

R049: Health service use and outcomes in later life: an examination of urban and rural health inequalities in Northern Ireland – UU

That more people are able to live into very old age is one of the great achievements of our society. However, with age comes greater levels of illness and disability and the need to find more effective ways to keep people healthy for longer and to provide health and social care more efficiently and equitably.

Our study will examine health service use by locale of residence to identify potential disparities between living in rural, intermediate or urban areas. The analyses will focus on mortality outcomes while adjusting for presence of multi-morbidity, characteristics of hospital admissions, and medication use in dementia patients and for common mental disorders.

The study aims to address the following key research questions:

1. What is the rate of hospital admissions and associated multi-morbidity for those aged 55 or more?
2. What are the rates of specific chronic health conditions, including dementia and multi-morbidity, by area of residence? Estimating prevalence for cause specific and dementia related mortality;
3. Is there variation in mental health outcomes between and within those living in rural, intermediate or urban areas?
4. Are there differences in prescriptions (e.g. drug types, number of medications) related to living in rural, intermediate or urban areas?
5. What is the prevalence of emergency admissions at the end of life (by specific condition)?