

User Guide

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Contents

Title

1918–1919 influenza pandemic mortality in England and Wales

Information type

Weekly influenza mortality (number of deaths and crude death rate) in the larger administrative areas of England and Wales for the duration of the 1918–19 influenza pandemic.

Coverage (geographic and temporal)

Influenza deaths for each week starting with the week ending 29 June 1918 and continuing to the week ending 10 May 1919 (46 weeks).

Complete for the London boroughs and the County boroughs (CB) throughout England and Wales. The other units included are by-and-large those with a population greater than 20,000, mostly metropolitan boroughs (MB) and urban districts (UD). Also included are ‘Remainder of’ county figures for all other units. Those administrative counties that had no individual centres selected have an entire county value.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strength: Weekly mortality data in both raw and rate form.

Weakness: Lacks the data for the smaller and rural areas. These are represented in the ‘Remainder of’ county figures.

Data periodicity

Weekly influenza mortality for the period 29 June 1918 until 10 May 1919 (46 weeks).

The dataset also includes total mortality and the equivalent annual death rate for the entire pandemic for each location.

Language

English.

Provenance

Who and why?

The data was entered into Excel spreadsheets by Niall Johnson as part of his PhD project in the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge (1996–2001). In this version the county names have been inserted.

This data was used in the examination of the 1918–19 influenza pandemic in Britain. This included the mapping of the patterns of the pandemic, incorporating the creation of animated maps.

Publications

This data was used (often mapped) in the following publications:

Johnson, Niall Philip Alan Sean. *Animating geography: space-time, multimedia and animation* [Website]. 2000. Available from <http://www.sid.cam.ac.uk/~npasj2>.

Johnson, Niall Philip Alan Sean. “Aspects of the historical geography of the 1918–19 influenza pandemic in Britain.” PhD, University of Cambridge, 2001.

Johnson, Niall Philip Alan Sean. “The overshadowed killer: influenza in Britain in 1918–19.” In *The Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918–19: new perspectives*, edited by David Killingray and Howard Phillips, London: Routledge, 2001.

How?

The data was entered into Microsoft Excel as a spreadsheet. Later operations included joining further data (mostly census data) and statistical analyses using Minitab and S-Plus. However, this dataset is the original data for weekly influenza mortality.

Sources

The original published source for this data was the *Supplement to the Eighty-First Annual Report of the Registrar-General – Report on the mortality from influenza in England and Wales during the epidemic of 1918-19* published in 1920. The mortality data appeared in “Table XX.—INFLUENZA, 1918–19.— DEATHS, and ANNUAL DEATH –RATES per 1,000, of Civilians living in ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS (a) during the whole EPIDEMIC (June 23–May 10); (b) in each wave of the Epidemic (June 23–September 14, September 15–January 25, and January 26–May 10); and (c) in each week of the Epidemic Period.” (pp. 48–80).

The data for the Metropolitan Boroughs comes from pages 48–50; the County Boroughs pages 51–56; the Administrative counties (administrative areas generally with a population greater than 20,000, ‘remainder of county’ or county totals) pages 57–77; with a summary on pages 78–80.

The table had the following note attached:

“The deaths shown in this table refer, from October 1st onwards, to all deaths to which influenza was recorded as contributing, whether the death has been assigned to influenza or not.”

There is further discussion and tables showing what causes those deaths had been assigned to, being largely other respiratory conditions such as bronchitis, phthisis, etc.

Structure

Files/tables

There are three (3) supplied data files. These are:

- ◆ RGdata.XLS
- ◆ RGdataRAW.tab
- ◆ RGdataRATE.tab

The Excel file (RGdata.XLS) contains two worksheets. One is labelled “Raw data”, the other “Rate data”. The raw data is the actual deaths while the rate data is the annual death rate equivalent of those deaths for each location given.

The tab files are copies of each of these worksheets, in tab delimited ASCII text format.

Records

There are 333 individual records (in both the raw and rate data).

The upper portion of the file gives the records for the MBs, UDs, and ‘Remainder’ of county figures (222 records).

This is then followed by the records for the metropolitan London boroughs (29 records)

The lower portion gives the records for the county boroughs (CBs) (82 records).

Fields

Field name	Description	Field length	Data type
Administrative unit	Name of the location, including type (MB/UD/CB)	32	Alpha-numeric
Administrative county	Name of the location's county	18	Alpha-numeric
Week ending	Influenza mortality for that week (46 columns) In the raw data this is the number of deaths recorded. In the rate data it is those deaths expressed as deaths per 1,000 population per annum in that administrative unit.	12	Decimal
Total	In the raw data this is the number of deaths recorded during the pandemic period. In the rate data it is those deaths expressed as deaths per 1,000 population per annum (an annualised equivalent rate)	12	Decimal

File formats

File name	File type
RGdata.XLS	Microsoft Excel 97
RGdataRAW.tab	Tab delimited ASCII text
RGdataRATE.tab	Tab delimited ASCII text

Terms and conditions

It is presumed that the copyright on this data is held by the British government. The data were originally published by the Registrar-General (for England and Wales), London in 1920 (see above for details). The creation of this electronic format of this data was done by Niall Johnson (see above for details). No other terms and conditions of use are known to apply to this data.