PUBLIC HEALTH STATISTICS – 1990

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POPULATION

The mid-1990 estimate of population was 132,546 of whom just over 25,000 were aged over 65 years (3,000 over 85 years). Initial results of the latest national census indicate that the usual resident population will be about 130,500.

BIRTHS

There were 1928 live and six still births notified by the Lancaster Maternity Unit, and two home confinements. After adjusting for mothers who live in other districts, and Lancastrians born elsewhere, the final number of births belonging to Lancaster was 1,550 live and five still births.

Thirty-one per cent of the district's live births were outside marriage. We lost seven babies in their first week of life, and another died at ten days. Most were due to extreme low birth weight or congenital abnormalities, incompatible with prolonged life. Sadly, a further nine babies died before their first birthday, all from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>Under 65</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the total deaths, just over 50% of males were over 75 years of age, but over 70% of female deaths were over 75.

SELECTED CAUSES

VACCINATION AND IMMUNISATION

Whilst the uptake of measles and pertussis vaccines has continued to improve, immunisations against poliomyelitis, tetanus and diphtheria have plateaued at about 92% of the children under two years of age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Acceptances</th>
<th>Pertussis</th>
<th>Measles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diphtheria</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our target is to achieve 95% cover for all those by 1995, the level considered necessary in order to eradicate measles and rubella.

DEATHS

1990 saw the highest number of deaths since the '70s (1919). Forty people died aged between 13 and 44 years. Thirteen of these were due to injuries or suicide, and eleven from various forms of cancer (breast, four).

Deaths amongst the under 65's from Ischaemic Heart Disease, however, continue to decrease, and are about 25% fewer for both sexes, compared with fifteen years ago. Cancer of the lung and bronchus remains the commonest cause of cancer death (70 male, 31 female).

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Only three cases of measles were notified in 1990, the lowest number ever; only five years ago, there were 550. Apart from the various forms of food poisoning (45), the highest number of notifications were for hepatitis A – 22, and pertussis – 13. Tuberculosis remains with us – six notifications, which justifies the continuation of BCG vaccination for a little longer.

There was a marked increase of attendances by Lancaster district residents at the GUM clinics. Over 1,800 attendances were recorded, of whom 784 were new patients. Only 20 cases of gonorrhoea were diagnosed, and no cases of syphilis. However, there were 112 cases of chlamydia, whilst genital warts were the most prevalent sexually transmitted disease.