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**“How does social care need amongst older adults change over time in the UK?”**

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**Abstract**

The provision of state funded social care for older adults in the UK is driven by the concept of need. Individuals who have care requirements that surpass a threshold are eligible to receive care. A wide range of methods are used to ascertain need, but the ability to conduct simple activities of daily living (ADL), such as bathing and dressing, is often used. However little is known how the abilities to conduct these activities change over time, alongside the factors that are associated with changes in care need. This is of clear interest to those providing care services to older adults.

Using all five available waves of the English Longitudinal Survey (between 2002 and 2012) the care need for individuals over the age of 50 was calculated for each time period. ADLs were used to calculate need, which was divided into none, low, intermediate and high. Multistate life tables were used to estimate the probabilities of transitions between care need states between survey waves, as well as between care need state and death. These life tables were calculated for the whole survey, before calculating them separately by gender, age groups and smoking status and combinations of these factors.

Results indicate that there is a substantial variation of care need between waves, with many individuals recovering between waves. Recovery is less likely amongst males, the old and those who smoke. This indicates that assessments of need should be conducted on a regular basis in order to ensure the appropriate level of care is provided when needed.