15
Low life satisfaction score	27	28	32	15	23
Lives alone	36	55	61	32	64
Wants to move home	50	31	27	28	15
Has no friend/relative/ neighbour to rely on for help	6	5	7	1	2