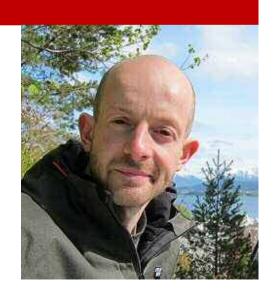
# Has working-age morbidity been declining?

Changes over time in general health, chronic diseases, symptoms and biomarkers in England 1994-2014

#### Ben Baumberg Geiger

Health Studies User Conference 2020 [online] 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 <a href="http://www.benbgeiger.co.uk">http://www.benbgeiger.co.uk</a>



### My argument today: Both methodological & substantive

- I. Methodological: The challenges of analysing trends using HSE
- 2. Substantive: So has working-age morbidity been declining?
- **②**A lot of info vs. a little time...

#### Taken from a recently published paper: DOI 10.1136/bmjopen-2019-032378

Original research Open access

BMJ Open Has working-age morbidity been declining? Changes over time in survey measures of general health, chronic diseases, symptoms and biomarkers in England 1994-2014

Ben Baumberg Geiger ©



#### Methodology: Challenges in analysing morbidity trends using HSE

- Inconsistent inclusion of qs
- Incomparability (often subtle):
  - -Sampling (e.g. 1991-3)
  - –Wording
  - –Routing / eligibility (e.g. BMI)
  - -Measurement (esp. biomarkers)

#### My approach is to systematically search for *all* relevant trends

- Inclusion: Search of all HSE questionnaires 1991-2014
- Comparability: Checking via data, documentation & other sources
- Sampling: only 25+ (communal ests), excludes 1991-3, new weights 1993-2014
- **Public resource** ideally to be collarboatively built upon!

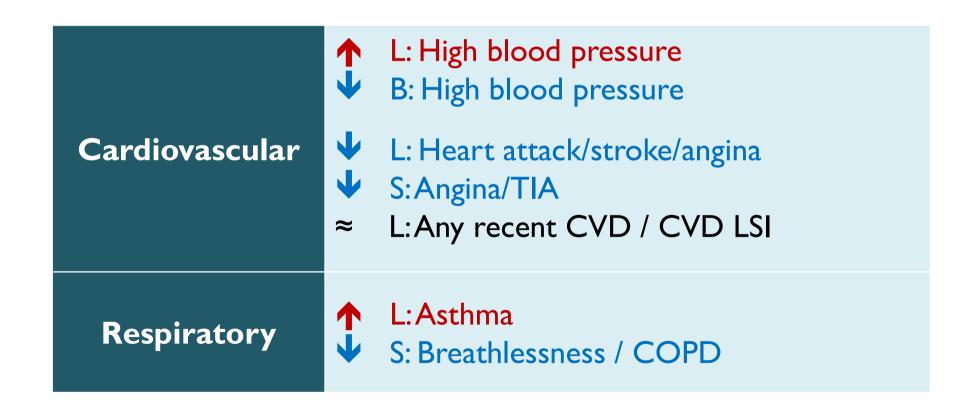
#### Substantively: is working-age morbidity really decreasing?

- Widespread assumption based on mortality data (recently reversed?)
- Little evidence...
- ...and that which exists is usually based on global self-reports...

#### Substantively: is working-age morbidity really decreasing?

- Here use 39 specific measures:
  - -Medical labels
  - -Symptom-based
  - -Biomarkers
- Age/sex adjusted only
- Variable start/end dates of trends (see paper)

# Cardiovascular/respiratory: a priori expect improvement



### Obesity, diabetes, MH: a priori expect deterioration

Obesity, diabetes

↑ B: Obesity / high waist-hip ratio

♠ B: Diabetes

↑ L: Diabetes

Mental health

↑ L: Mental ill-health

≈ S:'Moderate' mental ill-health

↑ L: 'Severe' mental distress

## Other morbidity domains: no clear a priori expectation

S:Activity limitations 1994-6 to 2001-3 **Activity** limitations, S: Pain pain, MSD L: Arthritis B: Raised fibrinogen B: Aneamia / iron deficiency **Other** L: Eye/ear S: Hearing 1994-6 to 2001-3 S: Seeing/communication 1994-6 to 2001-3

# Conclusions from this very high-level summary

#### No sign of systematic morbidity improvement 1994-2014

- No overall measure of morbidity available
- BUT no trend for falling morbidity to be seen in measures that predict SRH the most

#### We still need...

- -Better impairment measures!
- -Better collaborative resources