The Cognitive Function and Ageing Study II (CFAS II) is a large study which looks at ageing and health in three centres in the UK; We have recently finished the wave 2 interviews of the CFAS II study. It will be over two years since some of you were last visited by an interviewer, more recently for others. We wanted to wait until we had completed all of the interviews before we wrote to you in order to give you the fullest results from the study possible.

The information you have provided will help policymakers both locally and nationally to plan what level of resources will be required to help and support older people in society.

All of the information you have provided is treated with the strictest confidence and held anonymously. No personal details are passed on to anyone outside the study team.

By the end of the first wave of interviewing 7,635 people had agreed to take part in the study, we have now completed our second wave of interviews with over 5,200 people agreeing to take part again. Thank you!

The main aspect of the second wave of interviews was to look at change over the previous two years. By measuring change we can more accurately look into the relationships between lifestyle and health related factors.

All of the information below has come about as a direct result of your involvement and is of critical importance in revealing the changes in health and wellbeing in our older population over time.
The findings

In our previous newsletter we shared some of the initial findings from the first 3906 people to take part in Wave 1. In this newsletter we would like to update you on all people who took part in both the first and second wave of interviewing and the changes that we have observed over that time.

Who took part?

At the two year follow up interview we interviewed 2459 men and 2759 women.

Over 200 people were older than 90 years of age with the oldest man and woman both over the age of 100 years.

Most people who took part were still living in their own homes, and this has remained stable over both waves of interviewing with 5% living in sheltered accommodation and only 2% of people living in Residential/Nursing homes.

Activities

Many of you have now given up work with just 4% not yet retired, but this is only part of the story as 18% have undertaken some paid work since their retirement and slightly more (21%) engaged in unpaid work such as voluntary work.

For some aspects of life such as engaging in social and physical activities there have been many changes over time. Just under half of you (45%) still attend social groups/meetings in the same way as before. An additional 1 in 10 people have taken up attendance at social groups/meetings. More people took up social activities (12%) than gave them up (9%).

Lay Members

CFAS has 2 lay members Dr Simon Harrison from the Hospital Chaplaincy and Mrs Cathy Baldwin from the Alzheimer’s society who are part of our Management Committee offering advice from the public and patient perspective.

Marital status

Over two years marital status has remained quite stable, 95% of the population are still in the same type of relationship as before. More than 50 people reported living with a new partner.

Interviews

To date there have been in the region of 73,000 interviews with participants in all of the CFAS studies.
New technologies are being used more often to contact your relatives. 28% of people contact their relatives by text or email at least once a week. Talking over the telephone remains very popular with over three quarters of people (81%) talking at least once a week, and 26% every day. The number of friends people have in the community has stayed stable with 85% of people having the support of friends.

**Smoking**

There has been a small change in smoking habits, an additional 90 people have given up (2%) more than the 32 people who had originally given up but by the two year interview had taken it up again.

Nobody began to smoke who had not previously been a smoker.

**Self reported health**

We asked everyone how they would rate their own health, more than three quarters of people said they thought they were in good or excellent health. 16% of those questioned felt there was no change and just 8% of people thought their health was worse, rating feeling fair/poor.

**Health conditions**

The most common disorder identified in the first wave of interviewing was arthritis with half reporting it in one or more joints. Arthritis is also the most common newly diagnosed condition with 9% new cases. High blood pressure came second with 7% newly diagnosed on top of the 51% of cases identified in the first interview.
The future plans of CFAS

With your permission, we hope to visit you again as we continue to look at how we can improve people’s health and wellbeing.

It may be that in the future we will be able to invite CFAS participants to take part in a number of prevention strategies aimed at lowering the risk of dementia and associated risk factors, these would be tailored to area and current health status. Promising approaches to date may include items such as physical activity, dietary or computer game technologies to help improve health and cognition.

We hope that you have been interested to hear what’s been happening with the study, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your continued interest and enthusiasm for the study. If you wish to get in touch for any further information, our contact details can be found below.

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