



**Summary Report of the Seminar on  
Public Policy, Social Security and Trends in Mortality  
held on Tuesday, 14 May 2019  
Washington D.C., USA**

On Tuesday May 14, 2019 a full day seminar was co-hosted by IAA's MWG and PIWG at the Mayflower hotel in Washington, DC to present and discuss trends in:

- Pension and Social Security
- Mortality due to Socio Economic Differences
- Public Health Response on Avoidable Mortality

The [seminar program and presentations](#) began with an official welcome from Brian Ridsdale Chair of the IAA MWG. After sharing information about the IAA MWG Brian introduced the first speaker Mitchell Wiener

Mitchell Wiener is a Senior Social Protection Specialist with the World Bank. His presentation entitled "Longevity: Rethinking Defined Contribution Pay-Outs in Multi-Pillar Retirement Systems" illustrated the retirement challenges and opportunities related to defined contribution plan. Particular emphasis was placed on difficulties of providing for retirement in developing countries. An example from Kosovo was used to illustrate how some of the longevity challenges could be effectively met at a lower cost by using a combination of accumulated savings and deferred annuities.

Assia Billig Chief Actuary, Canada's Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Office, was the second presenter. Her presentation "Balancing Adequacy, Sustainability, and Intergenerational Equity – Canada Pension Plan Auto Adjustment Mechanisms" demonstrated the process by which Canada modified its pension plan to preserve its financial sustainability, ensure the stability of the additional contribution rates, and reduce the risk of future reductions in benefits and/or increases in contribution rates. The resultant CPP Sustainability Regulations shares adjustments between current beneficiaries, contributors and their employers.

Following a brief refreshment break Barbara D'Ambrogio-Ola, Head of Actuarial and Analytical services, Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Company spoke next on "General trends and Issues in Finland". After providing an overview of the Finnish pension system the impact of increasing longevity and falling birth rates and the socio-economic differences were presented. Discretionary vs automated alternatives to adjust pension level/contributions to address longevity were discussed in the context of fairness. A question left with the audience was how fairness should be defined and whether other mechanisms beyond the pension plan should be used to address questions of fairness.

Abraham Hernandez, Chairman of the IAA PBSS section, delivered several innovative actuarial ideas during his remarks on how we might begin "Mitigating the Global Pension Crisis". After describing the scale and causes crises mitigation ideas including: Miles for retirement (Mexico), Sustainability factor (Germany), Voluntary Tax Free and Digital savings (Kenya) along with several other examples.

The last two speakers before lunch provided a U.S. perspective on Trends in Pension and Social Security. First Steve Goss, Chief Actuary U.S. Social Security Administration, provided an overview of “Trends in U.S. Social Security Actuarial Status”. Steve discussed both the statistical facts and political realities which are important when assessing the current and future state of the U.S. Social Security system. Josh Shapiro, Senior Actuarial Advisor Groom Law Group gave a snapshot of U.S. Private Single Employer, Multi-Employer and other Public pension plans during his talk entitled “U.S. Private and Public Sector Panel Discussion”.

A buffet lunch began at the conclusion of Josh’s remarks and was the transition from a morning where we discussed trends in Pension and Social Security to an afternoon that would start by discussing Trends in Mortality Due to Socio-economic Differences.

The Society of Actuaries “Causes of death in the U.S. Population” research was presented by Dale Hall, Managing Director of Research Society of Actuaries. The changes in the rate of mortality improvement and causes of death were discussed along age, sex and time continuums. The observed drop in overall U.S. life expectancy was also examined.

Dr. Ayse Arik, research fellow at ARC Heriot Watt University followed by providing findings on “Trends and Regional differences in Cancer Morbidity and Mortality Risk in the U.K.” The modeling approach and process to develop observations for nine areas along with outcomes for male and female populations were discussed.

Steven Baxter, Head of Longevity Innovations and Research, Club Vita, “Recent Developments in Longevity Trends” presentation highlighted the recent slowdown in mortality improvement in the UK, the potential reasons why and how this compares to observations from other countries. Differences with in and across countries along the unhealthy blue collar and healthy affluent dimensions were also demonstrated.

Karen Glenn and Tiffany Bosley from the Office of the Chief Actuary, U.S. Social Security Administration, discussed findings regarding “Mortality by career-Average earnings Level”. After reviewing, the data, definitions and process followed in the research the following results were discussed in more detail:

- Higher AIME levels correlate with lower mortality rates, while lower AIME levels correlate with higher mortality rates.
- The trends from 1995 to 2015 show that the spread in relative mortality ratios among the AIME quintiles remain fairly steady. The spread widens, but not significantly, and even slightly compresses for some age groups in recent years.

Our second and final refreshment break preceded oratory from our final three speakers on Trends and Public health Response on Avoidable Mortality.

R. Jerome Holman, Principal RJH Integrated Solutions, provided insight into “Trends in U.S. Motor Vehicle Accident Deaths”. Type of passenger, pedestrian, age, and seasonal dimensions were examined along with impairment (e.g. alcohol, other drugs). A pathway to zero motor vehicle accident deaths was also discussed.

Sam Gutterman described the “Smoking and Obesity Risks to Life”. The facts show that while obesity impact on health is significant it remains an increasing issue of significance in the U.S. and around the world. The rate of smoking traditional tobacco in the US is down, however e-cigarettes and marijuana may present new challenges to mortality going forward. This is an area where there is great variation by socio-economic class.

Our final presenter was Assia Billig in her role as Chair of the ISSA Technical Commission on Statistical, Actuarial and Financial Studies. During Assia’s presentation on “Four Key Trends in Avoidable Mortality and How Public Health Systems Should Respond” government actions initiated to address obesity, substance abuse, mental health, and accidents/diseases were discussed.

In closing Brian Ridsdale, Chair of the IAA MWG and Jeff Johnson, Actuary and Seminar organizing committee chair thanks the speakers, presenters, our sponsors (i.e., IAA Life section, PBSS section and Society of Actuaries) and IAA Staff.

The members of the IAA Seminar Organizing committee were:

- Jeff Johnson, Seminar Planning Chair
- Brian Ridsdale, Chair of the Mortality WG
- Assia Billig, Chair of the Population Issues WG
- Sam Gutterman
- Dale Hall
- Al Klein
- Amali Seneviratne, IAA Staff
- Nancy Kelly, IAA Staff

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Johnson  
MWG/PIWG Organizing Committee Chair (May 2019)