

Life expectancy in the Caribbean Netherlands differs slightly from that in the Netherlands

summary

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Introduction

The Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba) have been part of the Netherlands since 10 October 2010. Statistics Netherlands presents statistics on the Caribbean Netherlands separately, and does not integrate them with existing statistics. This article describes the method and results of life expectancy calculations for the Caribbean Netherlands. As – because of the relatively small population - the standard life expectancy calculation method is not suitable for the Caribbean Netherlands, the method was adjusted.

Data

For the period 1998-2010, data on the population on 1 January and the yearly number of deaths were taken from the Netherlands Antilles Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS-NA) and the Island Registries. From 2010 onwards, the data are based on information Statistics Netherlands receives from the PIVA, which is the personal information system for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba that serves as the population register for the Caribbean Netherlands.

Method of calculation

Life expectancy at birth and at different ages is calculated on the basis of a life table. Life tables describe the mortality and survival patterns in a population. The life table is compiled from observed age-specific mortality data for a given year and the observed age-specific population at the beginning and the end of that year.

Statistics Netherlands calculates the life table for the population of the European part of the Netherlands for each year and for each age, with an upper limit of 99 years or older. Because of the small population of the Caribbean Netherlands, the methodology must be adjusted: a life table is calculated with five-year age groups and an upper limit of 85 years or older, combined with regression analysis and a correction for younger ages.

Results

On average, every year 95 of the 17 thousand inhabitants of the Caribbean Netherlands die, the smallest number of persons died in 2001 (71), while in 2011 the number of deaths was significantly higher than in other years (140).

Using the modified methodology, for men and women life expectancy at birth in the

Caribbean Netherlands was calculated to be 80.2 years in 2012. This is 0.9 of a year lower than in the Netherlands. At age 65, the difference in life expectancy was only 0.1 of a year. Because of the considerable year-to-year variations in mortality and population numbers, life expectancy for the Caribbean Netherlands is subject to a margin of error.

Uncertainty

The graph presents life expectancy at age 65 and the confidence interval, which represents the range within which the year-to-year variation in life expectancy will probably lie. Surprisingly, life expectancy at age 65 in the European part of the Netherlands falls entirely within the range of life expectancy at age 65 in the Caribbean Netherlands. This suggests that at age 65, life expectancy in the Caribbean Netherlands is not significantly different from that in the European part of the Netherlands. Averaged across the entire period, life expectancy at age 65 in the Caribbean Netherlands was 0.75 of a year lower than life expectancy at age 65 in the European part of the Netherlands.

Life expectancy at age 65, with 95% confidence interval, men and women

