

Life Expectancy Falls In Dozens of Counties

by Marcia Merry Baker

July 20—New findings published July 10 in *JAMA*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, report that, while U.S. life expectancy, *on average*, still shows a rise to 78 years, there are many regions of the country where the expectancy is far below that, not even 65, and falling, under a dynamic of impoverishment, illness, and despair.

The U.S. economic breakdown process has proceeded to the point that even crude vital statistics for the county level, show the drop in life expectancy for millions of Americans, mostly women. The lowest U.S. life expectancies are found in the southern Appalachian, old coal regions of West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama; in northern Mississippi; and in dirt-poor rural and tribal lands of Oklahoma.

Moreover, the county-by-county statistical survey reported in *JAMA*, which covers 25 years, stops at 2010; but the economic breakdown process has significantly quickened since then. Among the patterns shown, for the 3,000-plus counties, are:

- If you were born a male in McDowell County, West Virginia, in 2010, your life expectancy is 63.9 years; whereas, it is 81.7 years in Fairfax, Va. (Metro Washington, D.C.).

- Women's life expectancy has remained static, or dropped, in nearly half of all counties, over the 25 year period, 1985-2010.

- The U.S. now ranks 27th among the 34 members of the OECD.

The principal authorship of the newly published study is based in Seattle, at the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). Its 96-page report, posted July 10, is titled, "The State of US Health: Innovations, Insights, and Recommendations from the Global Burden of Disease Study."

Upping the Death Rate

The *JAMA* coverage is the latest in a growing number of articles in medical and public-health jour-

nals over the last two years, covering details of the demographic decline in the United States, but now, the full picture is starting to be publicized.

The process involved is the same as that now seen in southern Europe, where killer-austerity is being imposed in Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Portugal, and other nations, under the pretext of “fiscal discipline” to save bankrupt trans-national financial institutions. And the rate of death is rising.

In an arrogant cover-up, the Obama Administration staged a White House event July 20, to spin the worsening U.S. suffering and life-expectancy decline, as resulting—not from economic crisis—but from poor individual “lifestyle” choices. Michelle Obama lectured mayors and guests from 41 cities, on how they must admonish their people to eat smarter, exercise more, and not be fat. This is the identical trans-Atlantic script to that of the British empire’s Prince Charles, who advises his subjects on how to “live better.” They both issued books in 2012: Michelle Obama’s, *American Grown*, and Charles’s *The Future of Food*.

The new U.S. county health survey documents how the many stark national and geographic morbidity and mortality patterns are consistent with the process of demobilization of the population and cultural collapse. For example, among the top ten causes of premature death in the U.S. nationwide, is diabetes—associated with obesity. Diabetes has now soared, to rank as the 7th leading cause of death in the United States; it was 15th in 1990. Drug overdoses are also an epidemic.

The American obesity rate has sky-rocketed to 35.7% as of 2012, as the economy shuts down. In hundreds of counties now, there is nothing for anyone to do; you are considered expendable; if you can, you eat.

Conversely, the lowest obesity rate occurs in those counties with the highest rate of jobs, income, medical services, and (apparent) security. Falls Church, Fairfax County, Va., for example, has the lowest percentage of women considered obese—17%—of any county nationwide. The Fairfax and Northern Virginia job roster is propped up by the Federal government complex. Thousands of Fairfax residents have moved there to flee the shutdown underway in, for example, the Great Lakes states.

Female Life Expectancy Falling

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation county-level health study is regarded as a landmark of the last 25 years of research. Along with its new report, the Institute has posted its data series, by state and

county, for life expectancy, obesity, and physical activity, for the period 1985 to 2010.

The IHME looked specifically at 291 diseases, and certain other markers of health status and mortality rates, for the 1990 to 2010 period.

Much of the IHME research is part of an international project to comparatively “score” 34 OECD nations, considered “economic peers.” It is no surprise that the U.S. ranks a low 27th in life expectancy, while first in the dollar-value per capita spent on health care; this simply reflects the intent all along of the post-1971 privatized health insurance/“managed care” offensive, to loot the medical system and undermine the nation. Now the results are showing up in illness and death.

One outstanding pattern, is the decline in life expectancy for women. The picture shows that in 1,405 counties—which is 45% of the total number of 3,143 counties in all 50 states—female life expectancy remained static, or declined from 1985 to 2010. In 72 of these counties, the decline was very significant.

These counties are concentrated in regions characterized by poverty and desperation over the means of existence.

The national pattern was described in “Life Expectancy Declining for Many U.S. Women,” an article in the March 2013 issue of *Health Affairs*, which described the “disturbing trend,” in which “women age 75 and younger are dying at higher rates than in previous years, in nearly half of the nation’s counties, many of them rural, and in the South and West.”

The situation in two states makes the general point.

In Oklahoma, out of the total number of 77 counties in the state, the life expectancy for women went down in 48 counties, from 1985 to 2010. In 11 of these counties, the decline was more than 2 years (**Table 1**).

In West Virginia, out of the 55 counties in the state, the life expectancy for women went down in 15 counties, from 1985 to 2010. In two counties, the decline was nearly two years, McDowell (-1.7) and Logan (-1.6) (**Figure 1**).

The profiles of the counties explain the vital statistics in both states. Oklahoma has terrible poverty in rural and tribal areas.

No Coal, No Nuclear, No People

The two West Virginia counties with the biggest decline in life expectancy for women, are in the “old coal” belt of Appalachia, a part of the nation whose population is considered “excess” under the Obama/London

TABLE 1

Oklahoma—Counties with Decline in Female Life Expectancy of More than 2 Years, 1985-2010

| County | Change, 1985-2010 In Years |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Beckman | -3.4 |
| Seminole | -2.7 |
| Murray | -2.6 |
| Coal | -2.5 |
| Johnston | -2.5 |
| Pontotoc | -2.5 |
| Cotton | -2.4 |
| Garvin | -2.4 |
| Jefferson | -2.4 |
| Tillman | -2.4 |
| Kiowa | -2.0 |

Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation

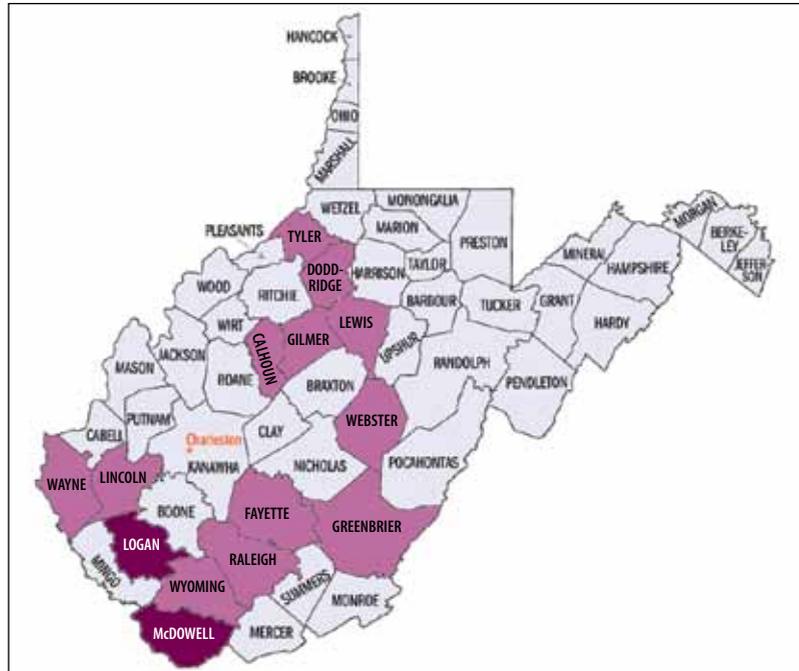
regime. In Logan County, more than 20% of the 36,160 residents are living below the official poverty line; median household income is \$36,562 (2007-11). In McDowell County, over 33% of the 21,320 residents live below the poverty level, where the median household income is \$21,967. Nearly half the county’s children are living in poverty. As of 2000, McDowell ranked in the lowest 10 of all 3,014 U.S. counties based on personal income. Unemployment is over 30%. The rate of disabled persons over age 5 is more than 40%.

McDowell had been—up to the mid-20th Century, the leading coal-producing county in the nation; its population was 98,880 in 1950. In 1955, Logan County superseded McDowell in coal output, and for awhile, both were economically active. Then both experienced a decline in coal output—itself not a critical factor, at a time when the entire nation, as of the 1970s, went into decline: Nuclear power was scaled back and halted; the North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) was stopped cold; large infrastructure projects and maintenance on existing civil works were stalled, then cancelled. The nation went into the World Trade Organization-era of global outsourcing, and world casino-economics.

McDowell County itself is outstandingly lacking in infrastructure. Only a small percentage of the residents have safe water; over 65% of the households have no wastewater treatment. Flood protection is next to nil; in the 2002 “Century” flood, 15% of the homes were destroyed.

FIGURE 1

West Virginia—Decline in Female Life Expectancy, 1985-2010, in Years



Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation; EIR, July, 2013

Of the 15 out of 55 West Virginia counties registering a decline in female life expectancy, McDowell (-1.7) and Logan (-1.6) have the highest rates.

On June 25, Obama delivered the greenie epitaph: Carbon is out. Coal is out. People are out.

West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, a Democrat and former governor, was quick to respond: “It’s clear now that the President has declared a war on coal.”

On July 9, some 5,000 coal miners and supporters from West Virginia and surrounding states, staged a mass rally in Fairmont (Marion County), to protest the prospect of a health-care cut-off by Patriot Coal’s bankruptcy process, in league with Peabody and Arch Coal. The United Mineworkers had given up ground on wages for health care, and now that too is being cut.

This shows the London/Obama program in action. The West Virginia picture is what is behind the newly released nationwide statistics of sickness and death.

If vital statistics were surveyed at the sub-county level—by census tract, for example—the same pattern seen for counties, would be manifest dramatically for cities and exurban areas as well. The headline example right now, is the city of Detroit.

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