

Deaths in Older Adults in England

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1. Introduction

In most recent decades mortality rates have fallen even in the very oldest age groups, with the consequence people will die at ever older ages. The average age of people in need of End of Life services will increase over time. "Deaths in Older Adults in England" describes the causes and places of death for people over the age of 75 to highlight what will be required of these services in the future and how that may differ from the present.

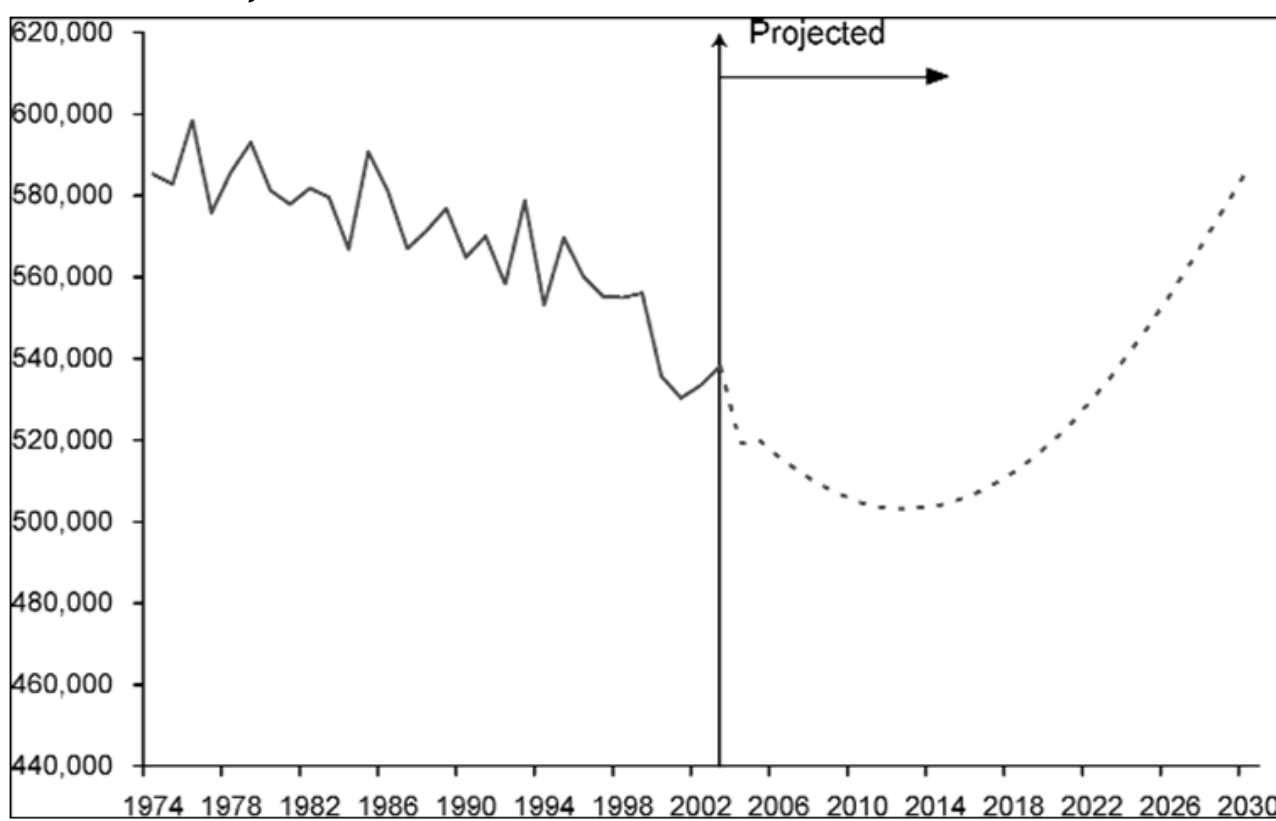
2. Methodology

The principle source of data was death certificates, in the form of the Annual Public Health Mortality Extract (ONS), focusing principally on deaths of people aged 75 years or older registered between 2006-08.

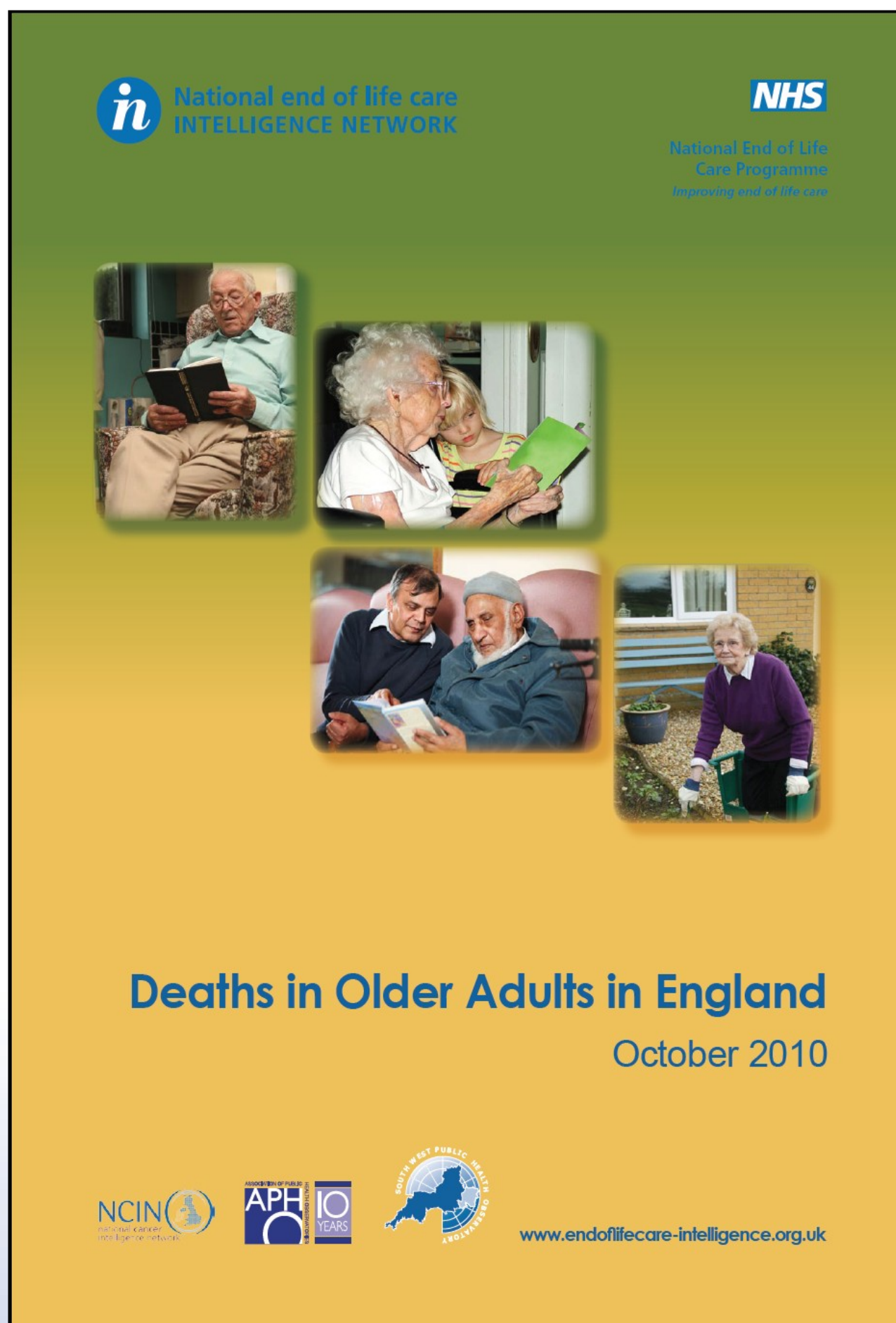
3. Death largely occurs in old age

In 2006-08 there were 313,942 deaths of people aged 75 years or older, approximately two thirds of all deaths. 35% of deaths were of people aged 85 years or older; this is predicted to increase to 44% in 2030¹.

Figure 1: Actual and projected deaths in England and Wales, 1974–2030



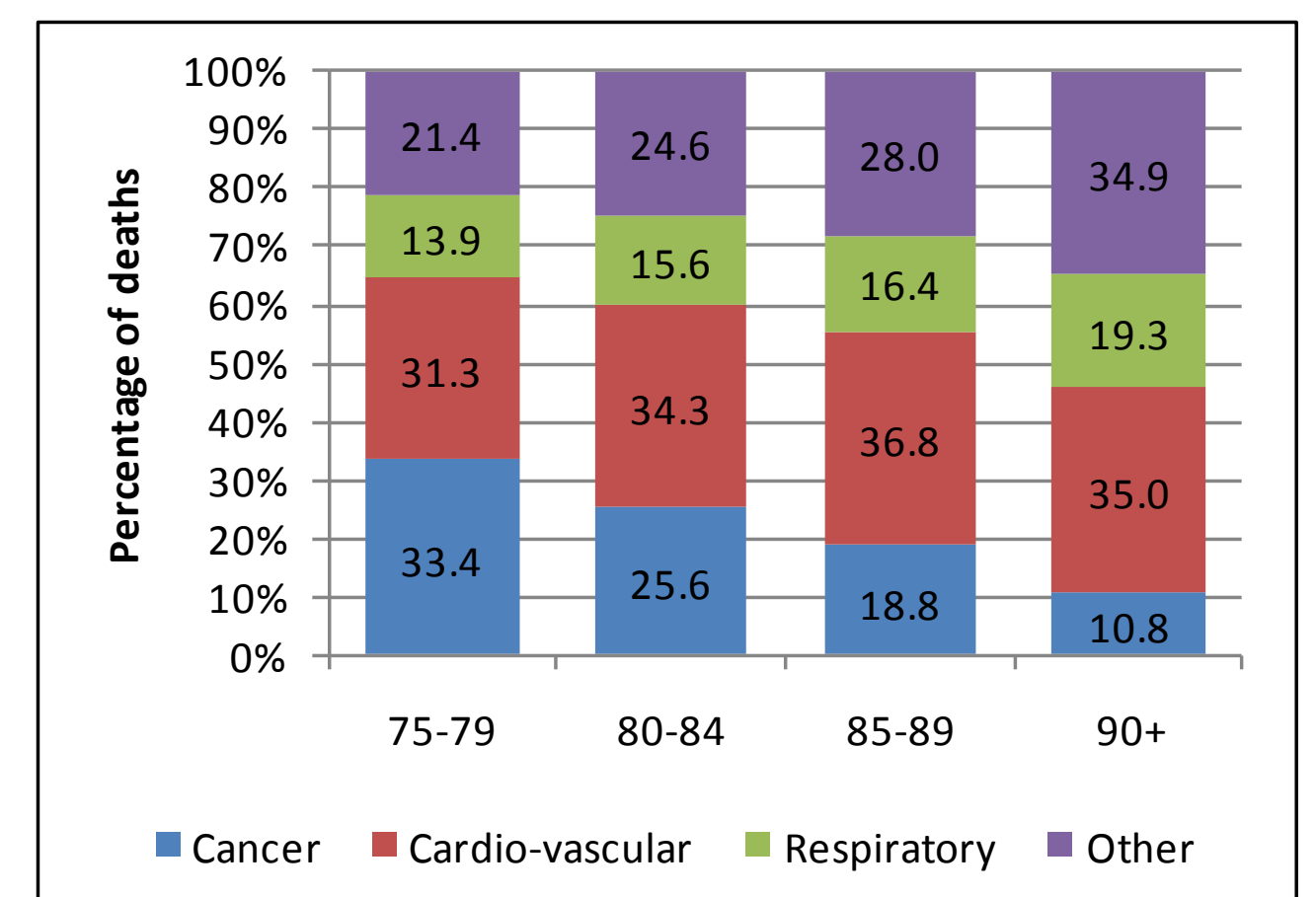
Source : Gomes & Higginson, 2008



4. Causes of death

Causes of death change with increasing age – Alzheimer's, senility, pneumonia and stroke becomes more common while cancer becomes less common.

Figure 2: The underlying cause of death by age, proportion of deaths in people aged 75 and over in England, 2006–08.

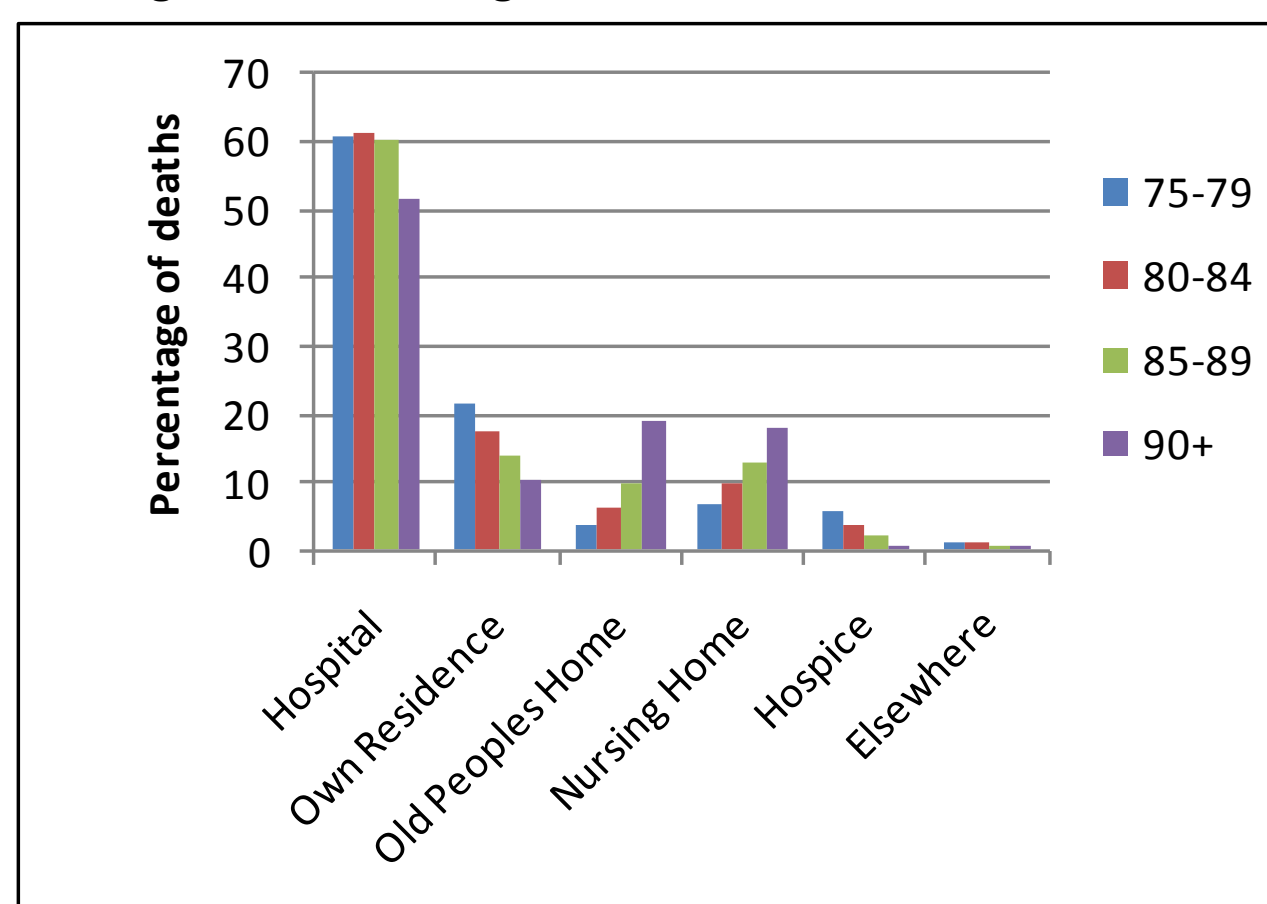


Source : Office for National Statistics data

5. Place of death

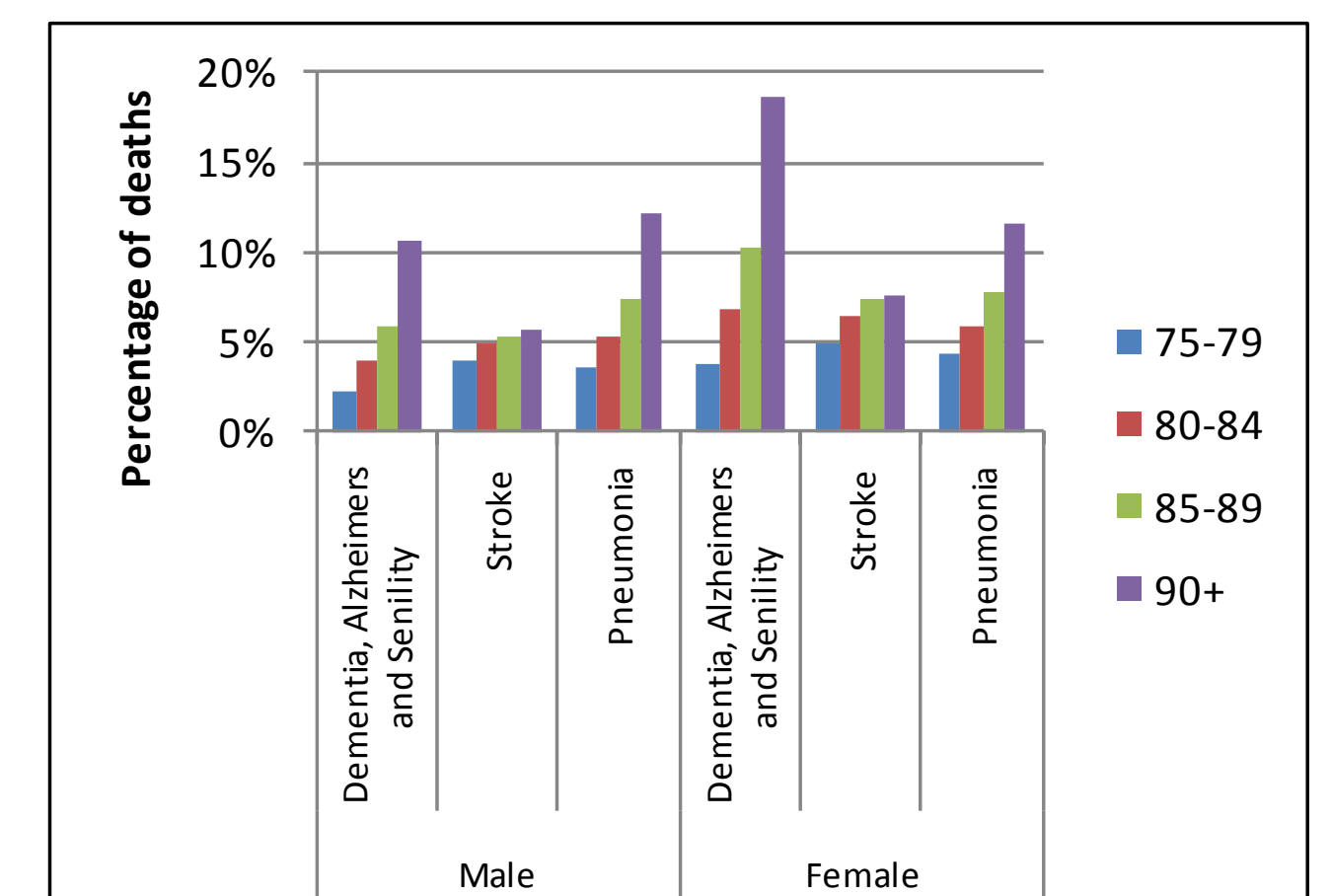
Death in hospital or own private residence becomes less common with increasing age, with death in residential or nursing home becoming more common; although death in hospital remains the most common place of death irrespective of age.

Figure 4: The percentage of deaths by place of death and age at death, England 2006-08.



Source: Office for National Statistics data

Figure 3: The percentage of deaths caused by Alzheimer's, dementia, senility, stroke and pneumonia by age and sex, England 2006-08.



Source : Office for National Statistics data

References

- Gomes & Higginson (2008) Where People die (1974-2030): past trends, future projections and implications for care *Palliative Medicine*, 2.22, 33-41