Comparison between Dutch EU-SILC and Dutch HIS as source for health prevalences

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The health expectancies presented in this country report are based on the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM) in EU-SILC. However, in the Netherlands also time series of health expectancies based on national survey(s) are published. Statistics Netherlands (known as "CBS") yearly conducts a health interview survey and calculates life expectancy in good perceived health, life expectancy without chronic conditions and life expectancy without disability. These national figures can be found on Statline, and are used in several national publications.

Both series of health expectancies have an important added value and each serves a different purpose. The national set is based on the health survey that includes detailed questions on disability and chronic diseases - as well as detailed questions on life style and other health-related factors. The EU set is part of a broad survey on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) and includes only the MEHM questions on health and some questions on unmet needs, but is comparable between EU countries. In addition, there are important differences in the data collection. The EU-SILC in the Netherlands is a follow up survey placed after the fifth wave of the Dutch Labour Force Survey, which resulted in a lower response rate compared to the national HIS. Another difference is that the HIS has a continuous observation throughout the year, while EU-SILC runs from June until September.

The publication of two series of health expectancies raises the question how comparable the two sources are. In 2013, the survey questions of the MEHM were also part of the national HIS. Figure 1 shows that the MEHM-outcomes of both surveys are not in alle cases comparable. The total prevalence (right side of the figure) of both longstanding illness/condition and GALI-limitations is higher within SILC, compared to HIS ($p < 0,05$).

Figure 1. Prevalence of MEHM-indicators, The Netherlands, 2013