

Icelandic study on widowers' mortality.

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A population study based on Icelandic widowers, who had lost their spouses by death in the years 1999, 2000 and 2001.

- Icelandic men born 1924-1969, living in Iceland.
- Widowers n=357.
- Controls n=357.

**This study is part of a project
at Karolinska Institutet.**

Title of project:

**Factors related to well-being in widowers
1-3 years after loss, and life expectancy
during the first decade after death of
spouse.**

**All steps of the study have
been approved by the National
Bioethics Committee of
Iceland and the Icelandic Data
Protection Authority.**

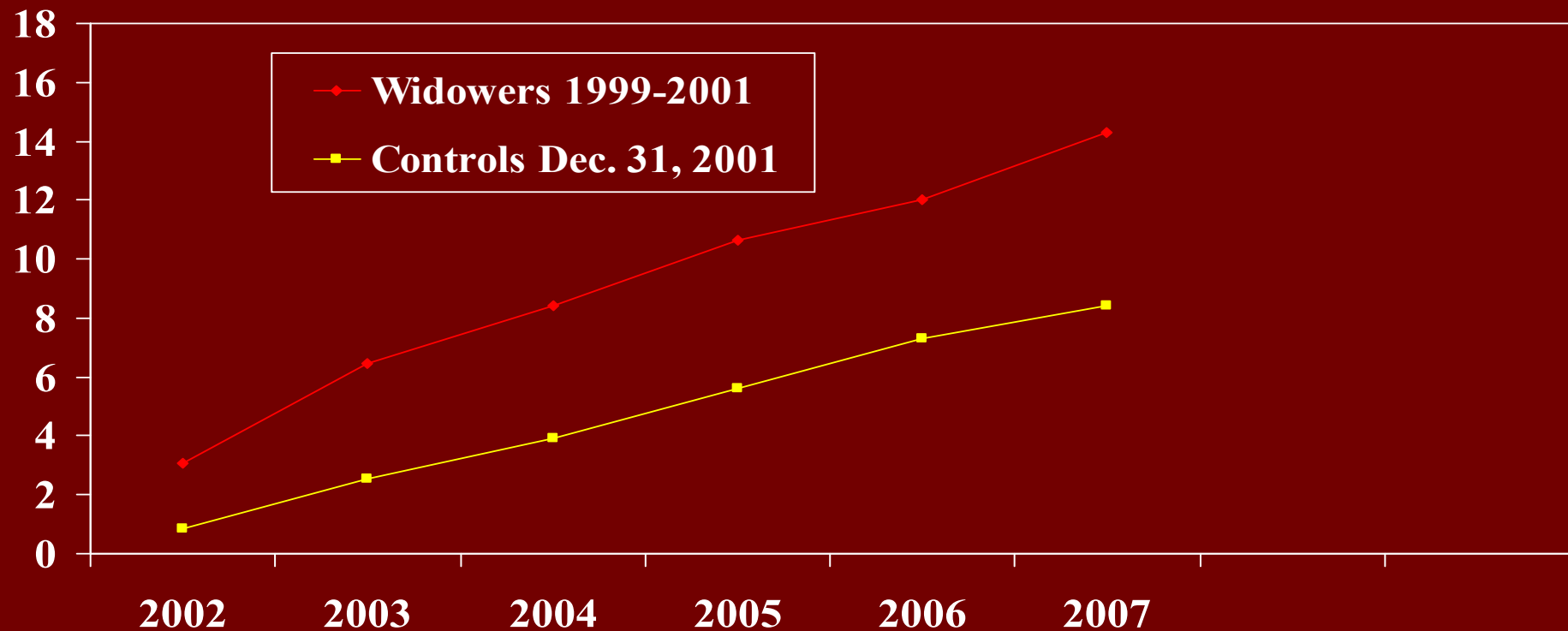
A nation-wide questionnaire survey of all widowers, 30-75 years old at the time of their wife's death, and a control group of married men.

- This was the first nation-wide bereavement survey of its kind in Iceland, especially for its gender base. Names were obtained by the Icelandic National Registry. The control group was age-matched with the widowers, and their homes were matched according to community or region in Iceland.

Because of the smallness of the agegroup it was difficult to match homes exactly with age, especially in rural areas.

- Therefore, the birthyears varied slightly.

Progressive death rates of Icelandic males born 1924-1969 widowers n=357 and controls n=357. Age-matched, and same/similar place of residence. Info obtained from National Registry Dec. 31st 2001. 2007 numbers are preliminary.

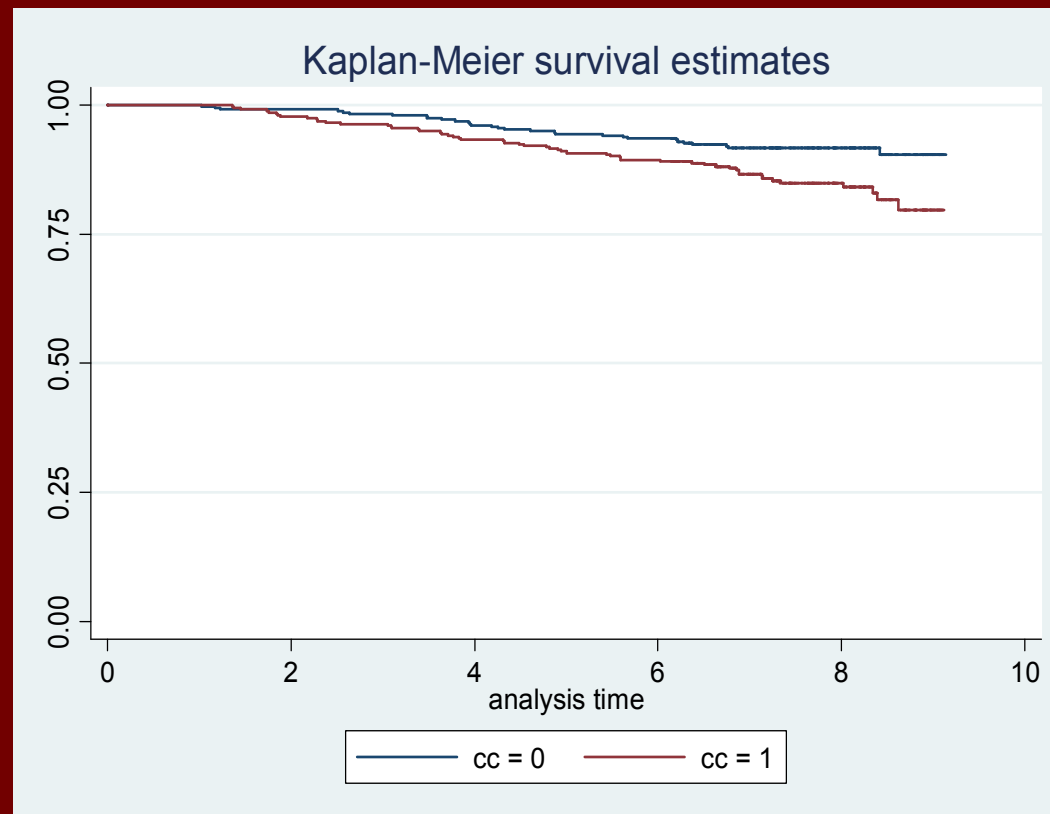


Married men live longer than other men in the general population.

- When the marriage is no longer in existence, chances are that survival rate will suffer.

cc=0 married

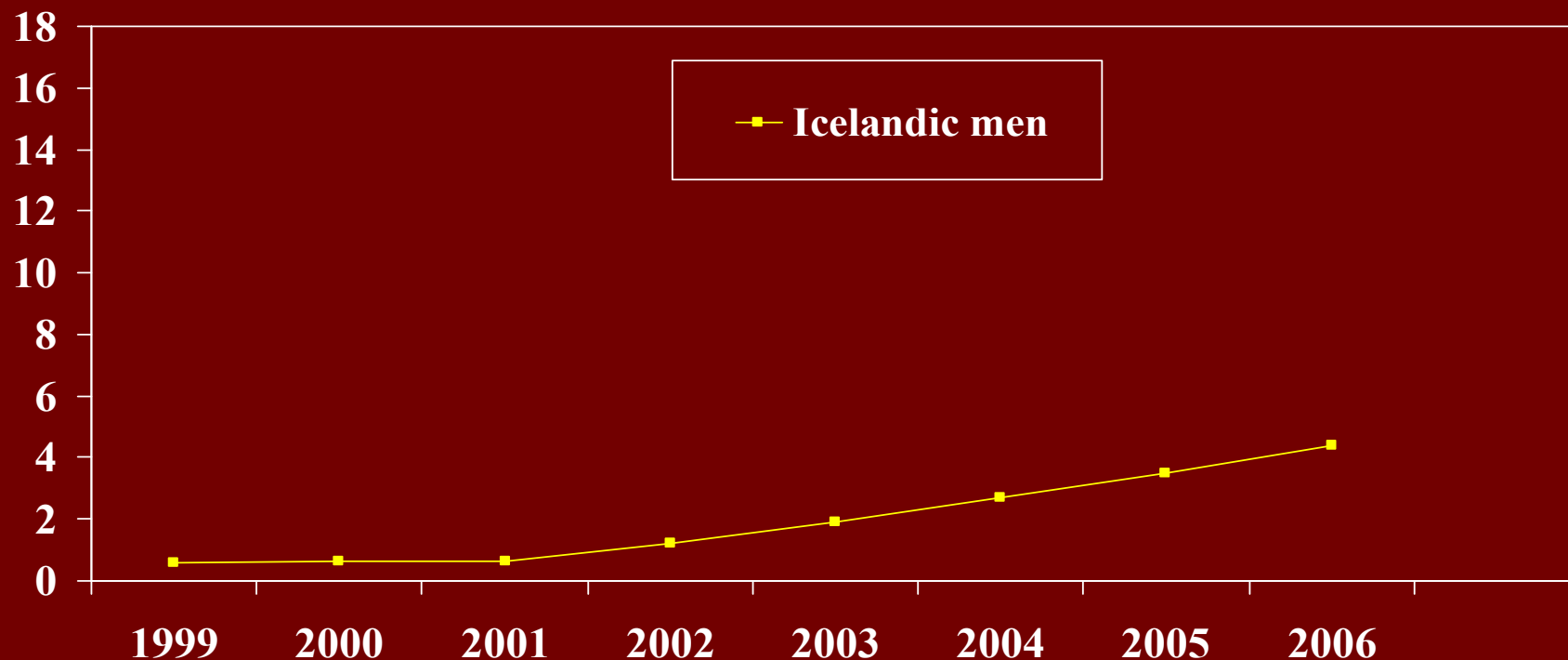
cc=1 widowers



The Haz. Ratio :

- We needed to correct slightly for birthyear.
- After that is corrected the Ratio is $cc=1.61$
- **This means that widowers run a 61% higher risk of dying within the timeframe 2002-2007.**
- However, that's a conservative estimate, since some widowers had already passed away during Jan. 1st 1991-Dec. 31st 2001.
- From Jan. 1st 1999-Dec. 31st 2001, total number of widowers is $n=410$.

Progressive deathrates of Icelandic men born 1924-1969 from January 1st 1999 to Dec. 31st 2006. Population based data. Info obtained from the Icelandic National Registry Dec. 31st 2006.



Widowers' progressive deathrate during first 7 years of grief.



90% of the widowers who responded to the questionnaire lost their wife through a disease, in many cases lasting a number of years.

- More than half the widowers lost their wife from cancer.
- Mortality rates for younger widowers, 30-50 years-old at the time of their wife's death, is lower than for other Icelandic men their age.
- The same is true for widowers in their 70's.

The mortality rates for the widowers group born 1929-1948 are significantly higher than mortality rates of other men their age every year from the time of their wife's death.

Icelandic men born 1929-1948

N=22.654	Control (general population) n=22.413	Widowers n=241
Total dead 8,30% (1.861/22.654)	Total dead in control group 8,08% (1.811/22.413)	Total dead widowers 20,75% (50/241)