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SHARE-LEAP: Longitudinal Enhancement and Access Improvement of the SHARE Infrastructure

What are the real reasons why wealthy people live longer than those less well off? Why do people retire earlier in some European countries than in others? Does paying more for healthcare guarantee greater benefits? To find the answers to these questions and many more, the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) project was set up to collect data from across the EU and beyond on the health, socio-economic status and social and family networks of citizens aged 50 or over. The SHARE-LEAP project is the essential device to enhance the longitudinal stability of the SHARE panel and to improve access and consulting services to users.

● AS TIME GOES BY

Ageing is one of the greatest social and economic challenges of the 21st century for European societies. As the proportion of the population aged 65 or over continues to grow, it risks placing an increasing financial burden on society. To give an idea of how our lives are changing, a 70-year-old today has a life expectancy 10 years longer than that of 50 years ago. SHARE helps us to understand this new challenge, using an international perspective to learn from differences between countries. Against a background of major variations between European countries, for example in fertility rates and life expectancy, SHARE contributes to uncovering possible explanations hidden in genetics, lifestyle and healthcare provision.

The main aim of SHARE is to arrive at a deeper understanding of individuals as they age over time and how they adapt to changed health, economic and family circumstances. It focuses on gathering information on the over-50s, reflecting three rather distinct phases of life: the time before retirement, the time after retirement, and old age and frail health. In addition, SHARE is designed to provide an insight into the policy changes that are made in response to ageing and then to develop indicators that are comparable between countries for key concepts relevant to EU policy.



SHARE is the first step to a better understanding of where we are, where we are heading and how we can influence the quality of life as we age – both as individuals and as societies. Currently, SHARE contains two waves of data for about 32 000 respondents aged 50+ in 17 European countries. Indeed SHARE has become a great success: the database has some 1 400 registered users and SHARE has been elected to be one of the future infrastructures of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures.

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● THE BENEFITS OF SHAREING

SHARE-LEAP aims to enhance the long-term (longitudinal) stability of the panel by keeping in touch with the panel members, monitoring moves, re-interviewing 'lost' panel members, and interviewing the next of kin of deceased panel members in order to ascertain the events of the last year of their life. These activities should represent a big leap forward in securing panel stability as the scientific value of SHARE critically depends on continuous panel care.

It is improving the research potential from the SHARE infrastructure by adding imputed values for missing variables, calibrated weights, geo-coded and environmental variables, and meta/para-statistics derived from IT-driven survey methods. In addition, it is enhancing the SHARE survey

instrument in response to user feedback, changes in the institutional environment and new survey technologies, making the interview more effective and less burdensome for the respondents. Finally, the project is working to improve and maintain the user-friendly access for SHARE data users through services provided by central and national support points.

In particular, SHARE-LEAP is enhancing the longitudinal value and research potential of the SHARE infrastructure through such actions as consultancy and training courses to new users in order to spread good practice; studies for new instrumentation, methods, concepts and technologies; and the development and maintenance of common databases for networking and managing users and infrastructures.



Project acronym: SHARE-LEAP

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University of Linz (AT)

University of Liège (BE)

The Economics Institute of the Academy of Science, Prague (CZ)

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Project webpage: www.share-project.org/t3/share/index.php?id=235