Fundación BBVA

Demography Today

The **Demography Today** lecture series aims to **promote and communicate** scientific work on demography through the dissemination of research and the **training of specialists** in issues related to demography, Big Data, longitudinal records and health, while informing society, in an accessible way, about issues currently in the foreground of scientific and political debate, such as the limits to longevity, pension systems, aging, emerging diseases, migration and low fertility.
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All **lectures** are **available for viewing** on the interactive platform:
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The lecture series also forms part of the Postgraduate Courses run by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC).

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The BBVA Foundation and the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) are pleased to invite you to the lecture:

Long-term Evolution of Life Expectancy among Medical Doctors

Prof. Frans van Poppel
Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (Netherlands)

Monday, March 27 at 19:00
Fundación BBVA
Paseo de Recoletos, 10
28001-Madrid

Please confirm attendance. Limited seating
e-mail: confirmaciones@fbbva.es
The lecture will be delivered in English without translation

Summary:

Rising life expectancy has been suggested as one of the determining factors for the start of modern economic growth. On the basis of information relating to elite groups, economic historians have questioned the idea, prevalent among demographers, that life expectancy was fairly stable until around 1800. There is still a scarcity of data on the long-term evolution of life expectancy that can support this claim. We present data on medical professionals in the Netherlands to study the evolution of life expectancy at age 25 in birth cohorts from the 16th until the beginning of the 20th centuries. We compare the medical professions with groups without formal medical knowledge - clergymen, visual artists, prominent Dutch citizens, and members of the nobility and patriciate - thereby providing clues for the role that medicine has played as a driver of the decline in mortality. We use event history models to estimate the length of life. Large increases in survival were observed across all selected groups, starting in cohorts born in the 17th century. The medical profession was no exception to this trend, yet the rise in its life expectancy did not surpass that of other groups. For a long time, therefore, medical knowledge seems to have provided only limited advantages to those who possessed it.

Biography:

Frans van Poppel (1947), historian and demographer, has been, since retiring, an Honorary Research Fellow at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, part of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (NIDI/KNAW). He was a senior researcher at the same institute from 1976 and a special full professor at Utrecht University and in the History Department at Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands. He served as co-editor of the *European Journal of Population* and is still co-editor of *Annales de Démographie Historique*. Coordinator for many years of the Family and Demography Network of the European Social Science History Conference and the Family and Demography Network of the Social Science History Association, he is also a past president of the European Society for Historical Demography (2014-2016). His research has focused on long-term developments in mortality, fertility and marriage and divorce, with results published in leading journals of epidemiology, demography, history and sociology. His main current research projects deal with the relation between prenatal malnutrition and survival (funded by the National Institutes of Health (USA)), the role of medical knowledge in the mortality and fertility transition, and the life course of centenarians (with researchers from the Alzheimer Center, Free University of Amsterdam).