



WEST OF SCOTLAND TWENTY-07 STUDY HEALTH IN THE COMMUNITY

May 1995

Dear Twenty-07 Study member,

It seems hard to believe that several years have passed since we last saw you, and the time has come to visit you again to ask about your life and health over the last few years. We are enormously grateful to you all for your continuing help. A study like this could not be done without so many people giving so generously of their time. We would like to take this chance to remind you how grateful we all are.

We have been very busy ourselves since we last visited you, analysing the information we have collected and trying to reach as wide an audience as possible. Over the last few years we have published more than 50 articles in specialist national and international journals. These are journals which doctors, policy makers and other researchers in Britain and abroad read to keep themselves up to date. In addition, we have produced a large number of reports, provided information to local Health Boards and the Scottish Office, and have spoken about findings from the study at local, national and international meetings. In doing this we want to make sure that the information that you have so kindly helped us to collect is used in current debates about the causes of ill-health and its effects on people's lives.

Here are a few recent examples of issues we have written about in the last year to give you some flavour of how vital your contribution is to understanding health in the community.

- It is often assumed, especially by outsiders, that the West of Scotland is an area of very poor health. While in some respects this is true, in other ways health does not differ from other parts of Britain. For example, few differences were found for some important markers of health like blood pressure.
- We have also shown that the assumption that women are more prone to various aspects of poor health is not as widely true as many people had assumed.
- We have looked at many aspects of diet and health, including how the intake of fruit and vegetable consumption is related to aspects of people's lives, and studying variations in diet in different areas. In less wealthy areas the cost and availability of certain foods makes it more difficult for people to eat a healthy diet.

- The needs of other people in our daily lives can also affect how we feel and how we are. One of our recent articles has looked at the health of people who care for others with health problems. This has shown how remarkably well they cope.
- Whilst adults in poorer circumstances in general have poorer health, fewer differences are seen in young people. Only time will tell whether this relative lack of difference will remain when the people that we interviewed as teenagers are interviewed later in their lives.

Already the information you and others have provided has been enormously useful. However, the Twenty-07 Study is now reaching the point where we can learn even more about how changes in people's circumstances and experiences affect their health, and conversely how their own changing health may affect other aspects of their lives. This really helps us to understand more about causes and effects of better and poorer health. It is this quality of information which is so necessary for doctors and policy makers to have if we are to help improve the health of current and future generations, not just here in the West of Scotland, but in other parts of Britain and beyond.

Thank you so much for your own part in this Study. We know that people have often fitted our interviews into very busy lives. We very much appreciate all your help.

Yours sincerely,

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