

Editorial

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Executive Editor

Sustainability

Much good news to report! With the membership of the Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies (SLLS) continually expanding and a good response to our invitation to members' University libraries to subscribe to the Journal, the prospects for the Journal's finances are looking good. It is particularly pleasing that 10 major libraries in different countries and varying in size responded immediately to our invitation to subscribe to the Journal, ensuring that all their users (staff, students and visitors) gain immediate access to it. We expect to boost the number further with the follow-up letter that has just gone out to those still undecided, offering enhancements in the ways that subscriptions can be paid. The letter also draws attention to other facilities of much interest to libraries, such as the newly established SLLS virtual bookshop, through which all Journal issues can be printed on demand as backup to the online version.

Editorial matters

Other items discussed at the recent editorial committee meeting included expanding the number of editors engaged in organising reviews for the Journal. This will broaden the range of expertise available to handle the interdisciplinary papers which we hope will be an increasing feature of the Journal.

Open Access

The other major item of much concern to all engaged in learned societies online journal publishing has been addressed in past editorials - *Open Access*. The UK Research Councils (UK-RC) have recently published a policy statement setting out their requirement of open access publication for all papers reporting research funded by them. Their position is particularly important because it sounds as if research councils in other countries, if not already adopting the same policy, are likely to follow suit.

The UK-RC favoured initially the 'Gold Model' of open access, in which part of the budgets through which they fund research has to be made available,

via the universities receiving the funding, to pay the Article Processing Charge (APC) to the publisher who produces any paper based on it. The alternative approach, now accepted at least *pro tem*, is the 'Green Model' in which papers 'accepted for publication' are made available in manuscript form via repositories, where any reader can access them. Providing such a paper is deposited within six months of publication for STEM disciplines, and up to twelve months, or even two years for Social Science and Humanities disciplines, then the open access requirement is met.

From early on in its history LLCS has deposited all papers, once published, in the British Library, where they can be accessed through the Reading Room and such deposits will be made available to all of the other six UK libraries that serve as 'Legal Deposit' repositories. Complementing this provision, all LLCS authors will be asked in future to make available their 'approved for publication' manuscripts, by depositing them in their own University repositories, thus extending access online through that route.

UK-RC acknowledge that it will take perhaps five years for this change in the requirements of online publishing to be fully in place. In our own case as supporters of open access in principle for research papers, while recognising the need for financial sustainability of the journals that publish them, we are pleased to be able to work within the new policy framework.

This Issue

This week's issue has a varied range of content reflecting most of the modes of publication that the Journal offers. We start with two papers, the first on the relationship between unemployment sequences and well-being. The next is methodological reporting on the optimum means of tracking individuals over time, in longitudinal surveys where intervals between follow-ups are extended, such as in the adult stages of birth cohort studies. The paper addresses the issue of office and field tracking and such factors as respondent characteristics in determining the most successful method for tracking them. The next paper is a Study Profile based on the *Born in Bradford* study, in which a special sub-study dataset was developed for investigating childhood obesity. This is followed by a discussion paper introduced below by members of the Population Health Sciences Section editorial team. The final item is a methodological

tutorial, devoted to two different approaches to the analysis of longitudinal repeated measures of binary outcomes in panel studies.

Discussion Paper

In this issue, the paper on *social-biological transitions* by David Blane and colleagues, strongly affirms the need for longitudinal and life course data for research into the mechanisms by which social exposures influence and interact with biological processes including genetic effects. Although ideas about such influences have been around for a long time, the opportunities to test some of them have only relatively recently begun to be possible, because of developments in biological measures and their integration with longitudinal data.

This new paper presents a review of the elements involved in social influences on biological processes, and puts forward guiding principles for thinking about them and the processes that are involved. The models proposed have relevance for studies of individuals over many years of life, and there are already some longitudinal studies in Britain and elsewhere which are undertaking this kind of work. Other studies are now preparing to collect additional biological data for these purposes. Such new research will, as this paper explains, give new insight into how social experience becomes the biological reality of physical and mental ill-health, and provides an essential key to understanding the persistent socio-economic differences in health. This approach could also provide a framework for public health measures to improve health.

These proposals also have relevance for comparisons of societies as they change over time. There is already compelling evidence that societies undergoing social and economic transition experience change in the patterns of prevailing illness as the transition occurs. Schooling, Lau, Tin and Leung (2010) showed how in non-western societies, as living conditions of early life improve, and exposure to infection and poor diet is reduced, consequent improvements in growth are associated with changed vulnerability in the long-run to such disease as ischaemic heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

Clearly it is important now for those who undertake longitudinal studies to consider the implications of these ideas both for individual studies, and for comparative research involving many studies. We would like to encourage discussion in *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies* on this topic, and also at the annual meeting of the Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Research in Amsterdam this September:

<http://www.longstudies.longviewuk.com/pages/conference.shtml> Please send your contributions to us at the journal or contact your local SLLS representative listed in the global representatives list on:

<http://www.longstudies.longviewuk.com/pages/membership.shtml>

Schooling, C.M., Lau, E.W.L., Tin, K.Y.K., & Leung, G.M. (2010). Social disparities and cause-specific mortality during economic development. *Social Science and Medicine* 70, 1550-1557.



SLLS Society for Longitudinal
and Life Course Studies

SLLS International Conference

**Growing Up and Growing Old:
Health Transitions Throughout the Lifecourse**

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