Trends in Mid-Life Mortality: Is the US an anomaly? Evidence from the UK and Canada

Jennifer Beam Dowd
Department of Global Health and Social Medicine
King’s College London

Anna Zajacova, Department of Sociology
Western University
Overview:

• US mortality trends, including recent focus on mid-life

• American exceptionalism?

• Comparisons with mid-life mortality from UK and Canada
ANOTHER drop in US life expectancy: CDC reveals the death rate rose again in 2017 - driving down lifespan for the third year in a row

- Death rates rose for Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, flu and pneumonia, and three other leading causes of death, according to numbers posted online Wednesday
- There was little change in the death rate from the nation's No 1 killer: heart disease
- In the past, steady annual drops in heart disease death rates offset increases in other causes
- Now, all death rates are rising or steady - driving down life expectancy

By ASSOCIATED PRESS
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American exceptionalism
Life expectancy at birth, selected OECD countries

84 years

Australia
France
Canada
Finland
U.K.

U.S. (2016) 78.6


Source: OECD, U.S. Census Bureau

THE WASHINGTON POST
UK:

Life expectancy in years

female life expectancy is 3.6 years greater than for males in 2016

male life expectancy is increasing faster than female, closing the gap between the sexes
AGE-STANDARISED MORTALITY RATES

Deaths per thousand people, 2001-16

Notes: Rates are standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population.
Sources: ONS, Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2016; NRS, Age-standardised Death Rates Calculated Using the European Standard Population
Deaths and age-standardized mortality rate, by province and territory (Rate)

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Note: Age-standardized mortality rates are calculated using the 1991 population of Canada as standard population.
Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, table 102-0552.
Last modified: 2017-03-09.
Fig. 1. All-cause mortality, ages 45–54 for US White non-Hispanics (USW), US Hispanics (USH), and six comparison countries: France (FRA), Germany (GER), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada (CAN), Australia (AUS), and Sweden (SWE).
Hypotheses for US Mortality Increases:

• *Deaths of “Despair”* – increase in suicide, drug overdose, alcohol related deaths, related to life-course structural deprivation, esp for less educated whites (Monnat, Case and Deaton)

• Period-based opioid epidemic combined with slow down or reversal in improvements in *metabolic conditions* (possibly due to obesity epidemic)– Masters, et al, *IJE 2017*
Figure 1.11 Drug, alcohol and suicide mortality

White non-Hispanic mortality ages 50-54, by education

- Men, high school degree or less
- Women, high school degree or less
- Men, 4-year college or more
- Women, 4-year college or more
Figure 4. Period-based variation in drug-related mortality and cohort-based variation in metabolic disease mortality among White women and men (right), ages 35–54, 1980–2014. Estimates are 3-year moving averages, and gray areas indicate upper and lower bounds of the 95% confidence interval. Estimates are mortality rates per 100,000 person-years.
What is going on with mortality in mid-life in Canada and the UK?

Can this help us shed light on the role of social/political factors, vis a vis more generalized overall trends in mortality?
Data Sources

- Canada: StatCan, all registered deaths 2001-2015
Analysis: Focus on Ages 35-45, 44-55, and 54-65

- **Total** mortality from all causes

- “**Despair**” deaths, suicide, alcohol-related and drug-related

- “**Metabolic**” deaths, include deaths caused by diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, or obesity
Total Mortality, Canada 2001-2015

Total Mortality, Ages 35-44, Canada

Total Mortality, Ages 45-54, Canada

Total Mortality, Ages 55-64, Canada

Metabolic Mortality, Ages 35-44, UK

Metabolic Mortality, Ages 45-54, UK

Metabolic Mortality, Ages 55-64, UK
Opioid overdose deaths reach record level in Canada

Drug Mortality, Canada

- 35-44
- 45-55
- 55-64
KINGSTON UPON HULL, England — There was something different in the batches of heroin that circulated through this English port city over the summer, but most addicts had no idea what it was until their friends and fellow addicts, 16 in all, had died of overdoses.
Conclusions:

- Evidence of leveling off and possible increase in overall mid-life mortality in UK (slow down in Canada)

- Some evidence of leveling off of declines in metabolic mortality

- Evidence of increase in “despair” deaths, esp. drug-related in both UK and Canada, though absolute rates far below US
Next steps:

• Remaining causes of death

• Individual linked data to investigate most comparable subgroups to US white population

• How are political, economic, and other contextual factors similar and different across these countries and how is that playing out in population health?
Broken down by age....& race & education

Case and Deaton (Brookings, 2017)