



**Guidance notes on using
the Scotland and European Health for All (HfA) Database**

Contents

	page
Background.....	2
1 Using the online version.....	2
2 <i>Online example – producing a time trend graph (line chart) for SDR (standardised death rate) for all causes, all ages, Scotland and UK.....</i>	3
3 <i>Online tips.....</i>	7
4 Using the offline version.....	8
5 <i>Offline example – producing a time trend graph (line chart) for SDR (standardised death rate) for all causes, all ages, Scotland and UK.....</i>	9
6 <i>Offline tips.....</i>	12
7 Definitions.....	13
8 Help (online and offline).....	14
9 Interpretation of trends for Scotland compared with 7 selected countries	14
10 Further help.....	14

Background

The Scotland and European Health for All (HfA) Database is a powerful and flexible tool to compare a wide range of health and health-related indicators over time, and between Scotland and a range of other countries in Europe. With a little practice, most users seem to find it easy to use. These notes have been written in response to feedback from some occasional users that some features are less intuitive than others. The online and offline tips (pages 7 and 11) are particularly aimed at answering queries which have arisen.

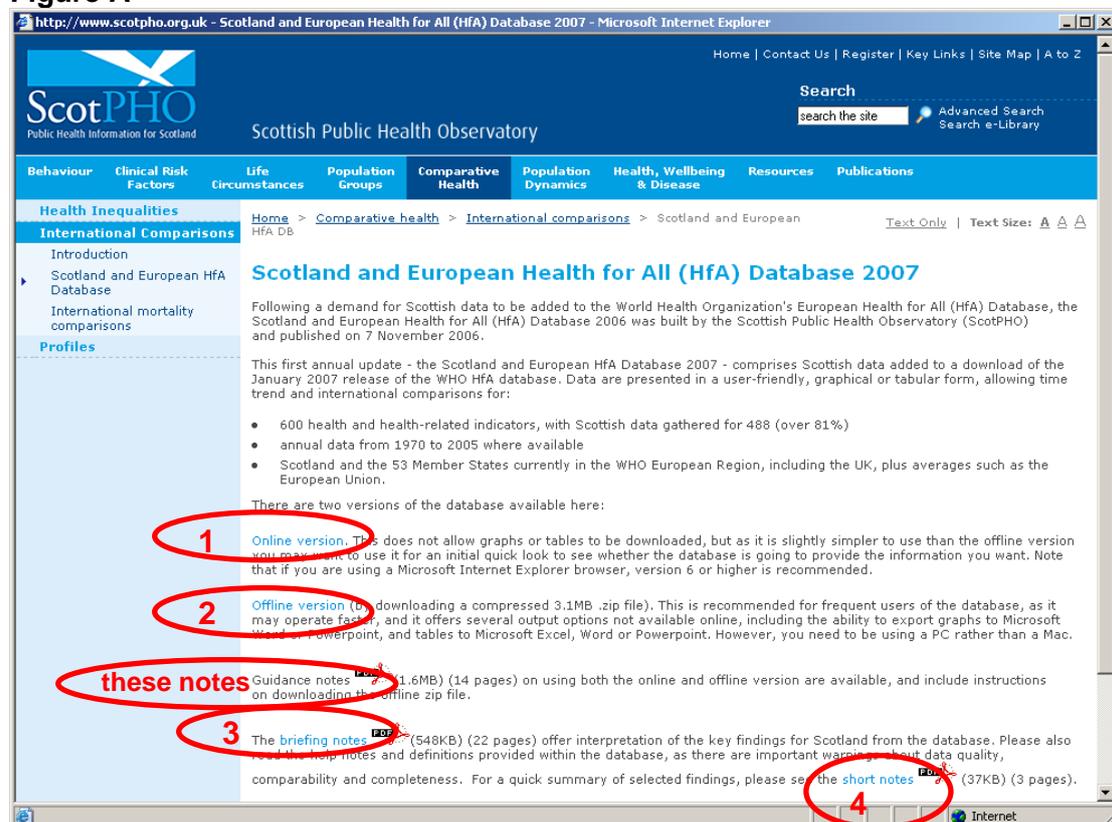
You might find it useful to print out these notes (if possible in colour) and keep them handy.

The database is available (in both an online and downloadable offline format) on the ScotPHO website www.scotpho.org.uk/scotlandhfabd. There is more functionality in the offline version (see page 8), such as the ability to download graphs to Microsoft Word or Powerpoint, and tables to Microsoft Excel, Word or Powerpoint. The online version does not allow graphs or tables to be downloaded, but is slightly simpler to use and may be the place to start if you just want to have an initial quick look to see whether the database is going to provide the information you want. Therefore these notes start with how to use the online version, then progress to the offline version. The notes are based on the 2007 release, but are applicable to all later releases.

1 Using the online version

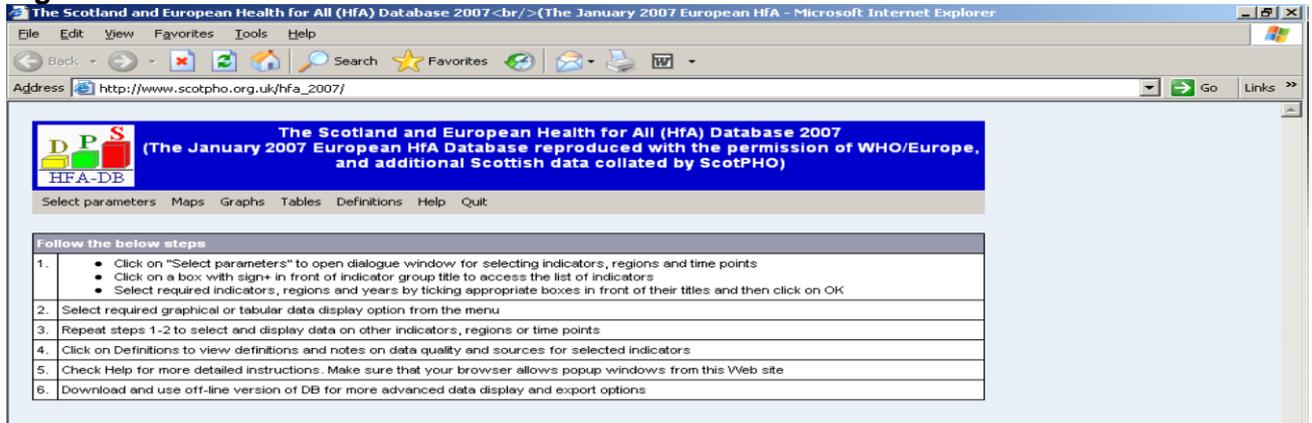
1.1 On the HfA page of the ScotPHO website www.scotpho.org.uk/scotlandhfabd, click on **On line version** (marked **1** in the **Figure A** screen dump below).

Figure A



1.2 This will take you straight to the online database's opening page (**Figure B**), which includes clear instructions on how to operate the database, numbered 1. to 6. :

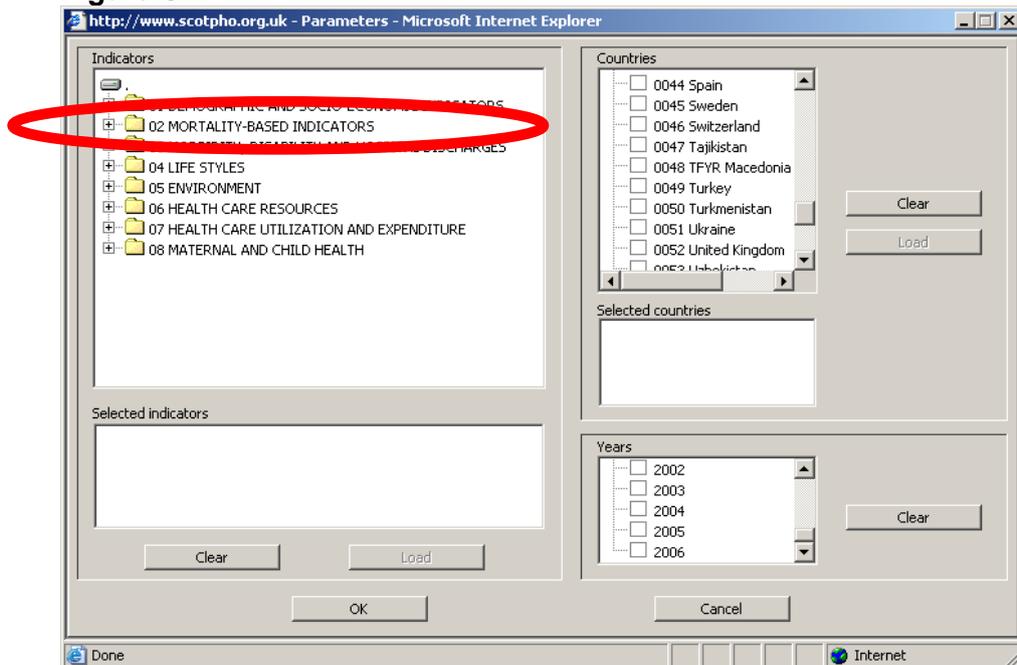
Figure B



2 Online example – producing a time trend graph (line chart) for SDR (standardised death rate) for all causes, all ages, Scotland and UK

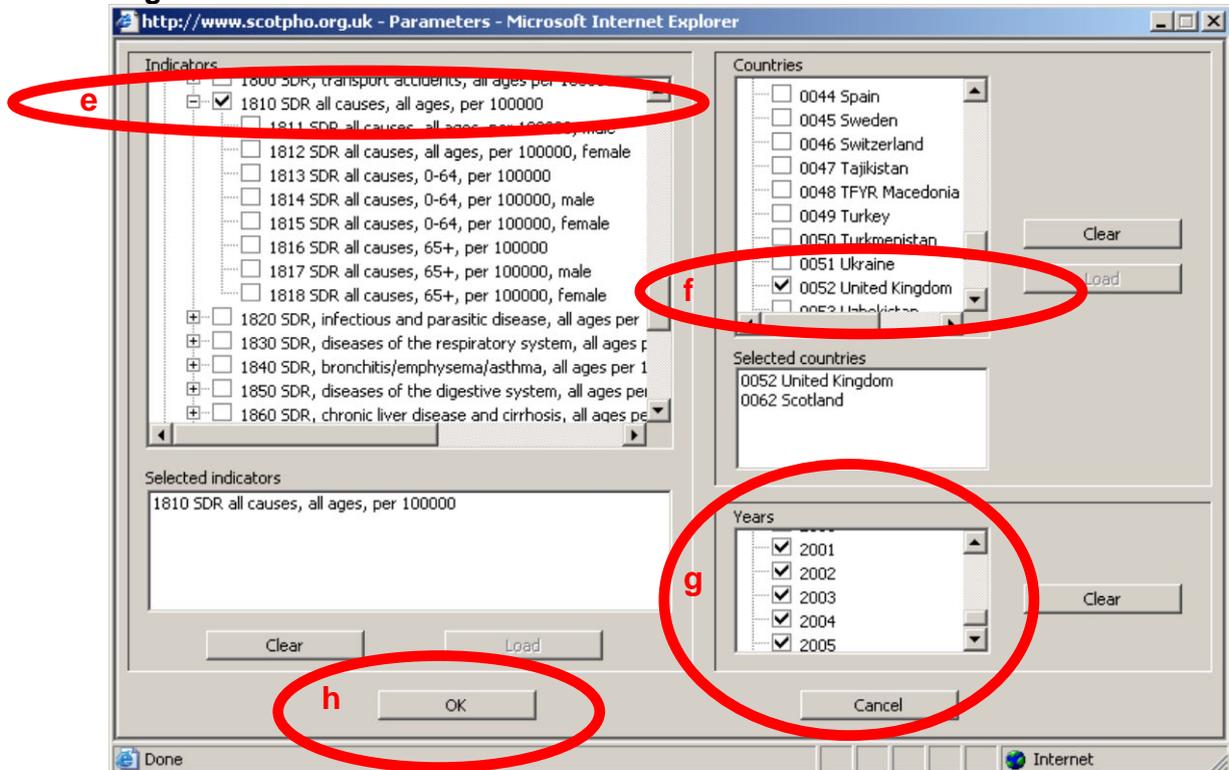
- a. Click on the Select parameters tab (shown in **Figure B**, on left hand side below the little bar chart icon).
- b. You will then get this window:

Figure C



- c. In the indicators box, click on the plus symbol (+) beside one (or more) of the 8 indicator groups (in this case, **02 Mortality-based indicators**, ringed in red).
- d. This will expand out the indicator group to show the main sub-groups within it, which themselves can be expanded out to all individual indicators. You can scroll down to the one you want, as shown below in **Figure D**:

Figure D

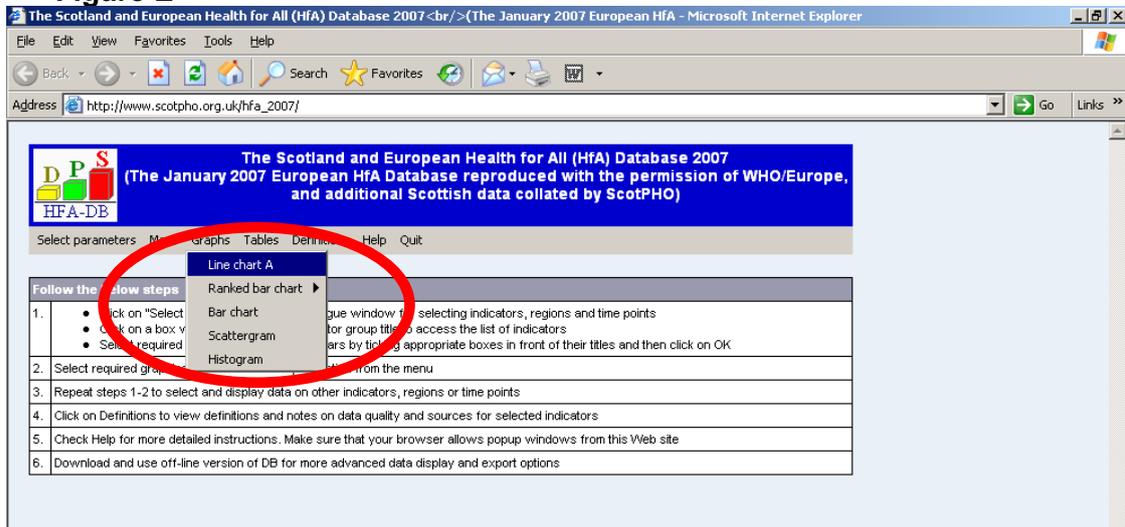


- e. As shown in **Figure D** (at the red “e”), click on the check box(es) for the indicator(s) you want: in this case just **1810 SDR all causes, all ages, per 100000**. The indicator name then appears in the “Selected indicators” box lower on the screen. (1810 is just one of the codes used for this indicator by the World Health Organization (WHO).)
- f. Next, in a similar manner pick the countries you want from the **Countries** list on the right hand side. With the exception of Scotland (shown last in the list), the countries are arranged alphabetically, followed by averages such as the EU average. For this example, click on **United Kingdom** and **Scotland**, and they will appear in the “Selected countries” box lower on the screen. (Again, you will notice WHO’s codes for these countries – 0052 and 0062.)
- g. Next, in the **Years** section you may want to click on the check box(es) for the year(s) you want (between 1970 and the most recent year). You can select up to 30 years (but for a line chart you can omit this step - see the second Online tip on page 7).
- h. Finally, click on OK.

- i. You will now be returned to the window shown above in **Figure B**. **Don't worry that your selections do not appear on this window – they will have been saved by the program.**

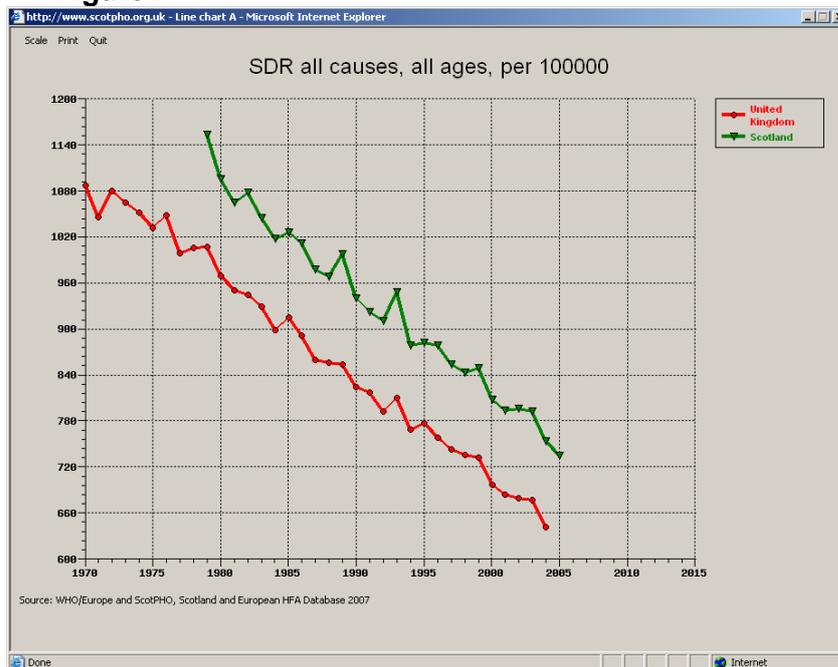
In this example we are producing a time trend graph, so click on the **Graphs** tab then the **Line chart A** option, as shown in **Figure E** below. (Alternatively, other presentation options are available at this stage, eg a **Table** or **Map**, but note that the maps do not display data for Scotland, just the UK as a whole).

Figure E



- j. After selecting **Line chart A** option, you will get the following graph (**Figure F**):

Figure F



- k. You can alter the scale of the x-axis or y-axis using the top left hand **Scale** tab, and you can print out the graph using the adjacent **Print** tab. However, you can't export the graph to another program – to do this you would need to use the downloadable offline version of the database (see page 8).

- I. Note that several different windows can be open within the database at the same time. Therefore, if you want to select a different chart type (eg bar chart), you first need to return from the current **Figure F** window to the **Figure B** window by doing one of the following:
 - 1) close the current chart window (if you don't want it again) using the **Quit** tab third from left at top of window, or the **X** (close) button on top right hand side, or
 - 2) minimise this chart window by clicking on the _ (minimise) button at top right hand side, or
 - 3) just move this window down on your screen by clicking on the blue bar at the top and dragging it down, so you can see the **Figure B** window underneath, or
 - 4) just click on the tab for the **Figure B** window at the bottom of your computer.

Note that all 4 options retain your parameter selections – you can keep using them when you select another chart type under the Graphs tab (**Figure E**), or indeed use them to produce a table or map.

You can also change the parameters you have selected in the **Select parameters** window (**Figure C**), but note that the already created graph(s) will not update automatically – you need to request a fresh graph again (as in **Figure E**).

3 Online tips:

- You can select up to 30 indicators, 30 countries and 30 years at one time.

- If you just want line charts, you can save time by not selecting any years (i.e. omit step 2 g. above). Line chart A (and tables B, C and D) always run from 1970 to the latest year, even if you haven't picked any years, and even if the countries you have selected do not have data for the whole period. However, you do need to pick years for the other types of graphs and tables or you will get the prompt:

! Select required parameters first (indicators, countries, years)

- If you only select years which are more recent than those for which data are available, then ask for a graph other than Line chart A, you will get the prompt:

X Sorry, no data

If, however, your selection included some available years as well as some unavailable years, a graph should appear showing data for the available years.

The tables will all display in these situations, but will have "...” for the years where the data are not available.

- You could get a blank scattergram if the year selected is too recent for one of the 2 indicators chosen.

- Your parameters selection can be altered at any time – just go to the open window shown in Figure B, click on Select parameters, and add, remove or change your indicators/countries/years selections then “OK” it. You will need to then click on the display option you want (a graph, table or map) in order to get the updated data selection displayed.

- Remember that you cannot export a graph (or table) to another program from the online version. If you want to do this, use the offline version.

4 Using the offline version

Note that in order to use the offline version you need a PC rather than a Mac computer.

- 4.1 On the Health for All page of the website (**Figure A**), click on **Offline version** (marked **2**) and follow the instructions to download the Winzip folder with the database files.

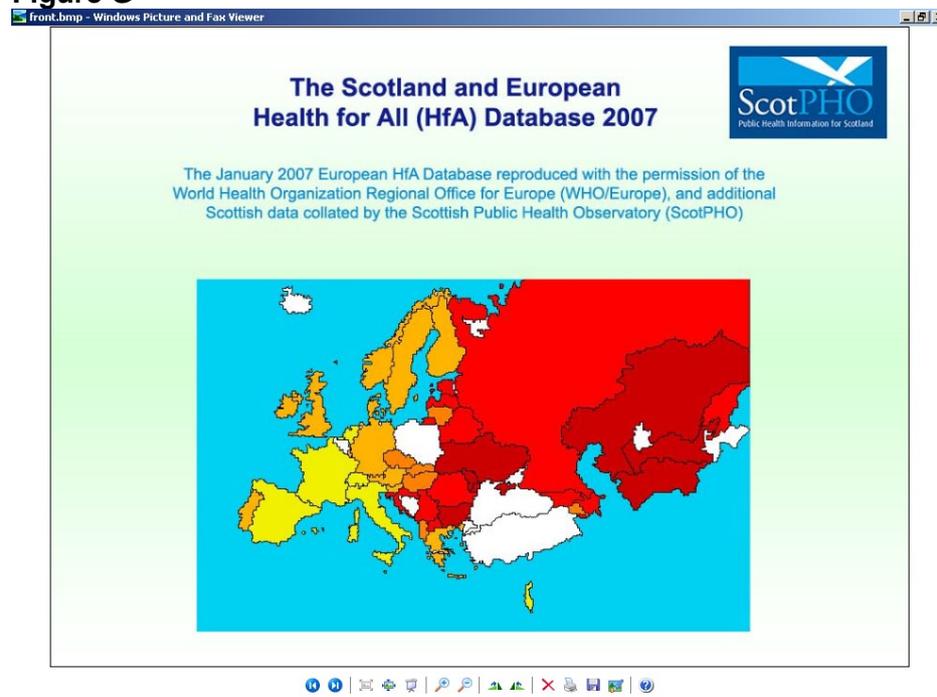
Under Winzip version 9.0, this will involve the following steps:

- You will be prompted “Do you want to open or save this file?” and you should click on the Save option.
- Under the “Save as” screen, select the location you want, eg your desktop, and click on the Save button. You will then see the message “Saving”, possibly followed by “Download complete”.
- Next, open the downloaded folder and click on Actions – Extract (or hit the Extract icon) and leave the destination as the location you have already selected; hit the Extract button and the extraction will take place immediately (with no comfort message on completion).
- If you are working on the 2007 version of the database, you will now have:
 - a) a set of extracted database files within the new folder
Offline Jan 2007 DB incl Scot
 - b) the Winzip folder **HFA_Download_2007**, which you can delete provided you have the above folder and extracted files.

- 4.2 To run the database, you need to click on the application file **HFA.exe** within the new folder.

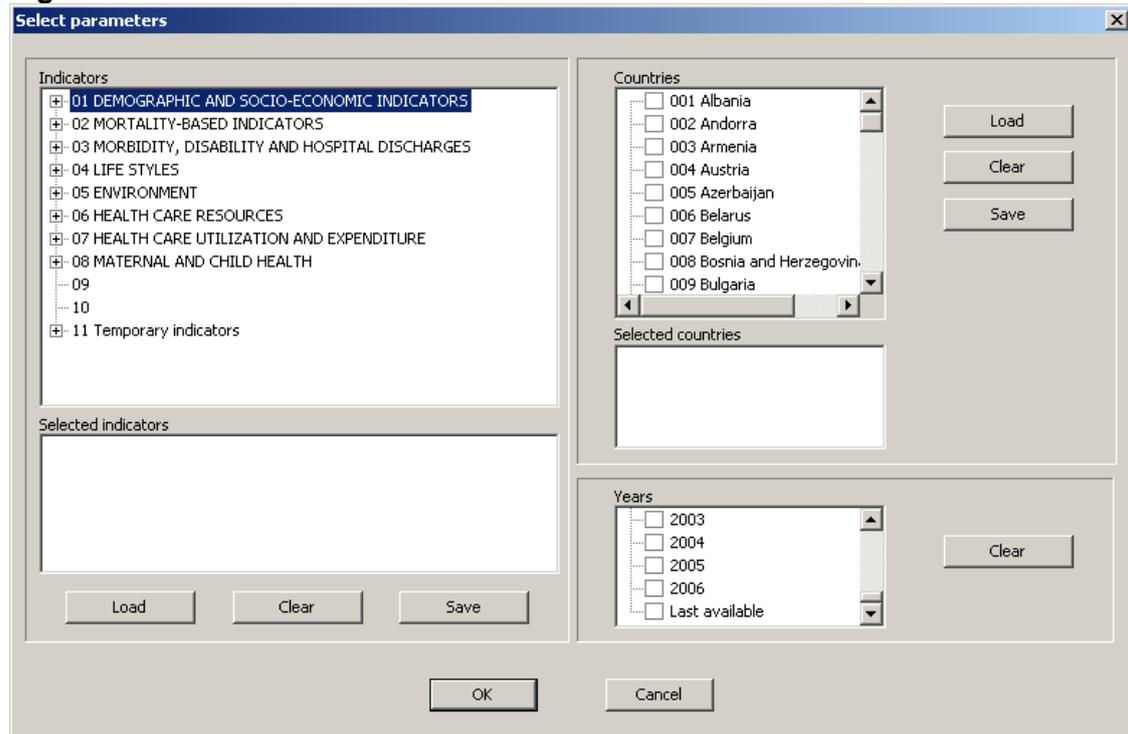
- 4.3 This will give you the following opening screen (which appears for only a short time) (**Figure G**):

Figure G



4.4 This will be followed by the screen shown in **Figure H**.

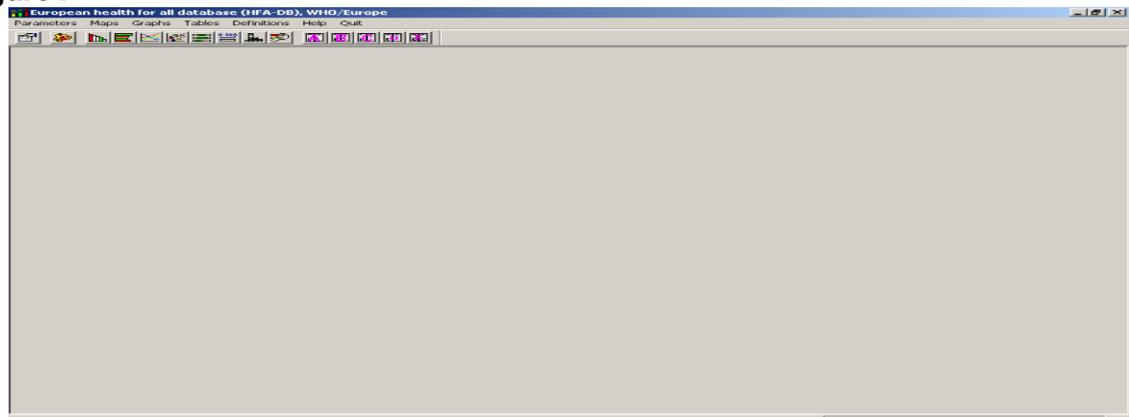
Figure H



5 Offline example – producing a time trend graph (line chart) for SDR (standardised death rate) for all causes, all ages, Scotland and UK

- a. The offline database is operated in a similar way to the online version, but it has no upfront instructions. You can select parameters as described above in **section 2c to h**. You will then be returned to **Figure I** screen below:

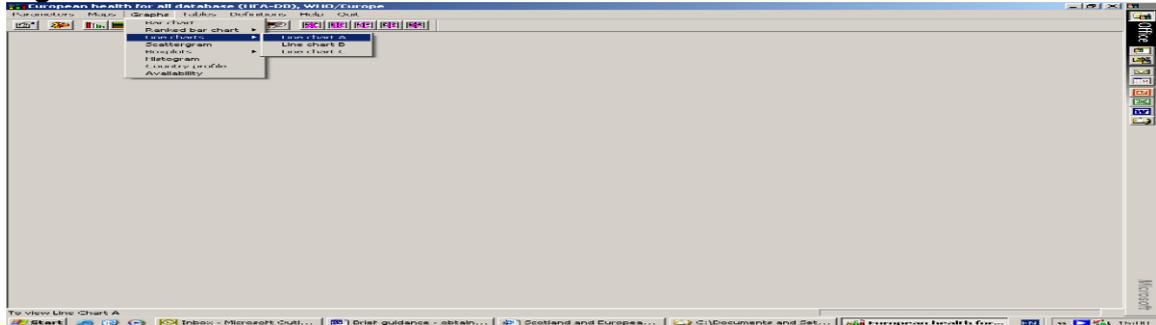
Figure I



- b. As when using the online version, **don't worry that your selections do not appear on this screen – they will have been saved by the program.**

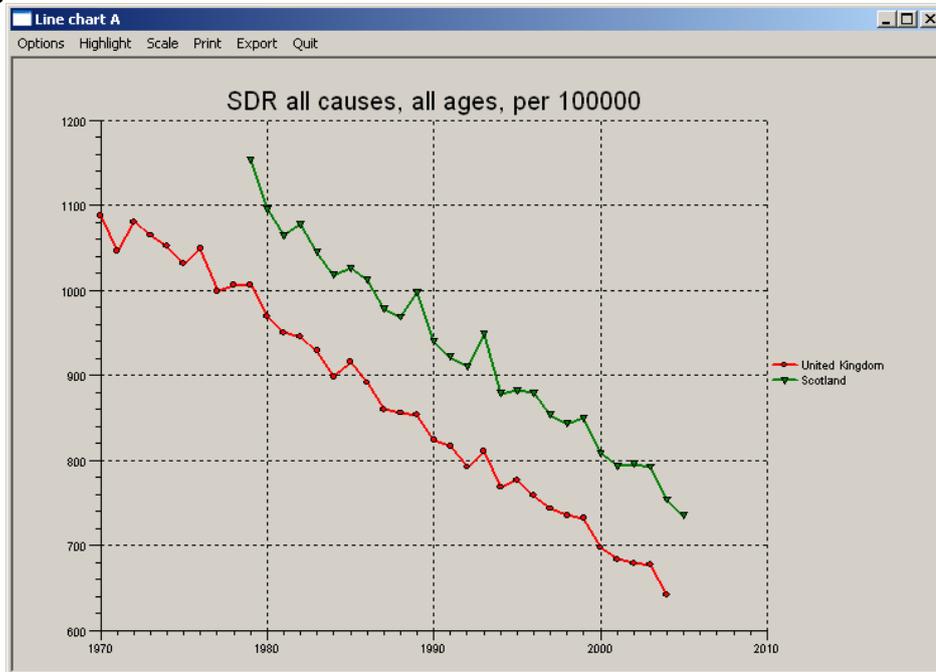
- c. Now you need to select **Graphs – Line charts – Line chart A**, as shown in **Figure J**.

Figure J



- d. The resulting graph should be as in **Figure K**:

Figure K



It will have additional functions at the top of the page compared to the online graph:

Options – lets you fit a 3-year moving average at the click of a button.

Highlight – lets you highlight one or more countries (show the data in colour with the country name), or leave them all greyed out and anonymised.

Scale – as in online version, allows you to alter the x or y axis scales.

Indicators – this will be shown if you have selected more than 1 indicator. It allows you to switch between indicators.

Print – as in online version, allows you to print your graph.

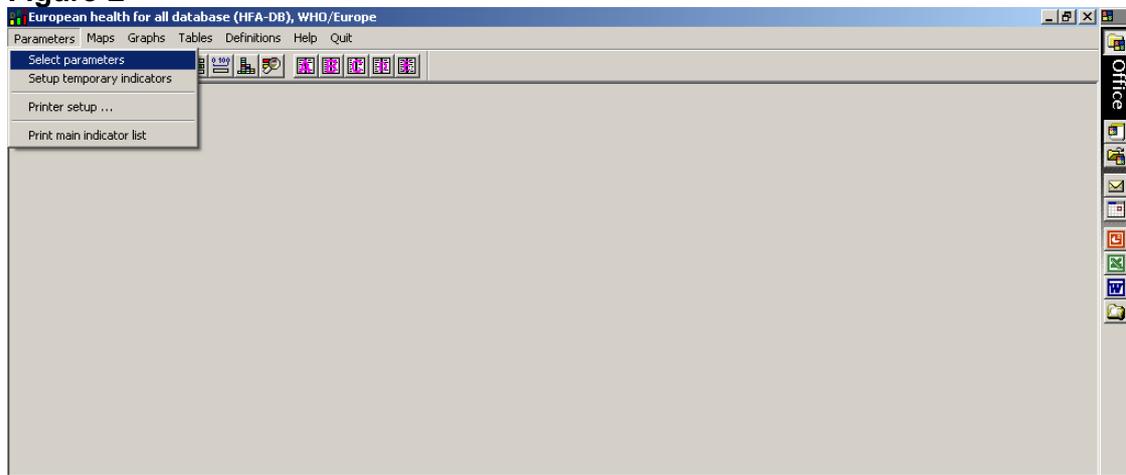
Export – lets you export the graph to Microsoft Word or Powerpoint (but not Excel – for some reason the text appears back to front in Excell!). After clicking the Export tab, you will get a new screen where you choose **Clipboard** under **Destination** (probably the default option) and then click on the **Export** box below. You then have the graph on your clipboard, and you can open a file in either Word or Powerpoint and paste it in (**Edit – Paste**, or **Ctrl-V**).

Quit – as in online version, clears the graph (but retains your parameter selections – you can keep using them).

In addition, the offline database allows you to fit simple linear trend lines (least squares method) to the data lines. All you need to do is point to where you want the regression line to start (eg at earliest point on x axis, or a later point) and click. This is only a rough estimate of the trend and, as a projection, it should be treated with caution. To clear it, point to the right of the last available year and click.

- e. As in the online database, you can alter your parameter selections at any time and request a fresh graph (or table). However, the Select parameters screen (**Figure H**) does not remain as an open window from start-up – you need to open it again via the main screen (**Figure I** above). Just click on Parameters (top left) to make a drop-down list appear, in which you should then click on the Select parameters option (see **Figure L**).

Figure L



6 Offline tips:

- You can select up to 30 indicators, 30 countries and 30 years at one time.

- You can save time by not selecting any years (i.e. omit step **g.** above) if you just want Line chart A or B, the “Availability” chart or Tables B, C or D. These run from 1970 to the latest year, and will work regardless of whether you select a year and whether the countries you select have data for the whole period. However, if you omit to select year(s) for other chart types or table types you will get the prompt:

! Select required parameters first (indicators, countries, years)

- If you select only more recent year(s) for the data than are available:

- line charts A and B and the “Availability” chart will work (although no data will be shown for the unavailable years)
- the boxplot will display with no data
- the country profile and all Tables (A, B, C, D and E)will display, but with “...” for the unavailable data
- for other chart types, you could get the prompt:

X Sorry, no data

- If, however, your selection included some available years as well as some unavailable years, you should be able to display each chart type (showing data for the available years). The exception might be the scattergram – you would need to ensure you selected indicators with data available for each axis.

Again, the tables will all work, but will have “...” for the years where the data are not available.

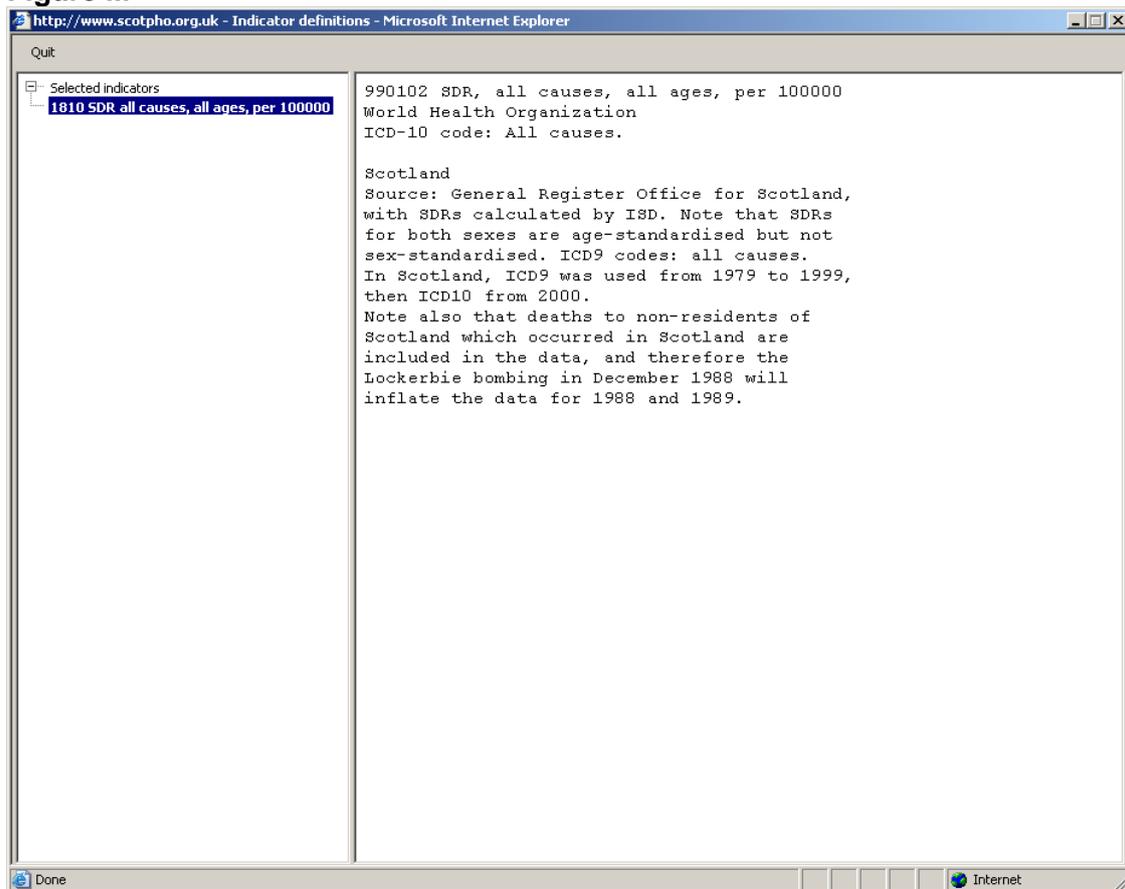
- Your parameters selection can be altered at any time. However, the Select parameters screen does not remain as an open window from start-up; you need to open it again via the main screen (as described in section 5e). Click on Select parameters, and add, remove or change your indicators/countries/years selections. You will then need to click on the display option you want (Graphs, Tables or Maps) in order to get the updated data selection displayed.

7 Definitions

Both the online and offline version of the database have definitions for every indicator, including sources and other key information for the Scotland data. You are advised to read this before interpreting and drawing conclusions about the indicators you have examined.

The **Definitions** tab is the fifth tab on the opening screen (see **Figure B**). After clicking on the tab, you will get a window with the selected indicators on the left hand side. Click on the one you want, and its definition will appear in the box on the right, eg for the example used in sections 2 and 5 (SDR (standardised death rate) for all causes, all ages):

Figure M



8 Help (online and offline)

Both versions of the database include an extensive **Help** facility (sixth tab from top left hand side on the opening screen; see **Figures B and I**). Click on **Help** then **Contents**, then the section for which you want more information. The offline **Help** contents (slightly fuller than online) are:

Introduction

Indicators (includes abbreviations used and a full list of indicators available)

Countries (for details of the country groups for which averages are available)

Years

Data sources

Notes on data availability and quality

Technical notes

Main Menu

Parameters menu (for further details on selecting parameters)

Maps

Graphical data presentation options:

Maps, Bar chart, Ranked bar chart (vertical), Ranked bar chart (horizontal), Line chart A, Line chart B, Line chart C, Scattergram, Boxplot - by value, Boxplot - by rank, Histogram, Country profile, Availability

Tabular data presentation options:

Table A, B C, D, E

9 Interpretation of trends for Scotland compared with 7 selected countries

From the ScotPHO website page for Health for All (**Figure A**), you can access comprehensive briefing notes **3** and short summary notes **4** which offer interpretation of trends for Scotland compared with 7 selected countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, UK, and the average of the 27 European Union countries ("EU")).

10 Further help

For further guidance on using the database, or to offer feedback on these guidance notes, please telephone or e-mail us using the contact details below.

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