

for income tax purposes, and whether income tax exemptions may be claimed for children

Tax exemptions for children, not allowable in Israel and Sweden, may double the figures for Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany, depending on the family size. An overall comparison of these countries suggests that the new transfer payments program for families in Israel is as generous, relatively speaking, as similar programs in other advanced social security systems

Research Grants Studies

Sections 702 and 1110 of the Social Security Act authorize extramural research projects in the broad areas of social security. The Social Security Administration provides funding through grants to nonprofit organizations and through contracts with both nonprofit and profitmaking organizations. From time to time, as projects are completed, the BULLETIN publishes summaries of research findings. A summary of a completed project (Grant No. 57823) is presented below.

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National Survey of the Black Aged

In January 1975 the Office of Research and Statistics gave a grant to the University of Illinois to gather certain information as part of a national survey of noninstitutionalized persons aged 65 and over. The basic survey was funded by the Administration on Aging, and the supplement was used to collect a large enough sample of black Americans, aged 65 and over, so that analysis of the survey findings would permit a separation of the black and white elderly populations.

The investigation was conducted by Ethel Shanas and Gloria Heinemann. It was expected that the information gathered would provide the knowledge base for estimating needed community services and special programs for the elderly.

The particular questions to which the survey gave special attention were: What is the general level of physical functioning of older persons? What services may be necessary to maintain old people in their own homes in the face of their declining physical capacity? What is the role of the family in later life? What proportion of old people lead isolated lives and what are the main characteristics of these persons? Why do people retire? What are their attitudes toward retirement? What are the sources and range of income of old people?

This report summarizes highlights of the survey findings. Discussion of the highlights and the sampling design as well as detailed tables appear in the full report, available from the Social Security Administration Library.

Health Status and Health Attitudes

Although little difference exists between the black and white elderly populations in their proportions of housebound and bedfast elderly, the black aged, particularly black women, report more restricted physical mobility than do the white aged. Black women are far more likely than white women to report that they can go outdoors only with difficulty.

Less capacity for self-care is seen among the black aged than among the white aged. Again, the greatest amount of incapacity is reported by black women. The black aged are twice as likely as the white aged to report difficulties with common physical tasks. The black population also is twice as likely as the white to report giddiness at least once during the week before the interview.

The black aged are twice as likely as the white to report that they were interviewed, and they are more likely than the white aged to report that they saw a doctor during the month before their interviews. They are also twice as likely to say that their health is poor and, in contrast, they are substantially less likely to say that their health is good. The black aged are twice as likely as the white to say that their health is worse than the health of other people their age.

Health and Welfare Services

The black aged who reported that they were ill at home some time during the year before they were interviewed were only slightly less likely than the white aged in the same situation to be visited by a doctor. They are, however, more likely than the white group to see a doctor in a 1-month period.

Almost twice as high a proportion of the black aged as of the white say they need medical care, but have delayed treatment. Lack of money is the major reason both groups delay medical treatment. Twice as high a proportion of the black group as of the white say that they need dental care but have delayed treatment. Again, lack of money is the major reason given by both groups for delaying treatment. Aged white persons who need footcare are more likely than elderly black persons to receive care from a private podiatrist.

Families were the major providers of care to both aged groups who spent time in bed because of illness. Substantial proportions of both populations, however, reported no help with either housework or meal preparation during such illnesses. Aged white persons who have

difficulty with heavy household tasks are twice as likely as the black group to report that they are using paid helpers. Both groups who have difficulty with personal and household tasks report a minimum use of social services and related types of assistance.

Family and Living Arrangements

A higher proportion of the black elderly than of the white elderly have no living children. Among those with living children more black than white elderly have large families.

A higher proportion of the white elderly than of the black elderly have grandchildren, but the black elderly are more likely than the white elderly to have great-grandchildren. Relatively more of the white elderly have living brothers and sisters. Both groups with living siblings are equally likely to either live with them or see them within a 1-week period.

The white elderly are more likely than those who are black to live only with a spouse, if married, or in a separate household if unmarried. Among persons who have surviving children, a higher proportion of the black group than of the white live in a household with a child. Among persons with surviving children who do not share a household with at least one child, about the same proportion of each group lives within a 10-minute distance. Among persons with surviving children, the black elderly are more likely than the white to have seen a child the day they were interviewed or the day before that. About the same proportion of both groups who were not living with children report that they had no family contacts the week before they were interviewed.

Among older persons who are unmarried and who have no surviving children, twice as high a proportion of the white elderly than of the black are likely to live with siblings. A higher proportion of the white elderly than of the black report that they give help to children or grandchildren. About the same proportion of both groups reported giving help to great-grandchildren. Aged black persons were more likely than aged white persons to report help received from children. A small proportion of both the black and the white elderly have no children, siblings, or relatives.

Isolation in Old Age

About the same proportion of black women and white women live alone. A higher proportion of black men than of white men live alone. Only a small proportion of both the black and the white elderly were without human contact on the most recent weekday or Sunday before they were interviewed. About the same proportion of both groups reported that they saw at least one relative (including children) during the week before they were interviewed.

Among unmarried persons—the never-married, widowed, or separated—the black elderly who live with children or with others are more likely than the white elderly to say that they are often or sometimes lonely. The black group, whether under or over age 75, are more likely than the white group of the same age to report that they are often alone and often or sometimes lonely.

Work and Retirement

About the same proportion of both black and white aged men are still in the labor force. Black women are more likely than white women to report that they had been employed earlier in their lives.

Among those in the labor force, about the same proportion of each group reported that they had worked during the week before their interviews. Similar percentages of each age group from ages 65–66 to age 80 and over were in the labor force.

Among retired persons, both races have about the same proportion of short-term retirees—that is, persons retired 3 years or less. Both are equally likely to report retiring before age 65. They are also equally likely to report retiring after age 70.

Black men are somewhat less likely than white men to report that they had been retired compulsorily. Black men and women, however, are more likely than white men and women to report poor health as a reason for voluntary retirement.

Black and white men to the same extent say they enjoy nothing in retirement. Black women, however, are far more likely than white women to say they enjoy nothing in retirement. The black elderly are far more likely than the white to say that what they miss most about not working is money.

The black group is twice as likely as the white group to report periods without work during the last year they were in the labor force. Neither group indicated any major desire to return to work. Among those still in the labor force, about the same proportion of both races do not want to retire.

Income and Assets

The financial analyses that follow are based on information supplied by cooperating income units—couples, unmarried men, and unmarried women. The data on income sources is virtually complete for all respondents. That on income amounts is virtually complete for black and white men, but only about 9 of every 10 white couples and 9 of every 10 white women gave the amounts of their income. About 4 of every 10 white income units reporting were couples, the comparable ratio for the black aged is about 3 of every 10.

Government benefits are the main income source of

both black and white elderly persons. A substantially greater proportion of black income units than of white units reported receipt of supplemental security income. A higher proportion of white couples than of black couples reported receiving income from a private business, a farm, or professional practice.

Income from pensions, rents, annuities, and other assets is reported by substantially higher proportions of white income units than of black units. White income units—whether couples, men, or women—report substantially higher median money income than do black units. Median money income declines with age for both races.

A higher proportion of black couple units have income 21 percent or more below the median for their group. Unmarried persons living with relatives are more likely than those living alone to have income 21 percent or more below the median for their group. Among white income units, the higher the level of income the greater the proportion of units with three or more sources of income.

Most couples of both races own their homes, but the proportion of homeowners is higher for white couples. Among unmarried men and women, whites are more likely than blacks to be homeowners. In both groups, most homeowners own their homes free and clear.

White income units are more likely than black units to have assets such as savings, stocks and bonds, and property. Roughly the same proportion of both groups own life insurance. The black elderly more often than the white report that their financial situation at the time of their interview was worse than when they were aged 60.

Copies of the final report of this completed research project are in the Social Security Administration Library, 571 Altmeyer Building, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, Md. 21235, and in the Library of the Office of Research and Statistics, Room 320-0, Universal North Building, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Copies of the report may be obtained through interlibrary loan. (Also in these libraries are copies of more than 50 other project reports that have been completed since 1963. Most of these reports were listed in the May 1974 BULLETIN.)

Recent Publications

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Health and Medical Care

Fain, Tyrus G. (editor) **National Health Insurance.** New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1977. 554 pp. \$29.95.

Contemporary government documents on national health insurance. Third volume in Public Documents Series.

Levitt, Ruth. **The Reorganized National Health Service.** New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1976. 251 pp. \$19.00.

Describes first major reorganization of British health service.

Roemer, Milton I. **Comparative National Policies on Health Care.** New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1977. 252 pp. \$16.75.

Analyzes major aspects of health care systems in some 150 countries.

Public Welfare

Fiegehen, G. C., Lansley, P. S., and Smith, A. D. **Poverty and Progress in Britain, 1953-73—A Statistical Study of Low Income Households: Their Numbers, Types, and Expenditure Patterns.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. 173 pp. \$15.00.

Institute for Research on Poverty. **Statistics of Poverty: A Bibliography.** Madison: University of Wisconsin, August 1977. 170 pp.

Employment

Elder, Peyton. "The 1977 Amendments to the Federal Minimum Wage Law." **Monthly Labor Review**, Washington, Vol. 101, January 1978, pp. 9-11. \$16.00 a year.

Sheifer, Victor J. "How Benefits Will Be Incorporated Into the Employment Cost Index." **Monthly Labor Review**, Washington, Vol. 101, January 1978, pp. 18-26. \$16.00 a year.

From a measure of wage change, the index will expand to include wages, salaries, and fringe benefits. Features a review of the statistics.

Children and Families

National Research Council. Assembly of Behavioral and Social Sciences. Advisory Committee on Child Development. **Toward a National Policy for Children and Families.** Washington: National Academy of Sciences, 1976. 133 pp. \$6.25.

Responds to question: What can be done to help families remove or lessen constraints they face in raising their children? Focuses primarily on children under age 6.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. **Characteristics of American Children and Youth: 1976.** (Current Population Reports, Special Studies, Series P-23, No. 66.) Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1978. 79 pp. \$2.50.

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