

Scotland's first long-term ageing study to improve lives of the elderly

July 27 2015, by Esther Hutcheson



The study aims to promote long, healthy and happy lives.

A major Scotland-wide study of the health, economic and social circumstances of people aged 50-plus will enable future improvements to be made to their health and wellbeing.

Launching today, the University of Stirling-led Healthy Ageing In Scotland (HAGIS) study is the first in Scotland to follow individuals and households through time.

There are currently two million people over 50 in Scotland, comprising 38 percent of the population. The £500,000 HAGIS study will capture a snapshot of the current circumstances of 1000 of them.

Following its findings next autumn, the aim is to expand the study to 8000 people in 2018, charting changes in their [health](#) and social circumstances over the decades, reporting every two years.

The multi-partner HAGIS project team includes the Universities of Strathclyde and Edinburgh.

Stirling Professor of Economics David Bell, from the Stirling Management School, said: "People in Scotland are now living longer and the size of our older population is increasing. But historically we have a relatively poor health record and high levels of income inequality exist.

"We want to build a picture of what life is like for our over-50s. By taking part in HAGIS, older people in Scotland can inform the design and implementation of policies and services affecting them. The study is part of Scotland's contribution to international ageing research and knowledge with the ultimate aim of promoting long, happy and healthy lives."

Its findings will help to address questions such as how individuals plan for retirement and who is providing care for our elderly population. It will include memory tasks and ascertain respondents' understanding of financial concepts.

Research Economist Dr Alasdair Rutherford, of Stirling's School of

Applied Social Science, and Stirling Management School Research Assistant Elizabeth Lemmon are working with Professor Bell on the HAGIS project.

HAGIS joins a worldwide network of ageing studies co-ordinated by the US National Institute on Aging (NIA) and will be compared with findings from across the UK and around the world.

Dr Ken Langa, Associate Director of the NIA-funded Health and Retirement Study, said: "The Scottish HAGIS study will be an extremely valuable and important new member of the growing worldwide network of longitudinal ageing studies, uncovering the unique health and [social circumstances](#) currently experienced by Scotland's ageing population.

"Our experience of a longitudinal study in America has shown that combining the different types of data that HAGIS will collect provides a detailed picture that can inform health and social policies aimed at improving the lives of older adults and their families."

A wider steering group also has experts representing the Universities of Dundee and Essex, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the Institute for Social and Economic Research, the NHS and the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing.

Provided by University of Stirling

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