Inequalities in Healthy Life Expectancy in Eastern Europe

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May 28, 2013
Background

- Large health disparities across Europe
  - Mortality rates
  - Chronic disease
  - Subjective assessment of health

“East-West health divide”
(Bobak and Marmot 1995; Mesle et al. 2001)
Recent evidence suggests another health divide on the European continent
Life Expectancy at Birth, 1989-2008

“Trisection approach” (Luy et al. 2011)
Conceptual Framework

- Recent research pays attention to differences in “health-related quality of life”
  - Andreev et al. (2003): healthy life expectancy (HLE)
  - Jagger et al. (2008): healthy life years (HLY)
Little attention has been directed toward differentials within Eastern Europe

- Jagger et al. (2008): only Baltic states
- Andreev et al. (2003): only Russia

Present study:
Investigate differentials in health expectancy (i.e., healthy life expectancy) across Eastern Europe
Data and Sample

- Life tables: Human Mortality Database (HMD), or the World Health Organization (WHO)
- Self-rated health: the European Values Study (EVS) 2008
- Men and women aged between 20 and 74
East Central Europe (n=13)
Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Czech Republic
Hungary
Macedonia
Montenegro
Poland
Romania
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia

Former Soviet Union (n=10)
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Estonia
Georgia
Latvia
Lithuania
Moldova
Russia
Ukraine
Measures

- Self-rated health from the EVS

Q: “All in all, how would you describe your state of health these days?”

A: “very poor,” “poor,” “fair,” “good,” and “very good”

the duration of life spent in good health = healthy life expectancy (HLE)
Results

- Large regional differentials exist in partial HLE for both genders
Male partial HLE (20-74) in 2008

Macedonia: 35.7 years (72%)

Russia: 13.9 years (34%)

Difference: 21.8 years
Female partial HLE (20-74) in 2008

- Czech: 34.4 years (66%)
- Russia: 12.5 years (25%)

Difference: 21.9 years
## Comparison of mean values (HLE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Central Europe (n=13)</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>28.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Former Soviet Union (n=10)</td>
<td>21.1</td>
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*p*-value

- Male: *p* < .001
- Female: *p* < .001

✓ Significant differences in partial HLE
Discussion

- It is important to focus on a broader aspect of health

- Limitations:
  - Subjective nature of the health measure
  - Institutionalized individuals are excluded
Next steps:
- Differentials in health expectancy across three country groups
- Investigate factors related to differentials in HLE
THANK YOU
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<tr>
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Distribution of Self-Rated Good Health

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Male partial LE (20-74) in 2008

Albania: 49.6 years

Russia: 41.6 years

Difference: 8.0 years
Female partial LE (20-74) in 2008

**Difference:** 3.4 years

**Slovenia:** 52.9 years

**Ukraine/Russia:** 49.5 years
Proportions of life spent in good health (male)

- Macedonia: 72%
- Russia: 34%
Proportions of life spent in good health (female)

Czech: 66%

Russia: 25%