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Life expectancy in two Caucasian countries. How much due to overestimated population?

Ruben Yeganyan
Irina Badurashvili
Evgueni Andreev
France Meslé
Vladimir Shkolnikov
Jacques Vallin

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Abstract

This study is a first attempt to produce reliable estimates of mortality in Georgia and Armenia in the 1990s. Official statistics registered a decrease in mortality over the 1990s in spite of local wars, mass flows of refugees, and severe economic hardships faced by populations. According to official statistics, in 1999-2000 population size was about 5.4 millions in Georgia and about 3.8 millions in Armenia. Non-official estimates based on migration surveys are much lower: 4.0-4.1 millions and 3.0 millions, respectively. This huge difference is mostly due to unregistered out-migration. In addition to corrections in population, corrections are made for under-registration of deaths. Hospital statistics is used for infant deaths and the Coale-Demeny model life tables are used for ages above 70. In Georgia, the introduction of payment for the declaration of vital events resulted in a greater under-registration of deaths than in Armenia. Modified populations, mortality and life expectancy values are produced for the 1990s. In 1999 life expectancy was 68.6 and 75.6 for males and females in Georgia and 68.7 and 75.4 for males and females in Armenia. These figures are lower than the official estimates by 5.2 and 5.6 years for males and females in Georgia and by 3.8 and 1.7 years for males and females in Armenia. After corrections Caucasian male life expectancy is higher than in other post-Soviet countries.

Author's affiliation

Ruben Yeganyan
Economic Research Institute of the Ministry of Finance, Armenia

Irina Badurashvili
Georgian Centre of Population Research, Georgia

Evgueni Andreev
Centre of Demography and Human Ecology, Moscow, Russian Federation

France Meslé
Institut national d'études démographiques, France

Vladimir Shkolnikov
Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Germany

Jacques Vallin
Institut national d'études démographiques, France

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Note 1 (p. 237): Paper presented at the Helsinki, June 7-9 European Population Conference-2001 Theme C: Health, morbidity and mortality. It results from collaborative work undertaken in the framework of the INTAS project n° 1722 "Expectation of life and causes of death in different republics of the ex-USSR: long-term trends and recent changes". (The last sentence was added on January 8, 2004.)

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[*Back to previous page*]