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Impact of health on retirement age varies across Europe

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The link between ill-health and retirement age varies markedly across European countries, according to new research from the University of York.

A study of the impact of health "shocks" on the decision of individuals to retire early found that for men, rapidly deteriorating health had the largest impact in Ireland, Portugal, Greece and Spain.

Compared to their healthy counterparts, for example, men suffering a health shock in Ireland were four and a half times as likely to give up work ahead of their normal retirement date.

The research, published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, was based on the analysis of data from the European Community Household Panel.

Professor Nigel Rice, from the Centre for Health Economics and co-author of the research, said; "People in different European countries might be expected to behave in broadly similar ways in response to a sudden decline in their health. Our research, however, demonstrates that people in these circumstances take very different decisions about their working future, depending on where they live.

The age people retire has significant implications for public policy.

Professor Nigel Rice, from the Centre for Health Economics

"The age people retire has significant implications for public policy so it is important that we improve our understanding of how they come to this decision. New data is now becoming available which should give us a far better insight into the factors that lie behind the differences we have uncovered."

The research points to a possible link between the incentives created by social security and tax systems in relation to retirement, pension arrangements and the influence of health shocks on the decision to stop working and calls for further investigation in this area.

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Notes to editors:

- ▶ The research 'Health and Retirement in Europe' can be found at www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph
- ▶ The Centre for Health Economics is widely recognised as a leading research centre in its field. Operating across all areas of the discipline, with a particular emphasis on methodological thinking and high policy impact, CHE is known especially for its work in health technology assessment, health status measurement, performance measurement and productivity, health care financing, and econometric methodology. The University was ranked joint first for health services research in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.

<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/che/>.

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