# Finance and Economics Discussion Series <br> Divisions of Research \& Statistics and Monetary Affairs Federal Reserve Board, Washington, D.C. 

# Using Subjective Expectations to Forecast Longevity: Do Survey Respondents Know Something We Don't Know? 

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2005-68
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# Using Subjective Expectations to Forecast Longevity: Do Survey Respondents Know Something We Don't Know? <br> Maria G. Perozek ${ }^{1}$ 

14 December 2005


#### Abstract

Future old-age mortality is notoriously difficult to predict because it requires not only an understanding of the process of senescence, which is influenced by genetic, environmental and behavioral factors, but also a prediction of how these factors will evolve going forward. In this paper, I argue that individuals are uniquely qualified to predict their own mortality based on their own genetic background, as well as environmental and behavioral risk factors that are often known only to the individual. Using expectations data from the 1992 HRS, I construct subjective cohort life tables that are shown to predict the unusual direction of revisions to U.S. life expectancy by gender between 1992 and 2004; that is, the SSA revised up male life expectancy in 2004 and at the same time revised down female life expectancy, narrowing the gender gap in longevity by 25 percent over this period. Further, the subjective expectations of women suggest that female life expectancies produced by the Social Security Actuary might still be on the high side, while the subjective life expectancies for men appear to be roughly in line with the 2004 life tables.


[^0]
## 1 Introduction

The 20th century witnessed unprecedented improvements in life expectancy: In the United States, life expectancy at birth rose from 47 years in 1900 to 77 years in 2000 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2004). ${ }^{1}$ Although most demographers agree that mortality rates will continue to decline in the 21st century, there is little consensus on how fast and for how long they will continue to fall (e.g. Vaupel and Lundstrom, 1994; Lee, 2003). The answers to these questions are at the heart of some of the most important issues in the economics of aging, including income adequacy in retirement, and the solvency of the social security system.

Many mortality forecasts are based on extrapolations of historical data. However, extrapolating historical trends may be misleading. For example, simple extrapolative procedures fail to incorporate information about the causes of mortality change over time. This paper provides a somewhat unorthodox alternative to using historical data to project the future path of mortality risk. The method proposed here uses data on individual subjective expectations of survival to construct subjective life tables for a particular cohort. This method has an important advantage over extrapolative methods in that subjective expectations incorporate current and future expected values of variables that influence mortality risk, such as exercise, diet and smoking habits, as well as current and expected advances in medical technology. As much of this information is private, individuals are uniquely qualified to assess how these factors will influence their personal mortality risk, which is a function of their medical history, current health status, and family history. By aggregating these individual forecasts of mortality risk across persons in a given cohort, we obtain a subjective cohort life

[^1] over the twentieth century.
table that incorporates causal mechanisms implicitly and does not explicitly depend on ad hoc historical trends.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the mortality forecasts implied by the subjective expectations of a cohort of individuals in the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) in 1992. There are three main findings: First, the subjective life tables differ significantly from the life tables put together by the Social Security Actuary (SSA) in 1992 and subsequently revised in 2004, and the deviations from the life table differ significantly by gender. In particular, the subjective life expectancies estimated for men are higher than SSA life tables predict, while the subjective life expectancies for women are a good bit lower. Second, these subjective life tables suggest a further narrowing of the gender gap in longevity in coming decades, with men living longer and women dying earlier than is currently predicted by the SSA. Part of this narrowing has already been reflected in revisions to the SSA life tables between 1992 and 2004 in which male life expectancies were revised up and female life expectancies were revised down. In essence, the subjective expectations data from 1992 predicted the direction of revisions to the SSA life tables between 1992 and 2004. The subjective expectations data also suggest that there should be a further narrowing in the gender gap in longevity for these cohorts that is not yet reflected in the SSA life tables. Finally, I demonstrate that the validity of the subjective survivor functions depends crucially on the functional form that governs changes in mortality after age 85. I show that different functional forms result in significantly different life expectancies, largely stemming from the shape of the survivor function beyond age 85; nevertheless I argue that the main findings of the paper are robust to these assumptions.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 describes the unique expectations data available in the Health and Retirement Study. The third section demonstrates how these data can be used to construct individual-specific survivor functions, which are then aggregated using
population weights for a cohort of men and women in the HRS. The fourth section discusses the resulting subjective life tables and compares their mortality predictions to the life tables produced by the Social Security Actuary in 1992 and then again in 2004. The final section offers concluding remarks and directions for future research.

## 2 The Health and Retirement Study

The data used in this analysis are from the first wave of the Health and Retirement Study (HRS). Initial interviews were conducted in 1992 and provide detailed information on the health status and socio-economic status of a nationally representative sample of persons aged 51 to 61 and their spouses. ${ }^{2}$ A total of 12,652 individuals were included in the final HRS sample in 1992. Variables of particular importance for this paper include subjective expectations of survival to age 75 and age 85 , as well as indicators of the age and sex of the respondent.

This paper uses the HRS data on survival expectations to generate sequences of survival probabilities for each individual in the sample. In particular, respondents were asked to answer the following questions:

I would like to ask you about the chance that various events will happen in the future. Using any number from zero to ten, where zero equals absolutely no chance and 10 equals absolutely certain, what do you think are the chances that you will live to be 75 or more? And how about the chances that you will live to be 85 or more?

[^2]When the responses to this question are divided by 10 , they can be thought of as probabilities of surviving to age 75 and 85 , hereafter referred to as $P_{75}$ and $P_{85}$. Hurd and McGarry (1995) suggest that, on average, the subjective survival probabilities are internally consistent: The probability of living to age 75 is greater than or equal to the probability of living to age 85. They also demonstrate that the subjective probabilities are externally consistent in that they covary in reasonable ways with other variables such as health status, and that they are on average in the ballpark of the 1988 life table probabilities. Hurd and McGarry (2002) also demonstrate that subjective survival probabilities have predictive validity; that is, those who survived between waves 1 and 2 of the HRS reported significantly higher probabilities of survival in 1992 than those who died. ${ }^{3}$

For this analysis, I focus on men and women aged 52 and 57 for comparison to the 1940 and 1935 birth-year cohort life tables, respectively. I drop 2.5 percent of the observations that had reported subjective probabilities that were not internally consistent, i.e., the subjective probability of living to 85 was strictly greater than the subjective probability of living to age 75. Persons who report the same value for $P_{75}$ and $P_{85}$ are retained in the sample, but their reported probabilities are altered somewhat in order to estimate the parameters of the survivor functions. ${ }^{4}$

[^3]
## 3 Using Expectations Data to Predict Mortality

### 3.1 Constructing Individual Subjective Survivor Functions

This section describes how the subjective expectations data from the HRS can be used to generate a sequence of subjective survival probabilities-or a subjective survivor function-for each individual in the sample. The basic method proposed here involves fitting a survivor function through the points $P_{75}$ and $P_{85}$ on the subjective survivor function. Note that this method is very different in spirit from an alternative method proposed by Gan, Hurd and McFadden (2003) that uses a Bayesian update model to construct individual subjective survivor functions. ${ }^{5}$

For the purposes of this paper, I maintain the assumption that the individual survivor functions can be approximated by a particular functional form. Two functional forms are commonly used in survival analysis-the Weibull distribution and the Gompertz distribution. The Weibull distribution has been used extensively to model the lifetimes of manufactured goods, as well as the lifetimes of insects, animals, and people (Lawless, 1982). The popularity of the Weibull distribution in survival analysis owes, in part, to its flexibility in allowing decreasing or increasing hazard functions. Another attractive feature of the Weibull is that the mean and variance of the distribution have closed-form solutions (Lawless, 1982).

The Gompertz distribution has been popular among demographers because its double exponential form has been thought to reflect the underlying process of aging that leads to
${ }^{5}$ Gan, Hurd and McFadden (2003) use data from the Asset and Health Dynamics of the Oldest-Old (AHEAD), which is representative of the population aged 70 and older, to estimate individual specific survivor functions. As a result, a direct comparison of the mortality forecasts from the different methods for a constant cohort are unavailable.
death. Despite studies which show that the Gompertz model may not accurately characterize mortality risk among the oldest-old-i.e. mortality hazards do not appear to continue to increase at the same exponential rate among the oldest-old-this distribution is still widely used and accepted (Economos, 1982; Wilson, 1994). The Weibull and Gompertz distributions each have two parameters, which implies that they are exactly identified given two points on the survivor function, $P_{75}$ and $P_{85}$. However, when $P_{75}$ is sufficiently close to $P_{85}$, the exactly-identified survivor functions are implausibly flat, yielding unreasonably high probabilities of survival in old age for a significant fraction of the sample. To induce the estimated survival probabilities to be close to zero in extreme old age, I introduce a third point on the subjective survivor function to which most respondents would not likely object. In particular, I set the probability of living to age 110 near zero according to the simple conditional probability:

$$
P_{i}\left(110 \mid \text { age }_{i}\right)=\underbrace{P_{x}\left(110 \mid 85, \text { age }_{i}\right)}_{\text {SSA lifetable }} * \underbrace{P_{i}\left(85 \mid \text { age }_{i}\right)}_{H R S}
$$

where the first term on the right-hand side is the probability of surviving to age 110 given that a person survives to age 85 for $x \in\{$ male, female $\}$. This term is calculated separately for men and women from the SSA cohort life tables (Bell, Wade and Goss, 1992). The second term represents the subjective probability of living to age 85 given that the respondent is age $_{i}$ in $1992\left(P_{85}\right)$.

The general strategy of this methodology is to estimate the parameters of the survivor function given $P_{75}, P_{85}$ and $P_{110}$ using nonlinear least squares (NLLS). In particular, I assume that:

$$
P_{i, t}=S_{i, t}\left(\alpha_{i}, \beta_{i}\right)+\epsilon_{i, t}
$$

where $P_{i, t}$ is the probability that individual i lives to age t , and $S_{i, t}$ is a general representation of a two-parameter survivor function. The error term $\epsilon_{i, t}$ is assumed to be i.i.d, mean zero, and homoskedastic. The NLLS estimators are the values of $\alpha_{i}$ and $\beta_{i}$ that minimize the following expression:

$$
\sum_{t \in\{75,85,110\}}\left[\mathrm{P}_{i, t}-S_{i, t}\left(\alpha_{i}, \beta_{i}\right)\right]^{2}
$$

Two sets of parameter estimates are calculated, the first under the assumption that the survivor function takes the form of the Weibull survivor function $\left(\alpha_{i}^{W}, \beta_{i}^{W}\right)$, which is given by:

$$
S_{i, t}^{W}\left(\alpha_{i}^{W}, \beta_{i}^{W}\right)=\exp \left[-\left(\frac{t-a g e_{i}}{\alpha_{i}^{W}}\right)^{\beta_{i}^{W}}\right]
$$

and the second under the assumption that it takes the form of the Gompertz survivor function, which is defined as:

$$
S_{i, t}^{G}\left(\alpha_{i}^{G}, \beta_{i}^{G}\right)=\exp \left[\frac{\alpha_{i}^{G}}{\beta_{i}^{G}} \exp \left(\beta_{i}^{G}\left(t-a g e_{i}\right)\right)\right]
$$

This estimation procedure assumes that each individual faces a unique sequence of survival probabilities that are generated from an individual-specific Weibull (Gompertz) survivor function. Further, each individual reports their survival probabilities with error. Under
these assumptions, NLLS will provide unbiased and efficient estimates of the underlying parameters of the survivor function for each individual. As we show in the next section, an aggregate life table can be computed by applying population weights to the individual survivor functions. ${ }^{6}$

### 3.2 Constructing Subjective Cohort Life Tables

The two sets of NLLS estimates are used to generate a series of subjective survival probabilitiesa Weibull and a Gompertz-for each person in the sample. To generate a representative cohort life table, these subjective probabilities are multiplied by the HRS person-level weight and summed for each age-gender group. That is, the N sample members who are age X in 1992 (call it the age- $X_{1992}$ cohort) represent a total population cohort of $\sum_{i=0}^{N} W_{i}$ persons, or the sum of the person-level weights $\left(W_{i}\right)$, in 1992. Going forward, the number of persons from the age- $X_{1992}$ cohort expected to be alive at age $X+t$ is given by $\sum_{i=0}^{N} W_{i} S_{i, t}$. This calculation gives the number of persons in the age $-X_{1992}$ cohort that are expected to be alive at every age $x>X_{1992}$, or in nomenclature of the life tables, $l_{x}$. Once we obtain $l_{x}$ for each age $x$, we can deduce all of the other life table functions as follows:

[^4]\[

$$
\begin{aligned}
\mathrm{d}_{x} & =l_{x}-l_{x+1} \\
q_{x} & =\frac{d_{x}}{l_{x}} \\
L_{x} & =\frac{l_{x}+l_{x+1}}{2} \\
T_{x} & =\sum_{t=0}^{\omega} L_{x+t} \\
e_{x} & =\frac{T_{x}}{l_{x}}
\end{aligned}
$$
\]

Conceptually, the life table age-specific death rate, $q_{x}$, is simply a count of the number of persons who die between age x and age $x+1, d_{x}$, divided by the number of persons alive at age $\mathrm{x}, l_{x}$. Note that this function explicitly accounts for the selection of healthier individuals into older age groups, as persons with higher mortality risk are more likely to die at younger ages and are therefore less likely to be included in the denominator $l_{x}$ as x increases.

As is customary, these estimates assume that deaths are distributed uniformly over the year, so that the average number of persons alive between time t and $\mathrm{t}+1$ is equal to $L_{x}$, which is the midpoint of $l_{x}$ and $l_{x+1}$. The sum of $L_{x+t}$ from $t=0$ to $\omega$, where $\omega$ is the maximum possible age, gives the total number of person-years lived by the cohort over its lifetime $\left(T_{x}\right)$. Life expectancy is derived by dividing the total number of person-years lived by the cohort $\left(T_{x}\right)$ by the total number of people alive at $\mathrm{t}=0\left(l_{x}\right) .{ }^{7}$

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Men, 1940 Cohort

Although life tables could be constructed for all age cohorts, this paper presents selected life table functions only for the cohorts that align with the 1940 and 1935 cohort life tables

[^5]published in 1992; that is, men and women aged 52 and 57 in 1992, respectively. ${ }^{8}$ Table 1 presents the survival probabilities derived from the Weibull and Gompertz distributions for the 1940 male cohort; for comparison, the table also shows the life table estimates that were published by Social Security in 1992 and 2004. The table shows that the Gompertz survivor function is quite a bit flatter than the Weibull; as illustrated in figure 1, the Gompertz survival probabilities are significantly lower than the Weibull probabilities through age 75, then a bit higher through age 95, before dropping much faster after age 95. It appears that the survival probabilities from the Gompertz survivor function are too low at younger ages, perhaps indicating that the Gompertz distribution is not appropriate. Indeed, Wilson (1994) notes that for human survivor functions, there appears to be a shift in the exponential parameter at older ages; that is, mortality does not increase at the same exponential factor over the entire length of life, it likely decelerates in old age. ${ }^{9}$

Not surprisingly, the life expectancy is higher in the subjective cohort life table derived from the Weibull relative to the Gompertz life table: The Weibull estimate of life expectancy at age 52 is 28.2 years while the Gompertz life expectancy is 26.5 years. Table 1 shows that these Gompertz and Weibull life expectancy estimates are between $1 / 2$ year and 2-1/4 years higher, respectively, than the life expectancy of 25.9 years published in the 1940 cohort life table from 1992-the year that these subjective expectations data were gathered. If these subjective life tables had been taken seriously in 1992, they may have suggested that the life expectancy estimates for this cohort were too low. Indeed, as shown in the top row of the right-hand side columns of table 1, the Social Security Actuary revised up their estimates

[^6]of life expectancy for this cohort by a significant margin of .8 years when it reestimated the 1940 cohort life table in 2004.

The revision to the life table estimates are shown in more detail in figure 2, which compares the SSA life tables published in 1992 and 2004 to the Weibull subjective survivor function. The results show that the revisions to the 1940 cohort life table in 2004 pushed the survival probabilities from the cohort life table into closer alignment with the subjective survivor function at almost every age up through the early 90s. Moreover, the figure shows that the Weibull estimates track the 2004 life table estimates almost exactly up through age 80, at which point the subjective survivor function diverges from the SSA life table. In particular, the Weibull survivor function has a much fatter right tail, implying the probability of surviving to older ages is a good bit higher than the current life table estimates predict. As discussed below, the key to estimating life expectancy for this age group lies in the assumptions underlying mortality forecasts at ages 85 and up.

### 4.2 Women, 1940 Cohort

Table 2 presents the survival probabilities derived from the Weibull and Gompertz distributions for the 1940 female cohort. As shown in figure 3, the comparison of the survivor functions from these two distributions mirror the male 1940 cohort: The Gompertz survivor function is flatter and has lower probabilities of survival after age 95 than the Weibull. In addition, the Weibull life expectancy of 29.9 years-shown in the first row of table 2-is about 2 years longer than the Gompertz life expectancy, implying a range of subjective life expectancies between 27.9 and 29.9 for this cohort.

That said, the subjective life expectancies for women and men in the 1940 cohort compare very differently with the SSA life tables. While the subjective life expectancies for men were
higher than the SSA life tables, the subjective life expectancies for women in this cohort are a good bit lower. The four columns to the right in table 2 show that the life expectancy for women in this cohort was 30.9 years according to the SSA life tables published in 1992-or about 1 to 3 years higher than the subjective life expectancies. Therefore, the subjective expectations from 1992 suggest that the SSA life expectancies from 1992 were too high. Remarkably, the SSA revised down its estimate of female life expectancy for this cohort to 30.4 years as of 2004-a downward revision of $1 / 2$ year. As shown in figure 4 , the Weibull survivor function looks quite different from the life table survivor functions, with lower probabilities of survival at younger ages and higher probabilities of survival for the oldestold. It is interesting to note that the reductions in life expectancy between the 1992 and 2004 life table estimates owes largely to a reduction in survival probabilities among those 85 and older. In contrast, the lower life expectancy implied by the Weibull stems from lower survival probabilities through about age 90 .

Although the functional forms given by the Weibull and the Gompertz are very important for determining the sequence of survival probabilities, the general results hold even when looking at the raw weighted responses to the expectations questions. Tables 3 and 4 show the weighted means of the actual survey responses of $P_{75}$ and $P_{85}$ for men and women age 52 and 57 in 1992. These figures differ a bit from the predicted values based on the fitted Weibull and Gompertz survivor functions presented in tables 1 and 2, but yield the same basic conclusions. That is, men in both age groups had much higher estimates of their probability of surviving to age 85 than indicated in the life tables published in 1992. And, upward revisions to the SSA life table probabilities in 2004 halved the difference between SSA estimates and the subjective estimates.

Meanwhile, women reported subjective probabilities of survival that were lower than the life tables by a good margin for both $P_{75}$ and $P_{85}$. In this case, the life table probability of
living to 75 was revised up slightly between 1992 and 2004, while the probability of living to 85 and beyond was revised down. Taken together, the life expectancy for women in both cohorts was revised down $1 / 2$ year in each cohort, moving the life table estimate closer to the subjective life expectancy estimates.

### 4.3 The Gender Gap

These results for men and women indicate that the gender differential in mortality risk was perceived in 1992 to be declining faster than predicted by the Social Security Actuary at that time. As shown in table 5, the life tables from 1992 predicted that the difference between female and male life expectancy was about 5 years for both cohorts. By 2004, revisions to the male and female life tables for these cohorts reduced the gender gap to about 3-3/4 years-a 25 percent downward revision in just over a decade. The lower panel of table 5 shows that the implied longevity differential from the subjective life tables, which range between $1-1 / 2$ and 2 years, is still quite a bit lower than the 2004 life table estimates. These expectations suggest that the mortality differential between men and women in these cohorts could narrow even further.

The bottom line is that the subjective cohort life tables, which are based only on data collected in 1992, predicted revisions to the SSA cohort life tables between 1992 and 2004. These included upward revisions to male life expectancy, and downward revisions to female life expectancy, implying a narrowing of the gender gap.

### 4.4 Functional Form Assumptions

A key maintained assumption in this analysis is that the Weibull surivivor function fitted through three points on the subjective survivor function can yield a meaningful sequence
of survival probabilities for each person in the HRS sample. The Weibull, as noted above, appears to yield higher probabilities of living beyond age 95, even when the estimated life expectancy is lower than the life table estimates, e.g. for women shown in Table 4. This section explores the implications of using the Weibull to fit survivor functions, particularly for comparison to the life tables produced by the Social Security Actuary.

One might argue that the Weibull is not be flexible enough to capture the shape of the human survivor function; in particular, the fat right tail associated with the Weibull is inappropriate and may be driving the results described above. To explore the importance of functional form assumptions, I fit Weibull functional forms to the SSA cohort life tables from 1992 and 2004 using the same 3 points of the survivor function used in the subjective life tables: $P_{75}, P_{85}$, and $P_{110}$. Figure 6 shows that for men, the Weibull functional form predicts higher survival probabilities both before age 75 and after age 90 than the life table probabilities. ${ }^{10}$ As a result, life expectancies derived from these Weibull estimates are higher; indeed, as shown at the bottom of table 3 , male life expectancies are roughly 1 year to 1-1/2 years higher than those computed by SSA. However, this transformation in effect makes the life table probabilities more directly comparable to the subjective life tables, and the results are somewhat reassuring. The subjective life expectancy was still quite a bit higher (1-1/4 years) than the fitted Weibull life table life expectancy from 1992, but matched the fitted Weibull life table estimate for 2004. Thus, the main result still holds: Subjective life expectancies from 1992 predicted an upward revision to male life expectancies between 1992 and 2004. ${ }^{11}$

For reference, the SSA life table probabilities were also fitted to the Gompertz functional

[^7]form, shown in the last row of table 3. The Gompertz, which does a much better job of fitting the right tail of the survivor function, implies a lower life expectancy than the Weibull that is closer to the actual life table life expectancies. As with the Weibull, the basic results described above continue to hold.

The results for women shown in table 4 are similar, only in this case, the life expectancy estimates from both the Weibull and Gompertz are higher than the subjective life expectancies calculated for each cohort. Nevertheless, the main result holds: SSA fitted life expectancies were revised down about the same amount as the actual life expectancies, and the subjective life expectancy is still lower than both the actual and fitted SSA life table estimates from 2004.

The memo items in table 5 show that the diminution in the gender gap in longevity is highly stable across the different fitted and actual life expectancy values. Although the fitted life table estimates of the gap are slightly higher than the actual, the percent reduction from 1992 to 2004 is 30 percent-roughly the same as the actual reduction between the 1992 and the 2004 life tables.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

The Weibull and the Gompertz differ dramatically in their implications about mortality risk at very old ages, with the Weibull implying higher rates of survival for the oldest old than the Gompertz. Because the 1940 and 1935 cohorts have only just now (in 2005) reached the ages 65 and 70, respectively, their mortality experience at the oldest ages has not yet been realized. Moreover, there is a wide range of opinion about the pace of future mortality improvements at very advanced ages. In one camp are those who believe that the pace of future improvements will slow because we are nearing a biological limit to human life
expectancy (Olshansky and Carnes, 2001). In the other camp are those who believe that we have not yet come close to the biological limit of human life expectancy (see, e.g. Oeppen and Vaupel, 2002). ${ }^{12}$ What is not disputed is that past forecasts of mortality improvements have been far too conservative (Oeppen and Vaupel, 2002) and that assumptions about future old age mortality are vital to estimating the expected longevity of current and future cohorts.

Future old-age mortality is very difficult to predict because it requires not only an understanding of the process of senescence, which is influenced by genetic, environmental and behavioral factors, but also a prediction of future medical advances as well as other important environmental variables. In this paper, I suggest that individuals have a unique understanding of their own individual aging processes conditional on their own genetic background and environmental and behavioral risk factors. Given this private information, individuals form expectations about future survival probabilities that may provide additional information to demographers and policymakers in their challenge to predict future mortality. I find that expectations elicited in 1992 predicted the unusual direction of revisions to U.S. life expectancy by gender between 1992 and 2004; that is, male life expectancy was revised up and female life expectancy was revised down. The subjective expectations of women suggest that female life expectancies produced by the Social Security Actuary might still be on the high side, while the subjective life expectancies for men appear to be roughly in line with the 2004 life tables.

[^8]Table 1
Subjective Life Tables vs. Cohort Life Tables (Social Security Actuary)
Men Aged 52 in 1992

| Age | Subjective Life Tables |  |  |  | 1940 Cohort Life Table |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Weibull |  | Gompertz |  | Published in 1992 |  | Published in 2004 |  |
|  | $\begin{gathered} \text { Survival } \\ \text { Probability } \\ S_{x} \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Life } \\ \text { Expectancy } \\ e_{x} \end{gathered}$ | Survival Probability $S_{x}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Life } \\ e_{x} \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Survival } \\ \text { Probability } \\ S_{x} \end{gathered}$ | Life Expectancy $e_{x}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Survival } \\ \text { Probability } \\ S_{x} \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Expectancy } \\ e_{x} \end{gathered}$ |
| 52 | 1 | 28.2 | 1 | 26.5 | 1 | 25.9 | 1 | 26.7 |
| 55 | 0.976 | 25.9 | 0.946 | 24.9 | 0.976 | 23.5 | 0.977 | 24.3 |
| 65 | 0.848 | 18.9 | 0.773 | 19.4 | 0.853 | 16.1 | 0.86 | 16.8 |
| 75 | 0.647 | 13.2 | 0.589 | 13.9 | 0.618 | 10.1 | 0.647 | 10.6 |
| 85 | 0.366 | 9.3 | 0.378 | 8.8 | 0.287 | 6.0 | 0.332 | 5.7 |
| 95 | 0.146 | 6.5 | 0.153 | 4.4 | 0.053 | 3.5 | 0.053 | 3.0 |
| 105 | 0.029 | 5.8 | 0.008 | 1.5 | 0.002 | 2.2 | 0.001 | 1.9 |
| 115 | 0.006 | 4.8 | 0 | 1.0 | 0 | 1.3 | 0 | 1.1 |

Table 2
Subjective Life Tables vs. Cohort Life Tables (Social Security Actuary)
Women Aged 52 in 1992

| Age | Subjective Life Tables |  |  |  | 1940 Cohort Life Table |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Weibull |  | Gompertz |  | Published in 1992 |  | Published in 2004 |  |
|  | Survival Probability $S_{x}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Expectancy } \\ e_{x} \end{gathered}$ | Survival Probability $S_{x}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Expectancy } \\ e_{x} \end{gathered}$ | Survival Probability $S_{x}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Life } \\ \text { Expectancy } \\ e_{x} \end{gathered}$ | Survival Probability $S_{x}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Life } \\ \text { Expectancy } \\ e_{x} \end{gathered}$ |
| 52 | 1 | 29.9 | 1 | 27.9 | 1 | 30.9 | 1 | 30.4 |
| 55 | 0.979 | 27.5 | 0.946 | 26.4 | 0.986 | 28.3 | 0.986 | 27.8 |
| 65 | 0.876 | 20.1 | 0.783 | 20.9 | 0.909 | 20.3 | 0.911 | 19.7 |
| 75 | 0.696 | 13.9 | 0.621 | 15.0 | 0.747 | 13.5 | 0.752 | 12.7 |
| 85 | 0.411 | 9.9 | 0.427 | 9.5 | 0.487 | 7.8 | 0.47 | 7.0 |
| 95 | 0.178 | 6.8 | 0.193 | 4.8 | 0.153 | 4.2 | 0.118 | 3.5 |
| 105 | 0.038 | 5.8 | 0.015 | 1.7 | 0.011 | 2.5 | 0.005 | 2.0 |
| 115 | 0.008 | 4.8 | 0 | 1.2 | 0 | 1.3 | 0 | 1.1 |

Table 3: Weighted Means of P75 and P85, Men
(standard errors in parentheses)

|  | Age 52 in 1992 |  |  | Age 57 in 1992 |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | subjective expectation $(\mathrm{n}=395)$ | life table 1992: 1940 cohort | life table 2004: 1940 cohort | subjective expectation ( $\mathrm{n}=391$ ) | life table 1992: 1935 cohort | life table 2004: 1935 cohort |
| P75 | $\begin{aligned} & 0.635 \\ & (.015) \end{aligned}$ | 0.618 | 0.646 | $\begin{aligned} & 0.618 \\ & (.015) \end{aligned}$ | 0.633 | 0.657 |
| P85 | $\begin{aligned} & 0.377 \\ & (.015) \end{aligned}$ | 0.287 | 0.332 | $\begin{aligned} & 0.366 \\ & (.015) \end{aligned}$ | 0.288 | 0.327 |
| life expectancy |  | 25.9 | 26.7 |  | 21.6 | 22.2 |
| life expectancy from fitted Weibull | 28.2 | 26.9 | 28.2 | 23.2 | 22.5 | 23.5 |
| life expectancy from fitted Gompertz | 26.5 | 25.6 | 26.9 |  | 21.4 | 22.4 |

Table 4: Weighted Means of P75 and P85, Women

|  | Age 52 in 1992 |  |  | Age 57 in 1992 |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | subjective expectation ( $\mathrm{n}=472$ ) | life table 1992: 1940 cohort | life table 2004: 1940 cohort | subjective expectation ( $\mathrm{n}=415$ ) | life table 1992: <br> 1935 cohort | life table 2004: <br> 1935 cohort |
| P75 | $\begin{aligned} & 0.678 \\ & (.013) \end{aligned}$ | 0.747 | 0.752 | $\begin{aligned} & 0.653 \\ & (.015) \end{aligned}$ | 0.761 | 0.764 |
| P85 | $\begin{aligned} & 0.428 \\ & (.014) \end{aligned}$ | 0.487 | 0.47 | $\begin{gathered} 0.43 \\ (.015) \end{gathered}$ | 0.489 | 0.468 |
| life expectancy | --- | 30.9 | 30.4 | --- | 26.4 | 25.8 |
| life expectancy from fitted Weibull | 29.9 | 32.5 | 32.1 | 24.8 | 27.9 | 27.4 |
| life expectancy from fitted Gompertz | 27.9 | 31.2 | 30.8 |  | 26.6 | 26.1 |

Table 5: Differences in Life Expectancy by Gender:
Female Life Expectancy less Male Life Expectancy

|  | Age 52 | Age 57 |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |
| Cohort Life Table, 1992 | 5 | 4.8 |
| Cohort Life Table, 2004 | 3.7 | 3.6 |
| percent change | $-26 \%$ | $-25 \%$ |
|  |  |  |
| Subjective Expectations (Weibull) | 1.7 | 1.6 |
|  |  |  |
| Memo: | 5.6 | 5.4 |
| Cohort Life Table 1992, fitted Weibull | 3.9 | 3.9 |
| Cohort Life Table 2004, fitted Weibull | $-30 \%$ | $-28 \%$ |
| percent change |  |  |
|  | 5.6 | 5.2 |
| Cohort Life Table 1992, fitted Gompertz | 3.9 | 3.7 |
| Cohort Life Table 2004, fitted Gompertz | $-30 \%$ | $-29 \%$ |
| percent change |  |  |

Figure 1
Subjective Survivor Functions: Men Aged 52 in 1992 (1992 HRS)


Figure 2
Survivor Functions for Men Aged 52 in 1992


Figure 3
Subjective Survival Functions: Women Aged 52 in 1992 (1992 HRS)


Figure 4
Survivor Functions for Women Aged 52 in 1992


Figure 5
Weibull Subjective Survivor Functions by Gender, Age 52 (1992 HRS)


Figure 6
Fitted Weibull vs. Published Life Table SSA 1940 Male Cohort (2004)


## A Appendix

Because of the form of the survivor function, the Weibull parameters are undefined for persons who report $P_{75}=P_{85}$. However, as Hurd and McGarry (1995) note, a respondent who reports $P_{75}$ close to $P_{85}$ may be conveying valuable information regarding the perceived flatness of the subjective survivor function, and it would be unfortunate to be forced to exclude such a large and potentially interesting segment of the sample. The format of the expectation questions in the first wave of the HRS requires respondents to round survival probabilities to the nearest tenth. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that the "true" expectation lies in some interval around $P_{75}=P_{85}$, i.e. $P_{75} \in\left[\mathrm{P}_{75}-.05, P_{75}+.05\right]$ and $P_{85}$ $\in\left[\mathrm{P}_{85^{-}} .05, P_{85}+.05\right]$. Hence, to retain nearly one-third of the sample who report $P_{75}=P_{85}$, I reassign the probability of living to 75 equal to the upper bound of the interval $\left(P_{75}+.05\right)$ and set the probability of living to 85 to the lower bound of the interval $\left(P_{85}-.05\right)$. For example, a person who reported $P_{75}=P_{85}=.5$ would be reassigned $P_{75}=.55$ and $P_{85}$ $=.45$. This assignment rule imposes the maximum distance allowed within the interval, thereby implying more credible Weibull estimates.

In addition, in order to estimate the Weibull, probabilities of zero and 1 are reassigned .01 and .99 , respectively. If $P_{75}=P_{85}=.99$, then $P_{85}$ is set to .95 , and if $P_{75}=P_{85}=.01$, then $P_{75}$ is set to .05 .

To check the robustness of the results to these assumptions, I started with the unadjusted reported survival probabilities and followed the same procedure for constructing subjective survivor functions. ${ }^{13}$ Of the 472 women aged 52 in 1992, 137-or about 30 percent-reported $P_{75}=P_{85}$, and of that group, $1 / 3$ reported both probabilities equal to $1,1 / 5$ reported both

[^9]probabilities equal to 0 , and $1 / 5$ reported both probabilities equal to .5 . The life expectancies derived from the unadjusted survival probabilities are generally higher than the adjusted life expectancies, particularly where the probabilities of living to 75 and 85 are close to or equal to 1 . For example, if reported probabilities of living to 75 and 85 are both equal to 1 , the unadjusted Weibull life expectancy is roughly $10-1 / 2$ years higher than the adjusted life expectancy for 52 year olds ( 54.7 years vs. 44.2 years).

In the aggregate, the unadjusted subjective life expectancies for the 1940 cohort were about 1 year higher for both men and women than the adjusted life expectancies, bringing the women more in line with the SSA life tables, but exacerbating the difference for men, and leaving the gender gap about unchanged. Therefore, these results would still predict a narrowing of the gender gap, although they would suggest that men will live even longer relative to the SSA life tables than reported in this paper.

Although the path of the survival probabilities generated by the unadjusted variables is fairly similar to that derived from the adjusted probabilities through about age 95 , the unadjusted probabilities of survival are much higher between age 95 and 110 before dropping down because of the higher life expectancies and lower variances estimated for those optimistic respondents who reported that they were certain to live to age 85 . The unusually high probabilities of survival at these ages lead me to favor the adjusted life table estimates reported in this paper. The problems with estimating these survivor functions point to the importance of understanding mortality rates among the oldest old, for which we have no subjective data beyond age 85 . For future work in this area, it would be useful to have another point on the subjective survivor function to work with, perhaps the probability of surviving to age 95.

Table B. 1
Men Aged 52 in 1992

| x | qx | Ix | dx | Lx | Tx | ex |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 52 | 0.0064 | 1015813 | 6532 | 1012547 | 28648439 | 28.2 |
| 53 | 0.0086 | 1009281 | 8634 | 1004963 | 27635893 | 27.4 |
| 54 | 0.0097 | 1000646 | 9661 | 995816 | 26630929 | 26.6 |
| 55 | 0.0105 | 990985 | 10393 | 985788 | 25635114 | 25.9 |
| 56 | 0.0112 | 980591 | 10993 | 975095 | 24649325 | 25.1 |
| 57 | 0.0119 | 969598 | 11534 | 963832 | 23674231 | 24.4 |
| 58 | 0.0126 | 958065 | 12055 | 952037 | 22710399 | 23.7 |
| 59 | 0.0133 | 946010 | 12581 | 939719 | 21758362 | 23.0 |
| 60 | 0.0141 | 933429 | 13129 | 926864 | 20818643 | 22.3 |
| 61 | 0.0149 | 920299 | 13710 | 913444 | 19891779 | 21.6 |
| 62 | 0.0158 | 906590 | 14330 | 899425 | 18978334 | 20.9 |
| 63 | 0.0168 | 892260 | 14994 | 884763 | 18078909 | 20.3 |
| 64 | 0.0179 | 877266 | 15706 | 869413 | 17194147 | 19.6 |
| 65 | 0.0191 | 861560 | 16466 | 853327 | 16324734 | 18.9 |
| 66 | 0.0204 | 845094 | 17272 | 836458 | 15471407 | 18.3 |
| 67 | 0.0219 | 827822 | 18122 | 818761 | 14634948 | 17.7 |
| 68 | 0.0235 | 809700 | 19010 | 800195 | 13816187 | 17.1 |
| 69 | 0.0252 | 790690 | 19928 | 780726 | 13015992 | 16.5 |
| 70 | 0.0271 | 770762 | 20866 | 760329 | 12235266 | 15.9 |
| 71 | 0.0291 | 749895 | 21810 | 738990 | 11474937 | 15.3 |
| 72 | 0.0312 | 728085 | 22745 | 716713 | 10735947 | 14.7 |
| 73 | 0.0335 | 705340 | 23655 | 693513 | 10019234 | 14.2 |
| 74 | 0.0360 | 681686 | 24524 | 669423 | 9325721 | 13.7 |
| 75 | 0.0386 | 657161 | 25345 | 644489 | 8656298 | 13.2 |
| 76 | 0.0413 | 631816 | 26116 | 618758 | 8011809 | 12.7 |
| 77 | 0.0443 | 605701 | 26850 | 592275 | 7393051 | 12.2 |
| 78 | 0.0476 | 578850 | 27577 | 565062 | 6800775 | 11.7 |
| 79 | 0.0514 | 551274 | 28333 | 537107 | 6235713 | 11.3 |
| 80 | 0.0557 | 522940 | 29143 | 508369 | 5698606 | 10.9 |
| 81 | 0.0607 | 493797 | 29973 | 478810 | 5190238 | 10.5 |
| 82 | 0.0661 | 463824 | 30673 | 448487 | 4711427 | 10.2 |
| 83 | 0.0715 | 433151 | 30985 | 417659 | 4262940 | 9.8 |
| 84 | 0.0763 | 402166 | 30680 | 386826 | 3845281 | 9.6 |
| 85 | 0.0800 | 371486 | 29727 | 356623 | 3458455 | 9.3 |
| 86 | 0.0827 | 341759 | 28279 | 327619 | 3101833 | 9.1 |
| 87 | 0.0845 | 313480 | 26483 | 300238 | 2774213 | 8.8 |
| 88 | 0.0851 | 286997 | 24415 | 274789 | 2473975 | 8.6 |
| 89 | 0.0849 | 262582 | 22285 | 251439 | 2199185 | 8.4 |
| 90 | 0.0850 | 240296 | 20435 | 230079 | 1947746 | 8.1 |
| 91 | 0.0868 | 219862 | 19073 | 210325 | 1717667 | 7.8 |
| 92 | 0.0903 | 200788 | 18138 | 191720 | 1507342 | 7.5 |
| 93 | 0.0955 | 182651 | 17435 | 173933 | 1315623 | 7.2 |
| 94 | 0.1018 | 165216 | 16812 | 156810 | 1141690 | 6.9 |
| 95 | 0.1091 | 148404 | 16188 | 140310 | 984879 | 6.6 |
| 96 | 0.1174 | 132216 | 15518 | 124457 | 844569 | 6.4 |
| 97 | 0.1265 | 116698 | 14768 | 109314 | 720111 | 6.2 |
| 98 | 0.1365 | 101930 | 13911 | 94975 | 610797 | 6.0 |
| 99 | 0.1468 | 88020 | 12924 | 81558 | 515822 | 5.9 |
| 100 | 0.1571 | 75096 | 11797 | 69197 | 434265 | 5.8 |
| 101 | 0.1665 | 63299 | 10538 | 58030 | 365067 | 5.8 |
| 102 | 0.1740 | 52761 | 9182 | 48170 | 307037 | 5.8 |
| 103 | 0.1787 | 43579 | 7788 | 39686 | 258867 | 5.9 |
| 104 | 0.1797 | 35792 | 6432 | 32576 | 219182 | 6.1 |
| 105 | 0.1767 | 29360 | 5188 | 26766 | 186606 | 6.4 |
| 106 | 0.1702 | 24171 | 4114 | 22114 | 159840 | 6.6 |
| 107 | 0.1615 | 20057 | 3239 | 18438 | 137726 | 6.9 |
| 108 | 0.1522 | 16818 | 2560 | 15538 | 119288 | 7.1 |
| 109 | 0.1440 | 14258 | 2053 | 13231 | 103750 | 7.3 |
| 110 | 0.1377 | 12205 | 1680 | 11365 | 90518 | 7.4 |
| 111 | 0.1332 | 10525 | 1401 | 9824 | 79154 | 7.5 |
| 112 | 0.1301 | 9123 | 1187 | 8530 | 69330 | 7.6 |
| 113 | 0.1278 | 7937 | 1014 | 7430 | 60800 | 7.7 |
| 114 | 0.1259 | 6923 | 872 | 6487 | 53370 | 7.7 |
| 115 | 0.1242 | 6051 | 752 | 5675 | 46883 | 7.7 |
| 116 | 0.1227 | 5299 | 650 | 4974 | 41208 | 7.8 |
| 117 | 0.1212 | 4649 | 563 | 4367 | 36234 | 7.8 |
| 118 | 0.1198 | 4086 | 489 | 3841 | 31867 | 7.8 |
| 119 | 0.1185 | 3596 | 426 | 3383 | 28025 | 7.8 |
| 120 | 0.1173 | 3170 | 372 | 2984 | 24642 | 7.8 |
| 121 | 0.1162 | 2799 | 325 | 2636 | 21658 | 7.7 |
| 122 | 0.1154 | 2473 | 285 | 2331 | 19022 | 7.7 |
| 123 | 0.1143 | 2188 | 250 | 2063 | 16691 | 7.6 |
| 124 | 0.1135 | 1938 | 220 | 1828 | 14628 | 7.5 |
| 125 | 0.1123 | 1718 | 193 | 1622 | 12800 | 7.5 |
| 126 | 0.1121 | 1525 | 171 | 1440 | 11179 | 7.3 |
| 127 | 0.1115 | 1354 | 151 | 1279 | 9739 | 7.2 |
| 128 | 0.1106 | 1203 | 133 | 1137 | 8461 | 7.0 |
| 129 | 0.1103 | 1070 | 118 | 1011 | 7324 | 6.8 |
| 130 | 0.1103 | 952 | 105 | 900 | 6313 | 6.6 |
| 131 | 0.1098 | 847 | 93 | 801 | 5414 | 6.4 |
| 132 | 0.1088 | 754 | 82 | 713 | 4613 | 6.1 |
| 133 | 0.1086 | 672 | 73 | 636 | 3900 | 5.8 |
| 134 | 0.1085 | 599 | 65 | 567 | 3265 | 5.4 |
| 135 | 0.1086 | 534 | 58 | 505 | 2698 | 5.1 |
| 136 | 0.1071 | 476 | 51 | 451 | 2193 | 4.6 |
| 137 | 0.1082 | 425 | 46 | 402 | 1743 | 4.1 |
| 138 | 0.1082 | 379 | 41 | 359 | 1341 | 3.5 |
| 139 | 0.1065 | 338 | 36 | 320 | 982 | 2.9 |
| 140 | 0.1060 | 302 | 32 | 286 | 662 | 2.2 |
| 141 | 0.1074 | 270 | 29 | 256 | 376 | 1.4 |
| 142 | 1.0000 | 241 | 241 | 121 | 121 | 0.5 |

Table B. 2
Women Aged 52 in 1992

| x | qx | Ix | dx | Lx | Tx | ex |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 52 | 0.0054 | 1147588 | 6247 | 1144464 | 34330656 | 29.9 |
| 53 | 0.0072 | 1141341 | 8217 | 1137232 | 33186191 | 29.1 |
| 54 | 0.0081 | 1133123 | 9134 | 1128557 | 32048959 | 28.3 |
| 55 | 0.0087 | 1123990 | 9752 | 1119114 | 30920403 | 27.5 |
| 56 | 0.0092 | 1114237 | 10235 | 1109120 | 29801289 | 26.7 |
| 57 | 0.0097 | 1104003 | 10654 | 1098676 | 28692169 | 26.0 |
| 58 | 0.0101 | 1093348 | 11054 | 1087821 | 27593493 | 25.2 |
| 59 | 0.0106 | 1082294 | 11464 | 1076562 | 26505672 | 24.5 |
| 60 | 0.0111 | 1070831 | 11905 | 1064878 | 25429110 | 23.7 |
| 61 | 0.0117 | 1058926 | 12395 | 1052728 | 24364232 | 23.0 |
| 62 | 0.0124 | 1046530 | 12952 | 1040054 | 23311504 | 22.3 |
| 63 | 0.0131 | 1033579 | 13588 | 1026785 | 22271449 | 21.5 |
| 64 | 0.0140 | 1019991 | 14317 | 1012832 | 21244665 | 20.8 |
| 65 | 0.0151 | 1005674 | 15150 | 998099 | 20231832 | 20.1 |
| 66 | 0.0163 | 990524 | 16097 | 982475 | 19233733 | 19.4 |
| 67 | 0.0176 | 974427 | 17163 | 965845 | 18251258 | 18.7 |
| 68 | 0.0192 | 957263 | 18349 | 948089 | 17285413 | 18.1 |
| 69 | 0.0209 | 938914 | 19648 | 929090 | 16337325 | 17.4 |
| 70 | 0.0229 | 919266 | 21047 | 908742 | 15408235 | 16.8 |
| 71 | 0.0251 | 898219 | 22520 | 886959 | 14499492 | 16.1 |
| 72 | 0.0274 | 875699 | 24035 | 863682 | 13612533 | 15.5 |
| 73 | 0.0300 | 851664 | 25549 | 838890 | 12748851 | 15.0 |
| 74 | 0.0327 | 826116 | 27017 | 812607 | 11909962 | 14.4 |
| 75 | 0.0355 | 799099 | 28399 | 784899 | 11097355 | 13.9 |
| 76 | 0.0385 | 770700 | 29669 | 755865 | 10312455 | 13.4 |
| 77 | 0.0416 | 741031 | 30831 | 725615 | 9556590 | 12.9 |
| 78 | 0.0450 | 710200 | 31924 | 694238 | 8830975 | 12.4 |
| 79 | 0.0487 | 678276 | 33006 | 661773 | 8136737 | 12.0 |
| 80 | 0.0528 | 645270 | 34091 | 628225 | 7474964 | 11.6 |
| 81 | 0.0573 | 611180 | 35024 | 593667 | 6846739 | 11.2 |
| 82 | 0.0615 | 576155 | 35428 | 558441 | 6253071 | 10.9 |
| 83 | 0.0647 | 540728 | 34994 | 523231 | 5694630 | 10.5 |
| 84 | 0.0673 | 505733 | 34020 | 488723 | 5171399 | 10.2 |
| 85 | 0.0700 | 471713 | 33028 | 455199 | 4682676 | 9.9 |
| 86 | 0.0727 | 438685 | 31872 | 422749 | 4227477 | 9.6 |
| 87 | 0.0744 | 406813 | 30278 | 391674 | 3804728 | 9.4 |
| 88 | 0.0754 | 376535 | 28375 | 362348 | 3413055 | 9.1 |
| 89 | 0.0761 | 348160 | 26481 | 334920 | 3050707 | 8.8 |
| 90 | 0.0776 | 321679 | 24952 | 309203 | 2715787 | 8.4 |
| 91 | 0.0807 | 296727 | 23940 | 284756 | 2406585 | 8.1 |
| 92 | 0.0854 | 272786 | 23290 | 261141 | 2121828 | 7.8 |
| 93 | 0.0912 | 249496 | 22747 | 238123 | 1860687 | 7.5 |
| 94 | 0.0977 | 226749 | 22155 | 215672 | 1622564 | 7.2 |
| 95 | 0.1049 | 204595 | 21462 | 193864 | 1406892 | 6.9 |
| 96 | 0.1128 | 183133 | 20653 | 172806 | 1213029 | 6.6 |
| 97 | 0.1213 | 162480 | 19714 | 152623 | 1040222 | 6.4 |
| 98 | 0.1305 | 142766 | 18630 | 133451 | 887600 | 6.2 |
| 99 | 0.1400 | 124135 | 17385 | 115443 | 754149 | 6.1 |
| 100 | 0.1496 | 106751 | 15965 | 98768 | 638706 | 6.0 |
| 101 | 0.1584 | 90785 | 14379 | 83596 | 539938 | 5.9 |
| 102 | 0.1657 | 76407 | 12662 | 70076 | 456342 | 6.0 |
| 103 | 0.1707 | 63745 | 10881 | 58304 | 386266 | 6.1 |
| 104 | 0.1726 | 52864 | 9127 | 48300 | 327962 | 6.2 |
| 105 | 0.1712 | 43737 | 7489 | 39993 | 279661 | 6.4 |
| 106 | 0.1667 | 36248 | 6043 | 33227 | 239669 | 6.6 |
| 107 | 0.1600 | 30205 | 4833 | 27789 | 206442 | 6.8 |
| 108 | 0.1525 | 25372 | 3869 | 23438 | 178653 | 7.0 |
| 109 | 0.1454 | 21503 | 3126 | 19940 | 155216 | 7.2 |
| 110 | 0.1395 | 18377 | 2564 | 17095 | 135276 | 7.4 |
| 111 | 0.1352 | 15813 | 2138 | 14744 | 118181 | 7.5 |
| 112 | 0.1320 | 13675 | 1806 | 12772 | 103437 | 7.6 |
| 113 | 0.1296 | 11870 | 1539 | 11100 | 90664 | 7.6 |
| 114 | 0.1276 | 10331 | 1319 | 9671 | 79564 | 7.7 |
| 115 | 0.1258 | 9012 | 1133 | 8445 | 69893 | 7.8 |
| 116 | 0.1239 | 7879 | 976 | 7390 | 61448 | 7.8 |
| 117 | 0.1221 | 6902 | 843 | 6481 | 54057 | 7.8 |
| 118 | 0.1204 | 6059 | 729 | 5695 | 47577 | 7.9 |
| 119 | 0.1187 | 5330 | 633 | 5014 | 41882 | 7.9 |
| 120 | 0.1171 | 4697 | 550 | 4422 | 36868 | 7.8 |
| 121 | 0.1156 | 4147 | 479 | 3908 | 32446 | 7.8 |
| 122 | 0.1143 | 3668 | 419 | 3459 | 28538 | 7.8 |
| 123 | 0.1130 | 3249 | 367 | 3066 | 25080 | 7.7 |
| 124 | 0.1117 | 2882 | 322 | 2721 | 22014 | 7.6 |
| 125 | 0.1109 | 2560 | 284 | 2418 | 19293 | 7.5 |
| 126 | 0.1103 | 2276 | 251 | 2151 | 16875 | 7.4 |
| 127 | 0.1091 | 2025 | 221 | 1915 | 14725 | 7.3 |
| 128 | 0.1086 | 1804 | 196 | 1706 | 12810 | 7.1 |
| 129 | 0.1082 | 1608 | 174 | 1521 | 11104 | 6.9 |
| 130 | 0.1081 | 1434 | 155 | 1357 | 9583 | 6.7 |
| 131 | 0.1079 | 1279 | 138 | 1210 | 8227 | 6.4 |
| 132 | 0.1069 | 1141 | 122 | 1080 | 7017 | 6.1 |
| 133 | 0.1070 | 1019 | 109 | 965 | 5937 | 5.8 |
| 134 | 0.1077 | 910 | 98 | 861 | 4972 | 5.5 |
| 135 | 0.1071 | 812 | 87 | 769 | 4111 | 5.1 |
| 136 | 0.1076 | 725 | 78 | 686 | 3343 | 4.6 |
| 137 | 0.1066 | 647 | 69 | 613 | 2657 | 4.1 |
| 138 | 0.1073 | 578 | 62 | 547 | 2044 | 3.5 |
| 139 | 0.1066 | 516 | 55 | 489 | 1497 | 2.9 |
| 140 | 0.1085 | 461 | 50 | 436 | 1009 | 2.2 |
| 141 142 | 0.1071 1.0000 | 411 367 | 44 367 | 389 | 573 | 1.4 0.5 |

Table B. 3
Men Aged 57 in 1992

| X | qx | Ix | dx | Lx | Tx | ex |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 57 | 0.0198 | 964461 | 19142 | 954890 | 22373741 | 23.2 |
| 58 | 0.0189 | 945319 | 17860 | 936389 | 21418851 | 22.7 |
| 59 | 0.0185 | 927459 | 17127 | 918895 | 20482462 | 22.1 |
| 60 | 0.0184 | 910332 | 16710 | 901977 | 19563567 | 21.5 |
| 61 | 0.0185 | 893622 | 16554 | 885345 | 18661590 | 20.9 |
| 62 | 0.0189 | 877068 | 16619 | 868758 | 17776245 | 20.3 |
| 63 | 0.0196 | 860449 | 16873 | 852013 | 16907487 | 19.6 |
| 64 | 0.0205 | 843576 | 17290 | 834931 | 16055475 | 19.0 |
| 65 | 0.0216 | 826286 | 17847 | 817362 | 15220544 | 18.4 |
| 66 | 0.0229 | 808439 | 18521 | 799178 | 14403181 | 17.8 |
| 67 | 0.0244 | 789918 | 19289 | 780273 | 13604003 | 17.2 |
| 68 | 0.0261 | 770628 | 20130 | 760564 | 12823730 | 16.6 |
| 69 | 0.0280 | 750499 | 21017 | 739990 | 12063166 | 16.1 |
| 70 | 0.0301 | 729482 | 21922 | 718521 | 11323176 | 15.5 |
| 71 | 0.0322 | 707559 | 22816 | 696151 | 10604655 | 15.0 |
| 72 | 0.0346 | 684743 | 23667 | 672909 | 9908504 | 14.5 |
| 73 | 0.0370 | 661076 | 24444 | 648854 | 9235595 | 14.0 |
| 74 | 0.0395 | 636632 | 25121 | 624071 | 8586741 | 13.5 |
| 75 | 0.0420 | 611511 | 25687 | 598667 | 7962670 | 13.0 |
| 76 | 0.0446 | 585824 | 26146 | 572751 | 7364002 | 12.6 |
| 77 | 0.0474 | 559678 | 26535 | 546410 | 6791251 | 12.1 |
| 78 | 0.0505 | 533143 | 26912 | 519687 | 6244841 | 11.7 |
| 79 | 0.0540 | 506231 | 27349 | 492557 | 5725154 | 11.3 |
| 80 | 0.0582 | 478882 | 27865 | 464950 | 5232597 | 10.9 |
| 81 | 0.0629 | 451017 | 28347 | 436844 | 4767647 | 10.6 |
| 82 | 0.0675 | 422671 | 28524 | 408409 | 4330803 | 10.2 |
| 83 | 0.0716 | 394147 | 28213 | 380040 | 3922394 | 10.0 |
| 84 | 0.0755 | 365934 | 27621 | 352124 | 3542354 | 9.7 |
| 85 | 0.0798 | 338313 | 27011 | 324807 | 3190230 | 9.4 |
| 86 | 0.0839 | 311302 | 26128 | 298238 | 2865423 | 9.2 |
| 87 | 0.0865 | 285174 | 24664 | 272842 | 2567185 | 9.0 |
| 88 | 0.0872 | 260510 | 22728 | 249146 | 2294344 | 8.8 |
| 89 | 0.0870 | 237782 | 20678 | 227443 | 2045198 | 8.6 |
| 90 | 0.0870 | 217104 | 18879 | 207664 | 1817755 | 8.4 |
| 91 | 0.0884 | 198225 | 17515 | 189468 | 1610091 | 8.1 |
| 92 | 0.0915 | 180710 | 16531 | 172445 | 1420623 | 7.9 |
| 93 | 0.0959 | 164179 | 15749 | 156304 | 1248179 | 7.6 |
| 94 | 0.1013 | 148430 | 15033 | 140913 | 1091874 | 7.4 |
| 95 | 0.1074 | 133397 | 14324 | 126234 | 950961 | 7.1 |
| 96 | 0.1142 | 119072 | 13594 | 112275 | 824727 | 6.9 |
| 97 | 0.1215 | 105479 | 12816 | 99071 | 712451 | 6.8 |
| 98 | 0.1291 | 92663 | 11965 | 86680 | 613380 | 6.6 |
| 99 | 0.1367 | 80697 | 11028 | 75184 | 526700 | 6.5 |
| 100 | 0.1436 | 69670 | 10005 | 64667 | 451517 | 6.5 |
| 101 | 0.1494 | 59665 | 8913 | 55208 | 386850 | 6.5 |
| 102 | 0.1533 | 50752 | 7782 | 46861 | 331642 | 6.5 |
| 103 | 0.1549 | 42970 | 6656 | 39642 | 284781 | 6.6 |
| 104 | 0.1538 | 36314 | 5584 | 33522 | 245139 | 6.8 |
| 105 | 0.1501 | 30730 | 4613 | 28423 | 211617 | 6.9 |
| 106 | 0.1446 | 26117 | 3776 | 24229 | 183193 | 7.0 |
| 107 | 0.1382 | 22341 | 3089 | 20796 | 158965 | 7.1 |
| 108 | 0.1322 | 19252 | 2544 | 17980 | 138168 | 7.2 |
| 109 | 0.1271 | 16708 | 2123 | 15646 | 120188 | 7.2 |
| 110 | 0.1233 | 14585 | 1798 | 13685 | 104542 | 7.2 |
| 111 | 0.1206 | 12786 | 1543 | 12015 | 90857 | 7.1 |
| 112 | 0.1188 | 11244 | 1336 | 10576 | 78842 | 7.0 |
| 113 | 0.1173 | 9908 | 1163 | 9327 | 68266 | 6.9 |
| 114 | 0.1161 | 8746 | 1015 | 8238 | 58939 | 6.7 |
| 115 | 0.1148 | 7731 | 888 | 7287 | 50701 | 6.6 |
| 116 | 0.1136 | 6843 | 777 | 6454 | 43414 | 6.3 |
| 117 | 0.1123 | 6066 | 681 | 5725 | 36960 | 6.1 |
| 118 | 0.1110 | 5385 | 598 | 5086 | 31234 | 5.8 |
| 119 | 0.1098 | 4787 | 525 | 4524 | 26149 | 5.5 |
| 120 | 0.1085 | 4262 | 463 | 4030 | 21624 | 5.1 |
| 121 | 0.1074 | 3799 | 408 | 3595 | 17594 | 4.6 |
| 122 | 0.1063 | 3391 | 360 | 3211 | 13999 | 4.1 |
| 123 | 0.1052 | 3031 | 319 | 2871 | 10788 | 3.6 |
| 124 | 0.1043 | 2712 | 283 | 2570 | 7917 | 2.9 |
| 125 | 0.1034 | 2429 | 251 | 2303 | 5347 | 2.2 |
| 126 | 0.1026 | 2178 | 223 | 2066 | 3043 | 1.4 |
| 127 | 1.0000 | 1955 | 1955 | 977 | 977 | 0.5 |

Table B. 4 Women Aged 57 in 1992

| x | qx | Ix | dx | Lx | Tx | ex |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 57 | 0.0173 | 1016365 | 17600 | 1007565 | 25190927 | 24.8 |
| 58 | 0.0167 | 998765 | 16712 | 990409 | 24183363 | 24.2 |
| 59 | 0.0165 | 982053 | 16169 | 973968 | 23192954 | 23.6 |
| 60 | 0.0164 | 965884 | 15864 | 957952 | 22218986 | 23.0 |
| 61 | 0.0166 | 950020 | 15765 | 942137 | 21261034 | 22.4 |
| 62 | 0.0170 | 934254 | 15845 | 926331 | 20318897 | 21.7 |
| 63 | 0.0175 | 918409 | 16079 | 910369 | 19392565 | 21.1 |
| 64 | 0.0182 | 902329 | 16446 | 894106 | 18482196 | 20.5 |
| 65 | 0.0191 | 885884 | 16924 | 877422 | 17588090 | 19.9 |
| 66 | 0.0201 | 868960 | 17495 | 860212 | 16710668 | 19.2 |
| 67 | 0.0213 | 851465 | 18139 | 842395 | 15850456 | 18.6 |
| 68 | 0.0226 | 833326 | 18839 | 823906 | 15008061 | 18.0 |
| 69 | 0.0240 | 814487 | 19575 | 804700 | 14184155 | 17.4 |
| 70 | 0.0256 | 794912 | 20327 | 784749 | 13379455 | 16.8 |
| 71 | 0.0272 | 774585 | 21079 | 764046 | 12594707 | 16.3 |
| 72 | 0.0289 | 753506 | 21811 | 742601 | 11830661 | 15.7 |
| 73 | 0.0308 | 731695 | 22510 | 720440 | 11088060 | 15.2 |
| 74 | 0.0327 | 709185 | 23169 | 697600 | 10367620 | 14.6 |
| 75 | 0.0347 | 686015 | 23790 | 674120 | 9670020 | 14.1 |
| 76 | 0.0368 | 662225 | 24393 | 650029 | 8995900 | 13.6 |
| 77 | 0.0392 | 637832 | 25015 | 625324 | 8345871 | 13.1 |
| 78 | 0.0420 | 612817 | 25714 | 599960 | 7720547 | 12.6 |
| 79 | 0.0452 | 587103 | 26540 | 573833 | 7120587 | 12.1 |
| 80 | 0.0490 | 560563 | 27481 | 546823 | 6546754 | 11.7 |
| 81 | 0.0532 | 533082 | 28377 | 518894 | 5999932 | 11.3 |
| 82 | 0.0573 | 504705 | 28918 | 490246 | 5481038 | 10.9 |
| 83 | 0.0608 | 475787 | 28931 | 461321 | 4990792 | 10.5 |
| 84 | 0.0643 | 446856 | 28727 | 432492 | 4529471 | 10.1 |
| 85 | 0.0686 | 418129 | 28673 | 403792 | 4096978 | 9.8 |
| 86 | 0.0732 | 389456 | 28499 | 375206 | 3693186 | 9.5 |
| 87 | 0.0770 | 360956 | 27807 | 347053 | 3317980 | 9.2 |
| 88 | 0.0799 | 333150 | 26606 | 319847 | 2970927 | 8.9 |
| 89 | 0.0820 | 306544 | 25150 | 293969 | 2651080 | 8.6 |
| 90 | 0.0843 | 281394 | 23711 | 269539 | 2357111 | 8.4 |
| 91 | 0.0871 | 257684 | 22444 | 246462 | 2087572 | 8.1 |
| 92 | 0.0908 | 235239 | 21362 | 224559 | 1841110 | 7.8 |
| 93 | 0.0954 | 213878 | 20396 | 203680 | 1616551 | 7.6 |
| 94 | 0.1007 | 193482 | 19483 | 183741 | 1412871 | 7.3 |
| 95 | 0.1068 | 173999 | 18580 | 164709 | 1229131 | 7.1 |
| 96 | 0.1136 | 155420 | 17652 | 146593 | 1064421 | 6.8 |
| 97 | 0.1210 | 137767 | 16664 | 129435 | 917828 | 6.7 |
| 98 | 0.1287 | 121103 | 15586 | 113310 | 788393 | 6.5 |
| 99 | 0.1365 | 105517 | 14403 | 98315 | 675083 | 6.4 |
| 100 | 0.1439 | 91114 | 13113 | 84557 | 576767 | 6.3 |
| 101 | 0.1504 | 78001 | 11734 | 72134 | 492210 | 6.3 |
| 102 | 0.1554 | 66267 | 10297 | 61118 | 420076 | 6.3 |
| 103 | 0.1582 | 55970 | 8853 | 51543 | 358957 | 6.4 |
| 104 | 0.1583 | 47117 | 7460 | 43387 | 307414 | 6.5 |
| 105 | 0.1558 | 39657 | 6178 | 36568 | 264027 | 6.7 |
| 106 | 0.1510 | 33479 | 5055 | 30952 | 227459 | 6.8 |
| 107 | 0.1448 | 28425 | 4116 | 26367 | 196507 | 6.9 |
| 108 | 0.1384 | 24309 | 3363 | 22627 | 170140 | 7.0 |
| 109 | 0.1326 | 20945 | 2776 | 19557 | 147513 | 7.0 |
| 110 | 0.1279 | 18169 | 2324 | 17007 | 127956 | 7.0 |
| 111 | 0.1245 | 15845 | 1972 | 14859 | 110949 | 7.0 |
| 112 | 0.1219 | 13873 | 1692 | 13027 | 96090 | 6.9 |
| 113 | 0.1200 | 12181 | 1462 | 11450 | 83063 | 6.8 |
| 114 | 0.1184 | 10719 | 1269 | 10085 | 71613 | 6.7 |
| 115 | 0.1168 | 9451 | 1104 | 8899 | 61528 | 6.5 |
| 116 | 0.1153 | 8347 | 962 | 7865 | 52630 | 6.3 |
| 117 | 0.1138 | 7384 | 840 | 6964 | 44764 | 6.1 |
| 118 | 0.1123 | 6544 | 735 | 6177 | 37800 | 5.8 |
| 119 | 0.1109 | 5809 | 644 | 5487 | 31623 | 5.4 |
| 120 | 0.1095 | 5165 | 566 | 4882 | 26136 | 5.1 |
| 121 | 0.1082 | 4599 | 498 | 4351 | 21254 | 4.6 |
| 122 | 0.1070 | 4102 | 439 | 3882 | 16904 | 4.1 |
| 123 | 0.1059 | 3663 | 388 | 3469 | 13021 | 3.6 |
| 124 | 0.1048 | 3275 | 343 | 3103 | 9553 | 2.9 |
| 125 | 0.1039 | 2932 | 305 | 2779 | 6449 | 2.2 |
| 126 | 0.1030 | 2627 | 271 | 2492 | 3670 | 1.4 |
| 127 | 1.0000 | 2356 | 2356 | 1178 | 1178 | 0.5 |

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[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ The author thanks Michael Palumbo, Lise Vesterlund, and Jim Walker for their helpful comments on a previous draft of this paper. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or its staff. Please address correspondence to Maria Perozek, Federal Reserve Board, mail stop 97, 20th and C Streets NW, Washington DC 20551, USA. Tel: 202 452-2692. Fax: 202 728-5889. Email: mperozek@frb.gov.

[^1]:    ${ }^{1}$ Cutler and Meara (2004) provide an excellent overview of the causes underlying mortality improvements

[^2]:    ${ }^{2}$ Detailed documentation of the HRS is available in Juster and Suzman (1995).

[^3]:    ${ }^{3}$ More generally, there is an interesting literature on the validity and interpretation of subjective expectations data, including Bassett and Lumsdaine (2001), Bernheim (1989, 1990), Dominitz (1998), Dominitz and Manski (1997), Hamermesh (1985), and Manski (1990).
    ${ }^{4}$ For practical reasons documented in Appendix A, the subjective expectations data are adjusted for respondents who report $P_{75}=P_{85}$, and for respondents who report survival probabilities of zero or one.

[^4]:    ${ }^{6}$ Alternatively, if one assumed that each individual in a given age-sex cohort actually faced the same Weibull survivor function, and reported those probabilities with error, one could estimate the parameters of the aggregate survivor function by weighted nonlinear least squares on the entire cohort. Estimates of aggregate Weibull parameters using this method yielded life expectancies that were a bit higher for the 1940 cohort, but the main results of this paper still hold. Given the variation in risk factors and responses regarding expectations of survival, we maintain the assumption that each individual faces a person-specific survivor function, and we construct the life tables accordingly.

[^5]:    ${ }^{7}$ These basic life table functions are described in more detail in Pollard, Yusuf and Pollard (1991).

[^6]:    ${ }^{8}$ Complete subjective cohort life tables are included in Appendix B.
    ${ }^{9}$ Vaupel et al. (2004) investigate the possibility that mortality rates actually decline beyond a certain age-a phenomenon they term negative senescence.

[^7]:    ${ }^{10}$ This is also true for the older 1935 male cohort.
    ${ }^{11}$ The same basic result obtains for men aged 57 in 1992.

[^8]:    ${ }^{12}$ For example, estimates from a risk factor simulation model developed by Manton, Stallard and Tolley (1991) suggest that life expectancy at birth could be dramatically higher than the U.S. life tables currently predict.

[^9]:    ${ }^{13}$ All adjustments were removed except for the cases where $P_{75}=P_{85}=0$, which cannot be estimated via the Weibull without some adjustment.

