LSE public lecture

Beauty and the Beast - Numbers and Public Policy

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Beauty and the Beast

Numbers and Public Policy

Michael Blastland and Andrew Dilnot
Tax as % of National Income.

Thatcher, Blair

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Inc. Major years
Is that a big number?

• £300m for 1m childcare places over five years

£300m / 1m children = £300 per child
£300 / 5 years = £60 per child per year
£60 / 52 weeks = £1.14 per week.
G8 debt relief of $50bn

=$1.5bn annually
=£750m
G8 population = 750m
=£1 per head.

£0?
Unpunished: The 3,000 crimes committed by the under-10s

Last updated at 15:48pm on 2nd September 2007

Comments (35)

The suspects behind almost 3,000 crimes last year, half of them arson or criminal damage, went unpunished - because they were too young to be prosecuted.

Offending by children aged under 10 in England and Wales included about 1,300 incidents of criminal damage and arson and more than 60 sex offences, it has been revealed.
Britain in grip of norovirus as cases hit 3m

By Rebecca Smith, Medical Editor

Last Updated: 2:47am GMT 13/01/2008

Three million people have been struck down by the winter vomiting bug - with experts fearing that cases could rise through this month and next.

- **Norovirus symptoms**

The norovirus season began a month earlier than normal this winter. Cases of the bug increased rapidly, with more than 200,000 people a week now catching the infection, official figures claim.
Norovirus lab reports

Figure: Laboratory reports of norovirus 2000-2007 (England and Wales)

Source: Health Protection Agency
Norovirus confidence intervals

• 1:1500  (1 lab case = 1500 in community).
• 2000 lab cases = 3 million in community

• But maybe 1:140
• (=280,000 cases)

• Or maybe 1:17,000
• (=34 million cases)

• Community study lab cases…
• 1
Scattergram generated by random x,y co-ords
Up and down
Heart attacks and smoking

Age Standardised (European Standard Population) Discharge rate per 100,000 population

Both Sexes  Females  Males
Up and down - Helena, Montanna

Age Adjusted Mortality Rate for Acute Myocardial Infarction Among Persons Age 35+ Years, Lewis and Clark County, Montana, 1979-2001
Risk

“Save our butty”

21% increase in risk of colorectal cancer for every 50g of bacon daily.

Baseline risk
5 in every 100 get colorectal cancer
21% increase on 5
= 6 in every 100 get colorectal cancer
ie 99 out of 100 unaffected
Which is clearer?

• An increase in risk of colorectal cancer of 21 per cent for every 50g of bacon consumed on a daily basis. Incidence rate approx: 6:100,000.

• 5 in 100 men typically get colorectal cancer. If they all have an extra rasher of bacon every day, about 6 will.
Data
Railway safety

Figure 1. Fatal movement and non-movement accidents per million train-kilometres, 1967–2005

Source: HMI railways inspectorate and Prof Andrew Evans
How many stakeholder pensions already?

- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
How much must a childless couple earn (after tax and benefits) to be in the top 10%?

- £35,000
- £50,000
- £60,000
- £75,000
- £100,000
- £150,000
How many gymslip mums?

• There are 780,000 single parents on means tested benefits. How many are under 18 (ie how many gym slip mums?)
  • 20,000
  • 50,000
  • 100,000
Total tax revenue as % of GDP
“Makes statistics far, far too interesting” - Rory Bremner