B.A.J. **4,** II, 417-418 (1998)

ARTICLES, PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS OF ACTUARIAL INTEREST

Twentieth century mortality. On CD-ROM is a record of mortality 1901–1955, of deaths by gender, age group, year of death and underlying cause, together with population data for England and Wales. It is available from the Office for National Statistics at Drummond Gate, London SW1.

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Annual interim life tables are now available from the Government Actuary's Department, using the most recent one or three years' experience. At present crude central mortality rates are used, but ELT-consistent graduated rates will be used in future.

DEMOGRAPHY
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OLSHANSKY, S. J. & CARNES, B. A. *Ever since Gompertz.* A review of the literature on the empirical law of geometrical progression of mortality rates since 1825, with a discussion of its effect on research into ageing.

POPULATION STUDIES
51, 2

ZHAO, Z. *Long-term mortality patterns in Chinese history.* The Wang clan has a geneaology extending over more than one thousand years. Over this time mortality (as measured by the chance of dying within five years) has remained roughly constant. This level links to other Chinese lineage data from 1500 onwards, and contrasts with the improvement shown among British dukes and peers.

POPULATION TRENDS
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(Anon). *Our health — better or worse? Findings from 'The Health of Adult Britain 1841-1991'.* The two volumes, edited by Charlton J. and Murphy M., reviewed mortality trends overall and by cause. Factors discussed included wealth, public health laws, diet, alcohol and other drugs, smoking, housing, family structure, pollution and climate, medical advances and risks. Several specific diseases were considered, and the health and prospects for older adults (including centenarians). There are mixed messages, in that a general lowering of mortality has been accompanied by an increase in certain causes of death and in morbidity, together with an increase in the proportion of people who are overweight.

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PEARCE, D. *et al. An overview of the population in Europe and North America.* Highlights from *Trends in Europe* (the statistical yearbook of the Economic Commission for Europe). This preliminary article compares population size, age structure, growth, fertility, marriage and divorce, mortality by age, sex and cause between countries.

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