

# Recording Ethnic Group at Death Registration

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# Structure of talk

- What led to Registrars asking for the deceased's ethnic group
- Information collection: 2012 onwards
- The first six months' results
- Some possible further work

# What led to Registrars asking ...

- 2009 – Laurence Gruer (LG) e-mail to Registrar General (RG)
- “... chairing working group ... research programme for ethnicity and health in Scotland”
- “... like to recommend that ethnic identity is recorded on the death certificate, using the same classification as the census ...”

# What led .... (2)

- LG met RG and colleagues
- RG happy in principle, but number of points to resolve, including:
  - Legal position
  - Public acceptability
  - Support of Registrars
  - Finalising the Census classification
  - IT etc changes

# Information collection: 2012 onwards

- Consent sought (undertaking shown on card)
- If Informant willing to provide
  - relevant ethnic group picked from list
  - if it is an “other” group (e.g. “Other white”), Registrar asks for more detail, and keys in whatever the Informant says (e.g. “German”)
- Otherwise, record “not willing to provide”  
or “Ethnic group not known” (as appropriate)

# The first six months' results

- January to June 2012
- 27,920 deaths registered
- 3.1% ( 867 cases ) - Informant “not willing to provide” ethnic group of deceased
- 0.5% ( 143 cases ) - Informant “did not know” the ethnic group of the deceased
- 96.4% ( 26,910 cases ) - ethnic group was provided

# 6 months' results (2)

Of 26,910 deaths for which ethnic group given:

- 99.4% ( 26,750 ) White
- 0.6% ( 160 ) All other ethnic groups (incl. mixed)
  - 0.2% Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish, Pakistani British
  - 0.1% Indian, Indian Scottish, Indian British
  - 0.1% Chinese, Chinese Scottish, Chinese British
  - each of the other groups shown on the card had under 0.1%: none of those other groups had as many as 10 deaths.

## 6 months' results (3)

- non-White percentage unexpectedly low?
- might “Not willing” or “Not known” response be more likely for non-Whites?
- **so must use carefully any death rates estimated from these data.**
- e.g. non-White deaths double IF 1-in-6 of the 1000-or-so “Not willing or Not known” deaths were non-White



# Some possible further work

- In due course, NRS will compare ethnic group %s (for some age-groups) in 2011 Census and 2012 Deaths.
- BUT must interpret cautiously: apparent “under-representation” of an ethnic group in the “Deaths” data could be due to
  - a lower death rate or
  - a higher “Not willing / Not known” rate

## Possible further work (2)

- ??? compare individuals' ethnic groups in Census and Death records – to see (e.g.)
  - if the same code given in both cases
  - what Census has for “no ethnic group” Death
- ??? use Scottish Longitudinal Study  
BUT it covers only 5.3% of population
- ??? try to match all Deaths to Census  
BUT (e.g.) practicality, confidentiality issues

Any questions?

# Some additional information

(e.g. more detailed results)

- for possible reference  
(e.g. during Q&A)

# How some potential problems were resolved

- Lawyers advised on how it could be done
- RG consulted interested parties about proposed approach:
  - Provision of data would be voluntary
  - It would not appear in the entry in the register of deaths, or in any extract (“death certificate”) that was produced
  - Informant would be asked for consent to sharing of data with NHS, and to use of data for research and to produce statistics

Responses generally supportive: no objections

- Colin Fischbacher spoke about the need for the data at a Registrars’ Conference
- Census classification finalised
- Identified changes to IT system, Form of Particulars, Registrars’ Handbook, etc – all implemented w.e.f. 1st January 2012

# Card for Informant

(while waiting to register death)

- Explains:
  - Registrar General wishes to record information about the deceased person's ethnic group
  - what the information would be used for
  - “At the time of informing on the death you will be asked by the registrar whether you consent to the recording and sharing of the deceased person's ethnic group. Please indicate to the registrar that you **give** consent or **do not give** consent ...”
  - “... None of this information, including your choice, will be shown in the register of deaths”
- Shows the question that will be asked, and the ethnic group categories that will be used

# Question to Informant

- “Are you willing to provide the Registrar General with information about the deceased person’s ethnic group? This would be shared with the National Health Service, used in research into the links between ethnic group and causes of death to help improve health and healthcare services, and used to produce statistical tables and datasets. All published information would be in numerical form, so that no individual could be identified. The information would be used for no other purposes”.

# Ethnic group categories

## *White*

- Scottish*
- Other British*
- Irish*
- Gypsy / Traveller*
- Polish*
- Other white ethnic group, please write in*

## *Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British*

- Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British*
- Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British*
- Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British*
- Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British*
- Other, please write in*

## *Caribbean or Black*

- Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British*
- Black, Black Scottish or Black British*
- Other, please write in*

## *Mixed or multiple ethnic groups*

- Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in*

## *African*

- African, African Scottish or African British*
- Other, please write in*

## *Other ethnic group*

- Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British*
- Other, please write in*



# Collection in practice

- Registrars' views:
  - all fine
  - no complaints
  - quite happy to provide the information

# 6 months' results: more detail

Of the 26,910 deaths for which ethnic group was given:

- 26,750 (99.4%) White
  - 88.5% White Scottish
  - 8.7% White Other British
  - 0.9% White Irish
  - 0.3% White Polish
  - 1.0% White “Other”
- 160 (0.6%) All other ethnic groups (incl. mixed)
  - 0.2% Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish, Pakistani British
  - 0.1% Indian, Indian Scottish, Indian British
  - 0.1% Chinese, Chinese Scottish, Chinese British

The rest of the groups shown on the card each accounted for under 0.1%: none had as many as 10 deaths.

# 6 months' results: "Other" groups

- 295 cases where an "Other" group was specified
  - 278 of them were "Other white ..."
  - Including 32 Germans, 25 Italians, 15 Canadians, 13 Americans, ...
  - Some misunderstandings? e.g. 13 "White British"

# 6 months' results: "Don't knows"

- 143 cases where Informant said "don't know ethnic group"
  - Some understandable, as officials (e.g. police, solicitor, nursing home, etc).
  - However, many were family (e.g. 40 sons or daughters, 9 widows or widowers) – might expect them to know deceased's ethnic group