Getting Started: An introduction to four British cohort studies

27 November 2025

Centre for Longitudinal Studies, UCL Social Research Institute

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Economic and Social Research Council

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Today's schedule

Session	Time	Topics covered	Speaker
1.	12.30 – 12.45	Introduction	Prof. Morag Henderson
2.	12.45 –13.05	Content by 'subject area'	Prof. Morag Henderson
3.	13.05 – 13.25	Overview of the type of analysis	Prof. Richard Silverwood
4.	13.25 – 13.45	Getting started with the data And where to go for more information	Prof. Richard Silverwood
5.	13.45 – 14.00	General Q&A	All

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Birth cohort studies

- Cohort studies are a type of *longitudinal study*—an approach that follows participants over a period of time (often many years)
- Participants share a common characteristic, i.e. birth cohorts follow individuals born in a particular period - a day, week, month, year
- It follows these people throughout their lives, and collects information from them at particular ages
- This design allows researchers to observe how early-life factors shape later-life outcomes

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The life course approach

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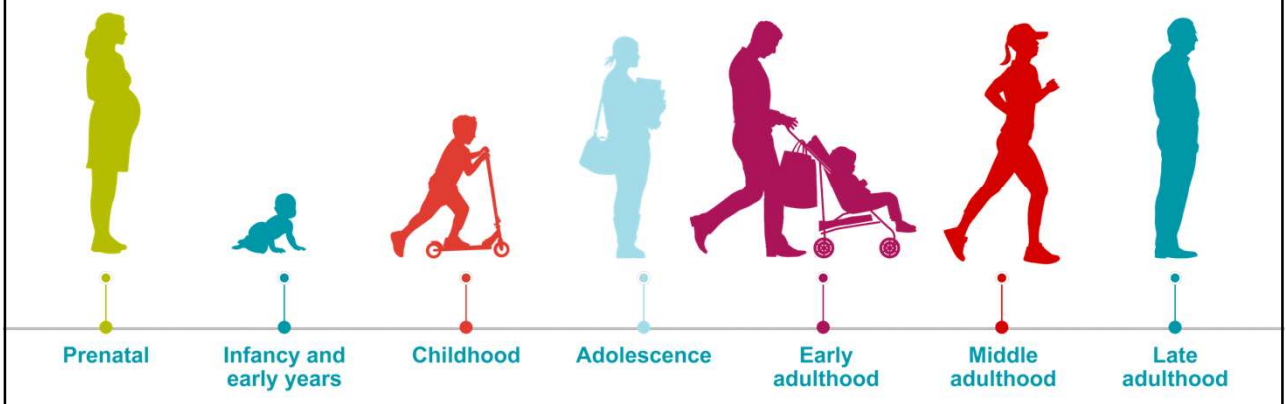

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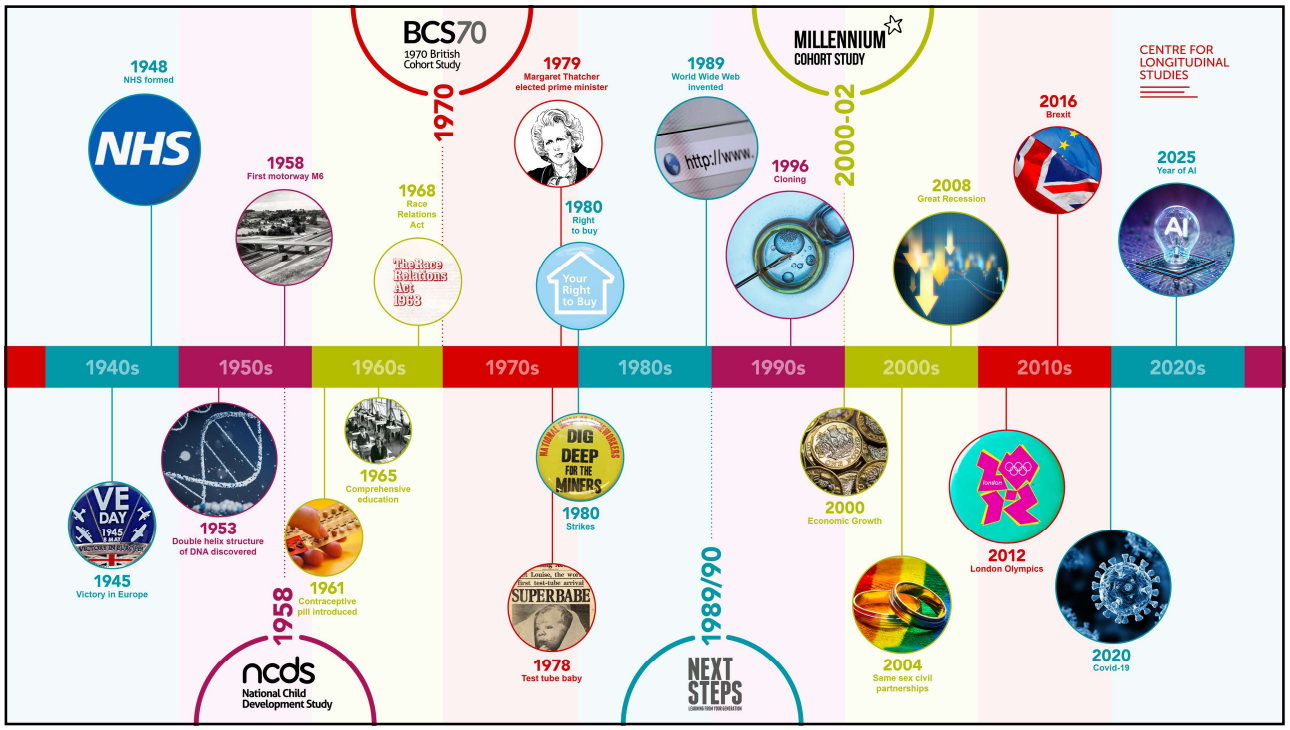
BCS70
1970 British Cohort Study
1970
MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY
2000-02
CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES
1948
NHS formed
NHS
1958
First motorway M6
1968
Race Relations Act
The Race Relations Act 1968
1979
Margaret Thatcher elected prime minister
1980
Right to buy
Your Right to Buy
1989
World Wide Web invented
http://www.
1996
Cloning
2008
Great Recession
2016
Brexit
2025
Year of AI
AI
1940s
1950s
1960s
1970s
1980s
1990s
2000s
2010s
2020s
VE DAY 1945
1945
Victory in Europe
1953
Double helix structure of DNA discovered
1961
Contraceptive pill introduced
1965
Comprehensive education
1958
ncds
National Child Development Study
DIG DEEP FOR THE MINERS
1980
Strikes
SUPERBABE
1978
Test tube baby
1989/90
NEXT STEPS
2000
Economic Growth
2004
Same sex civil partnerships
2012
London Olympics
2020
Covid-19

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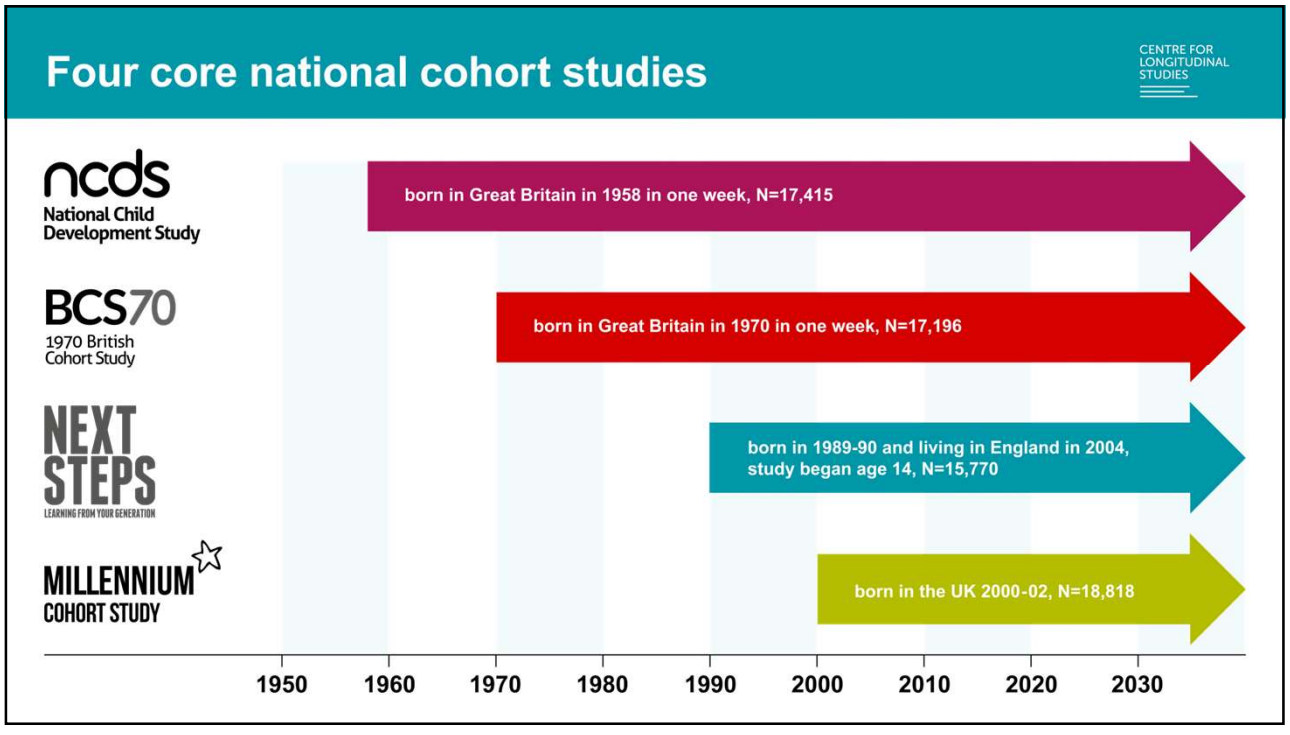
Four core national cohort studies
CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES
ncds
National Child Development Study
born in Great Britain in 1958 in one week, N=17,415
BCS70
1970 British Cohort Study
born in Great Britain in 1970 in one week, N=17,196
NEXT STEPS
LEARNING FROM YOUR GENERATION
born in 1989-90 and living in England in 2004, study began age 14, N=15,770
MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY
born in the UK 2000-02, N=18,818
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020
2030

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Study timelines

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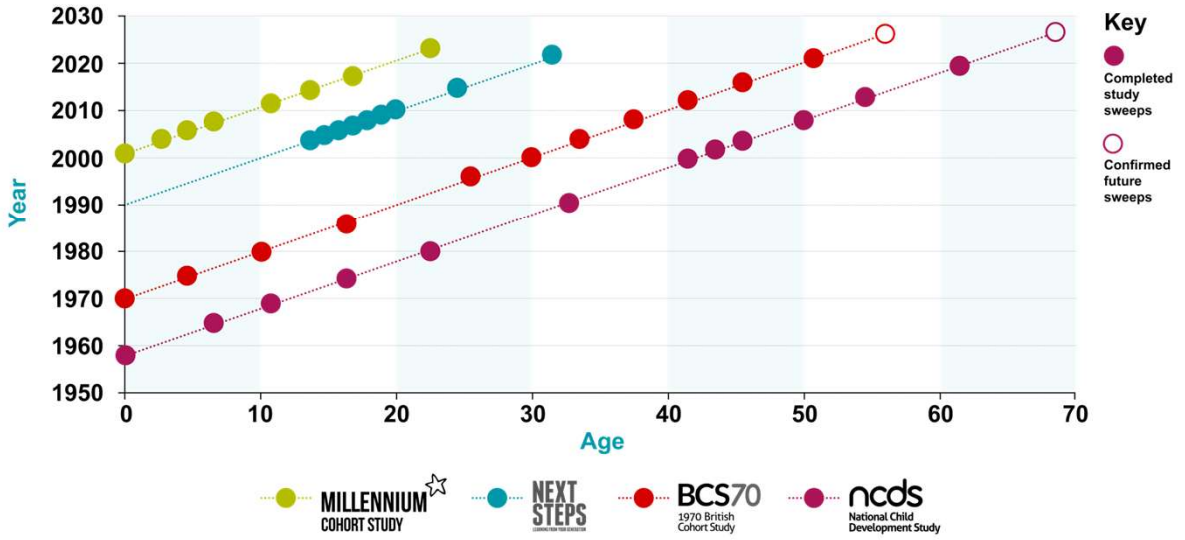

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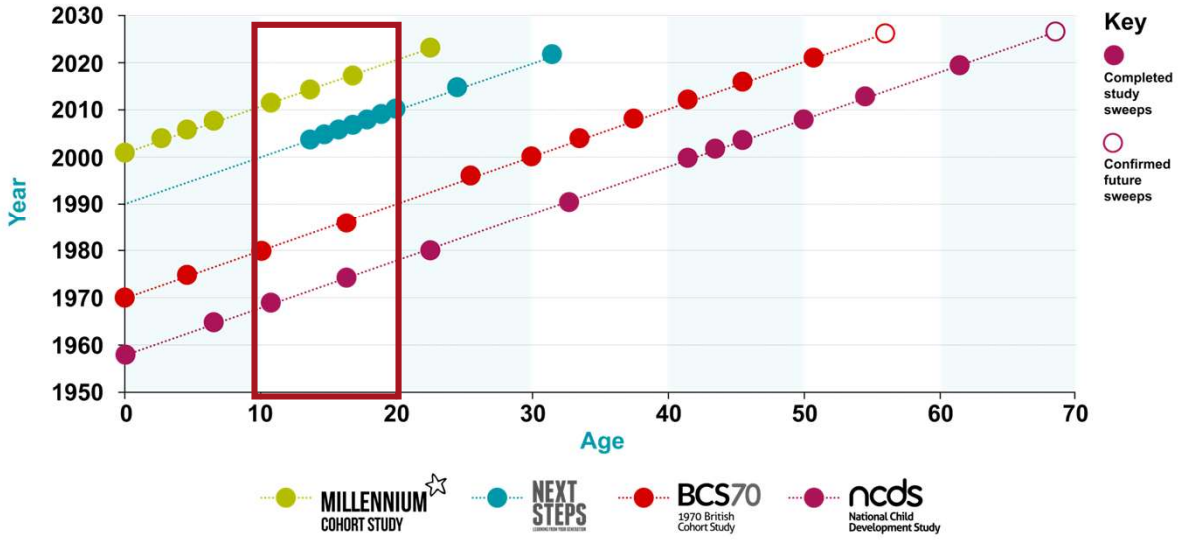
Study timelines

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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Study timelines

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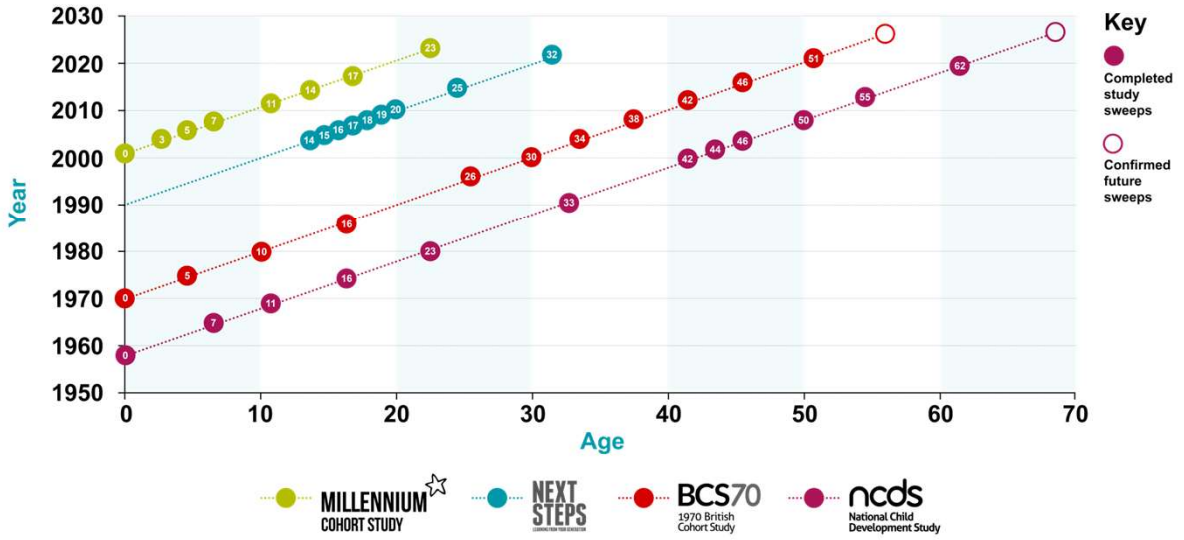

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Types of information collected across life

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Prenatal	Infancy and early years	Childhood	Adolescence	Early adulthood	Middle adulthood	Late adulthood
Pregnancy Birthweight Labour length	Motor skills Play Home and family	Childcare Friendships School	Risky behaviours Aspirations Peers	Work Partnerships Parenthood	Career Wealth Caring responsibility	Retirement Pensions Healthy ageing

Health | Well being | Employment | Education and skills | Family relationships

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NCDS A study of everyone born in one week in 1958 (GB)

	1958	1965	1969	1974	1981	1991	2000	2003	2004	2008	2013	2020/3
	Birth	7	11	16	23	33	42	44	46	50	55	62/65
main respondent	mother	parent cohort member	parent cohort member	parent cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member
others		school	school	school	exam results [16/18]	children (1 in 3) partner						
health	medical birthweight	medical height/ weight conditions illnesses accidents vaccinations	medical height/ weight conditions illnesses accidents vaccinations puberty	medical height/ weight conditions, illnesses, accidents vaccinations puberty smoking alcohol	height/ weight conditions illnesses accidents smoking alcohol exercise	height/ weight conditions illnesses accidents smoking alcohol exercise	height/ weight conditions, illnesses, accidents diet smoking alcohol drugs exercise	biomedical height/ weight blood - DNA	conditions, illnesses smoking alcohol exercise	height/ weight conditions, illnesses smoking alcohol exercise	height/ weight conditions, illnesses smoking alcohol	biomedical height/ weight blood - DNA
survey instruments		cognitive mental h.	cognitive mental h. motor coord essays	cognitive mental h. motor coord	mental h.	cognitive [c]* mental h. *c=children	mental h.			cognitive mental h.		cognitive mental h.
linked data				area of residence (census)	area of residence (census)		Linked health data (HES)	Linked health data (HES)	Linked health data (HES)	consent for economic records Linked HES	Linked health data (HES)	consent for health & economic records
response rate	17,415	15,425	15,337	14,654	12,537	11,469	11,419	9,377	9,534	9,790	9,137	8,405

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BCS70 A study of everyone born in one week in 1970 (GB)

	1970	1975	1980	1986	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	2021-24
	Birth	5	10	16	26 ✉	30	34	38	42	46	51-53
main respondent	mother	parent cohort member	parent cohort member	parent cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member	cohort member
others		school	school	school			children (1 in 2)				
health	medical birthweight	medical height/ weight, vaccinations conditions illnesses accidents	medical height/ weight vaccinations conditions illnesses accidents	medical height/ weight blood pressure conditions illnesses accidents alcohol smoking drugs motor coord diet	height/ weight conditions, illnesses, accidents alcohol smoking	height/ weight conditions, illnesses, accidents alcohol smoking drugs exercise diet	height/ weight conditions illnesses accident alcohol smoking exercise diet	conditions illnesses smoking	height/ weight conditions illnesses accidents alcohol smoking exercise	biomedical height/ weight conditions illnesses accidents alcohol smoking exercise blood (DNA) accelerometer	height/ weight conditions illnesses accidents alcohol smoking exercise
survey instruments		cognitive mental h.	cognitive mental h. dyslexia	cognitive mental h. time use diary diet diary	mental h.	mental h.	cognitive [c]* mental h. dyslexia basic skills *c=children		cognitive mental h.	cognitive mental h. diet diary	cognitive mental h.
linked data					HES	HES	HES	HES	HES, consent to health & econ		consent to health & econ
response rate	17,196 16,568* *(ex NI)	13,135	14,875	11,622	9,003	11,261	9,665	8,874	9,841	8,851	8,016

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Next Steps A study of people born in 1989/90

	2004 Age 14	2005 Age 15	2006 Age 16	2007 Age 17	2008 Age 18	2009 Age 19	2010 Age 20		2015 Age 25	2022 Age 32
Main respondent	Cohort member	Cohort member	Cohort member	Cohort member	Cohort member	Cohort member	Cohort member		Cohort member	Cohort member
Others	Parents	Parents	Parents	Parents						
Featured measures	Education	Education, quals	Education, quals	Education, subjects studied, quals, jobs & training, NEET	Education, subjects studied, quals, jobs & training, NEET, social attitudes	Education, subjects studied, quals, jobs & training, NEET	Education, subjects studied, quals, jobs & training, NEET, social attitudes		Education, subjects studied, quals, jobs & training,	Education, subjects studied, quals, jobs and training, NEET, social attitudes
Health	Birth weight, illness, smoking, alc, drugs, exercise	Illness, smoking, alcohol, drugs, exercise	Illness, smoking, alcohol, drugs, exercise	Birth weight, illnesses, alcohol, drugs, exercise		Illness, alcohol, drugs, exercise	Illness, alcohol, drugs, exercise		Height, weight, illness, smoking, alcohol, drugs, exercise	Height, weight, illness, sexual health, vaccinations, smoking, alcohol, drugs, exercise, diet, coronavirus
Survey instruments		Mental health, non-cognitive skills		Mental health, non-cognitive skills			Non-cognitive skills		Mental health, alcohol, non-cognitive skills	Cognition, mental health, personality, alcohol, non-cognitive skills, social provision, & genetic data
Linked data	NPD, HES	NPD, HES	NPD, HES	NPD, ILR, HES	HES	HES	HES		HES, Student Loans Co + consents to econ, health, ed	Consents to econ, health, ed.
Sample & RR	15,770 (74%)	13,539 (86%)	12,439 (92%)	11,801 (92%)	10,430 (89%)	9,799 (87%)	8,682 (90%)		7,707 (51%)	7,279 (53%)

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MCS A study of people born between 2000-2002

	2001-03 9 months	2003-05 3	2006 5	2008 7	2012-13 11	2015-16 14	2018-19 17	2023-24 23
main respondent	Parents	Parents / Cohort member	Parents / Cohort member	Parents / Cohort member	Parents / Cohort member	Parents / Cohort member	Parents /Cohort member	Cohort member
others		Older siblings (England)	Teachers, Siblings	Teachers	Teachers		Parents	Parents (Ongoing)
Health	Birth weight	Height, weight, conditions, illnesses, accidents, vaccinations	Height, weight, waist size, conditions, illnesses, accidents, vaccinations	Height, weight, waist size, body fat, conditions, illnesses, accidents, vaccinations	Height, weight, body fat conditions, illnesses, accidents, diet, puberty	Height, weight, body fat, puberty, diet, sleep, conditions, illnesses, vaccinations, alcohol, smoking	Conditions, illnesses, physical activity, puberty, sexual health, alcohol, smoking, drugs	Conditions, illnesses
Survey instruments	Developmental milestones	Cognition and mental health, developmental milestones	Cognition and mental health	Cognition and mental health, activity monitor	Cognition and mental health	Cognition and mental health, time use diaries, accelerometer, genetic data (trios)	Cognition and mental health	Cognition and mental health
linked admin data	Health, Geographical Identifiers, Air Pollution, Green Space, Birth Registration, Maternity Hospital Episodes, Hospital of Birth	Health, Education, Geographical Identifiers, Air Pollution, Green Space	Health, Education, Geographical Identifiers, Air Pollution, Green Space, Distances to Preferred Schools, Air Pollution, School Inspections	Health, Education, Geographical Identifiers, Points of Interest, Air Pollution, School Inspections, Green Space	Health, Education, Geographical Identifiers, Points of Interest, Air Pollution, School Inspections, Green Space, Distances to Grammar Schools	Health, Education, Geographical Identifiers, Points of Interest, Air Pollution, School Inspections, Green Space, Polygenic Indices	Health, Education, Geographical Identifiers, School Inspections	Health, Education, Geographical Identifiers, COVID-19 antibodies
sample	18,818 from 18,552 families	15,808 from 15,590 families	15,460 from 15,246 families	14,043 from 13,857 families	13,469 from 13,287 families	11,872 from 11,726 families	10,757 from 10,625 families	9,645 cohort members

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Other data enhancements in the birth cohorts

- Genetic data in the NCDS, BCS70, Next Steps and MCS
  - MCS - Trios (cohort, mother, father)
- Linked administrative data
  - Health and education
  - Consent: Employment (all) and crime (Next Steps, MCS)
- Geographical data
  - e.g. electoral wards, output areas, Points of Interest etc
- Harmonised datasets across the cohorts
  - Socio-economic, BMI, mental health, child environment
- COVID-19 online surveys
  - Possible impacts of pandemic on multiple aspects of life
  - Wide range of topics including family, employment, home schooling, mental health during lockdown and an open question on affects of the pandemic

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Our new studies

Generation New Era (fieldwork in late 2026)
- Generation New Era is a new UK-wide birth cohort study aiming to follow the lives of 30,000 children born in 2026, and their families.
- The first sweep of data collection will take place when the child is 9-10 months old, beginning in late 2026

Early Life Cohort Feasibility Study (fieldwork completed in 2023-24)
- ESRC funded study following a cohort of several thousand babies born in the UK in 2022-23
- Data collection took place when babies were 9-12 months. Data available at UK Data Service

Children of the 2020s Study (fieldwork began in 2022)
- DfE commissioned study following a cohort of babies born in England Sept-Nov 2021(@ 8,500 families).
- Wave 1 data (nine months) available now from ONS Secure Research Service, Wave 2 (two years) to be deposited soon

COVID Social Mobility and Opportunities study (fieldwork began in 2021)
- A UKRI funded study following over 13,000 young people (in Year 11 in the academic year 2020-21)
- Wave 1 and Wave 2 data available from the UK Data Service

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The contents of the cohort studies

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Subject areas

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- Physical health
- Mental health & Wellbeing
- Family and relationships
- Earnings and income
- Education, ability and cognitive measures

…but there are many more

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Physical Health

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Physical health measures	NCDS 58	BCS 70	NS 89	MCS 01
Self assessed general health	7, 11,16, 33, 44, 46, 50, 55, 62	5, 10, 16, 34, 42, 46, 51	25, 32	3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 17
BMI, Height, Weight	7,11, 16, 23, 33, 42, 44, 50, 55, 62	10,16, 26, 30, 34, 42, 46, 51	25, 32	3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 17
Hospital Episodes Statistics:	England & Scotland ✓	England & Scotland ✓	England ✓	Scotland & Wales ✓
DNA /biomarkers	44 (available), 62	46 (available)	32 (available)	14 (available)
Physical activity (leisure time)	11, 16, 23, 33, 42, 44, 50, 55, 62	5, 10, 16, 34, 42, 46, 51	20, 25, 32	5, 7, 11, 14, 17
Diet related measures (intake, overeating)	7, 33, 42, 44, 62	10, 16, 30, 34, 42, 46, 51	25, 32	9 months, 3, 7, 11, 14, 17
Anthropometry (e.g. blood pressure, body fat, grip strength, vision, motor skills)	7, 11, 16, 44, 62	10, 16, 46 + accelerometry	-	3, 7, 11, 14, 17 (10, 14 acceler)
Medical conditions/ *long term illness	0, 7, 11, 26, 23, 33, 42, 44, 46, 50, 55, 62	0, 5, 10, 16, 26, 30, 34, 38, 42, 46, 51	14*, 15*, 16*, 17*, 18*, 19*, 20*, 25*, 32	9m, 3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 17
Drugs & alcohol consumption	16, 23, 33, 42, 44, 46, 50, 55, 62	16, 26, 30, 34, 42, 46, 51	14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 32	11, 14, 17

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Physical health measures	NCDS 58	BCS 70	NS 89	MCS 01
Self assessed general health	7, 11,16, 33, 44, 46, 50, 55, 62	5, 10, 16, 34, 42, 46, 51	25, 32	3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 17
BMI, Height, Weight	7,11, 16, 23, 33, 42, 44, 50, 55, 62	10,16, 26, 30, 34, 42, 46, 51	25, 32	3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 17
Hospital Episodes Statistics:	England & Scotland ✓	England & Scotland ✓	England ✓	Scotland & Wales ✓
DNA /biomarkers	44 (available), 62	46 (available)	32 (available)	14 (available)
Physical activity (leisure time)	11, 16, 23, 33, 42, 44, 50, 55, 62	5, 10, 16, 34, 42, 46, 51	20, 25, 32	5, 7, 11, 14, 17
Diet related measures (intake, overeating)	7, 33, 42, 44, 62	10, 16, 30, 34, 42, 46, 51	25, 32	9 months, 3, 7, 11, 14, 17
Anthropometry (e.g. blood pressure, body fat, grip strength, vision, motor skills)	7, 11, 16, 44, 62	10, 16, 46 + accelerometry	-	3, 7, 11, 14, 17 (10, 14 acceler)
Medical conditions/ *long term illness	0, 7, 11, 26, 23, 33, 42, 44, 46, 50, 55, 62	0, 5, 10, 16, 26, 30, 34, 38, 42, 46, 51	14*, 15*, 16*, 17*, 18*, 19*, 20*, 25*, 32	9m, 3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 17
Drugs & alcohol consumption	16, 23, 33, 42, 44, 46, 50, 55, 62	16, 26, 30, 34, 42, 46, 51	14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 32	11, 14, 17

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Health measures in COVID-19 web surveys	NCDS 58	BCS 70	NS 89	MCS 01
COVID-19 antibodies	n=3,222	n=2,547	n=1,267	CM Par
Long COVID Symptoms Testing	W3 W1, W2; W1, W2;	W3 W1, W2; W1, W2;	W3 W1, W2; W1, W2;	W3 W1, W2; W1, W2;
COVID presence	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3
Self-related general health	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3
Long-standing health conditions	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3
Disruption to medical appointments	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3
Difficulty obtaining medication	W2, W3	W2, W3	W2, W3	W2, W3
Defined as vulnerable	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3	W1, W2, W3

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More information can be found in this video on the cohort studies through a biomedical science perspective

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Introducing the 1958, 1970, 1989-90 & 2000-01 birth...

CLOSER

320 views • 1 year ago

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSd7ETrQdR0&t=1932s

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Mental Health & Wellbeing

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Mental health & Wellbeing– all cohorts

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- Bristol Social Adjustment Guide (BSAG)
- Conners teachers Hyperactivity Rating Scale (Conn)
- Rutter Behavioural Scale (RUT)
- Child Development Scale (combination of Rutter and Connor) (CDS)
- Strengths and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ)
- Mood and feelings questionnaire (MFQ)
- Malaise inventory (MAL)
- Kessler Scale (4 item) (K4)
- General Health Questionnaire (12-item version) (GHQ-12)
- Short Form Health Survey (SF-36)
- The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWEBS)

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Malaise

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A nine-item Malaise Inventory: a measure of psychological distress

- Do you feel tired most of the time?
- Do you often feel miserable or depressed?
- Do you often get worried about things?
- Do you often get into a violent rage?
- Do you often suddenly become scared for no reason?
- Are you easily upset or irritated?
- Are you constantly keyed up and jittery?
- Does every little thing get on your nerves?
- Does your heart often race like mad?

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Mental health measure	NCDS 58	BCS 70	NS 89	MCS 01
BSAG	7, 11			
Conn		10, 16		
RUT	7, 11, 16, 16	5, 10, 16		
CDS		10		
SDQ				3, 5, 7, 7, 11, 11, 14, 17, 17
MFQ				14
MAL	23, 33, 42, 50, 62	16, 26, 30, 34, 42, 46		
K4/K6		34		17
GHQ-12	42	16, 30	15, 17, 25, 32	
SF-36	50, 62	46		
WEMWEBS	50	42, 46		17
PHQ, GAD	62		32	

Self-report, teacher, parent

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COVID-19 sweeps: All Cohorts

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- **Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2):**
- Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?
  - Little interest or pleasure in doing things
  - Feeling down, depressed or hopeless
- **Generalised-Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2)**
- Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?
  - Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge
  - Not being able to stop or control worrying

  - Not at all – Nearly every day

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More information can be found in this video on mental health in the cohort studies

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Mental health in four British cohort studies:...

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CC

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do4XVUqsPO0&t=1510s

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Wellbeing scales

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Well-being measure	NCDS	BCS70	NS89	MCS01
Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS)	50, 62	42, 46, 51		
Life satisfaction	33, 42, 46, 50, 62	26, 30, 34, 42, 46, 51	20, 25, 32	9 months, 5, 11 , 14, 17
Quality of Life Scale (CASP- 12/6 item)	50, 55, 62			
Self-efficacy	33, 42, 46, 50, 62	26, 30, 34, 42, 51	14	14, 17
Loneliness (UCLA)	COVID sweeps, 62	COVID sweeps, 51	COVID sweeps, 32	COVID sweeps

Parent

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Family and Relationships

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Family and relationships

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- Who is in the household
- Relationship to cohort member
- Age /number of siblings
- Biological, step, adoptive parents
- Age of parents when the cohort member was born
- Fertility intentions
- Pregnancy history
- Partnership formation, cohabitation, marriage, divorce, dissolution, formation

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More information can be found in this video on families in the cohort studies

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Families and relationships in four British cohort studies...

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1/3 recordings

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFkCWC9eJbE

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Education, ability and cognitive measures

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Education	NCDS 58	BCS 70	NS 89	MCS 01
School				
Key stage 1				NPD
Key stage 2			NPD	NPD
Key stage 3			NPD	
GCSE or equivalent (subject and grades) (KS4)	23, 42	32	NPD & self report	NPD & self report
A level or equivalent (KS5)	23, 42	26, 32, 34, 42	NPD & self report	NPD & self report
Study intentions	16	16	14, 15, 16, 17	11, 14
Further education			ILR	
Higher education				
Degree subject	42, 46	38, 42,	20, 25, 32	17
University type	23,33	42.	20, 25, 32	17
Degree grade	42,	38	20, 25, 32	-
Life long learning	62	51	32	

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Cognitive ability in childhood

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- Bracken school readiness (BSRA-R)
- British Ability Scales: verbal similarities, word definitions, matrices, recall of digits, pattern construction, picture similarities, naming vocabulary, word reading
- General Ability Test (GAT)
- Cambridge Neuropsychological Test Automated Battery (CANTAB): Decision making, Working memory
- National Foundation for Education Research (NFER): maths tests, reading comprehension
- Applied Psychology Unit (APU): Vocab test, Maths test
- Number Analogies (GL Assessment)
- Schonell Reading Test; Southgate Group Reading Test; Edinburgh Reading Test; English Picture Vocabulary Test
- Copying Designs Test; Human Figure Drawing; Complete a Profile Test

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Cognition	NCDS 58	BCS 70	NS 89	MCS 01
Developmental milestones		22 months*, 42 months*		9 months
School readiness (BSRA-R)				3
Verbal reasoning	11	10		11
Non-verbal reasoning	11	10,16		5
Verbal skills (i.e. reading, comprehension, vocabulary, literacy)	7,11,16,37*, 62	5,10,16,21*,34,42, 51		3,5,7,14
Mathematics and numeracy	7,11,16,37*	10,16,21*,34		7,17
Visual/spatial processing	7	5		5,7
Decision making				11,14
Memory (short-term, long-term, spatial, working)	50, 62	10,46, 51	32	11
Processing speed	50, 62	46, 51		

* sub-sample

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Occupation, earnings and income

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Occupation, earnings and income	NCDS 58	BCS 70	NS 89	MCS 01
Earnings from work (CM and parents)	7, 11, 16, 23, 33, 42, 46, 50, 55, 62	10, 16, 26, 30, 34, 38, 42, 46, 51	14, 15, 16, 20, 25, 32	3, 7, 11, 14, 17
Income (investments, income support, benefits, etc.)	16, 33, 42, 46, 50, 55, 62	10, 16, 30, 34, 38, 42. 51	14, 15, 16, 17, 18,19, 20, 25, 32	3, 7, 11, 14, 17
Occupation	11, 33, 42, 46, 50, 55, 62	10, 30, 34, 38, 42, 46, 51	14, 15, 16, 17, 18,19, 20, 25, 32	3, 7, 11, 14, 17
Social mobility (generational analysis)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wealth (actual): Housing Financial - Savings - Debt - Pensions	 55, 62 23,33,50, 62 33 62	 42, 51 34, 42, 46, 51 42, 46, 51 51	 32 32 25, 32 32	 11,14 7,11,14 7,11,14 3, 5, 7, 11, 14

Self-report, parents

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How to search these resources

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

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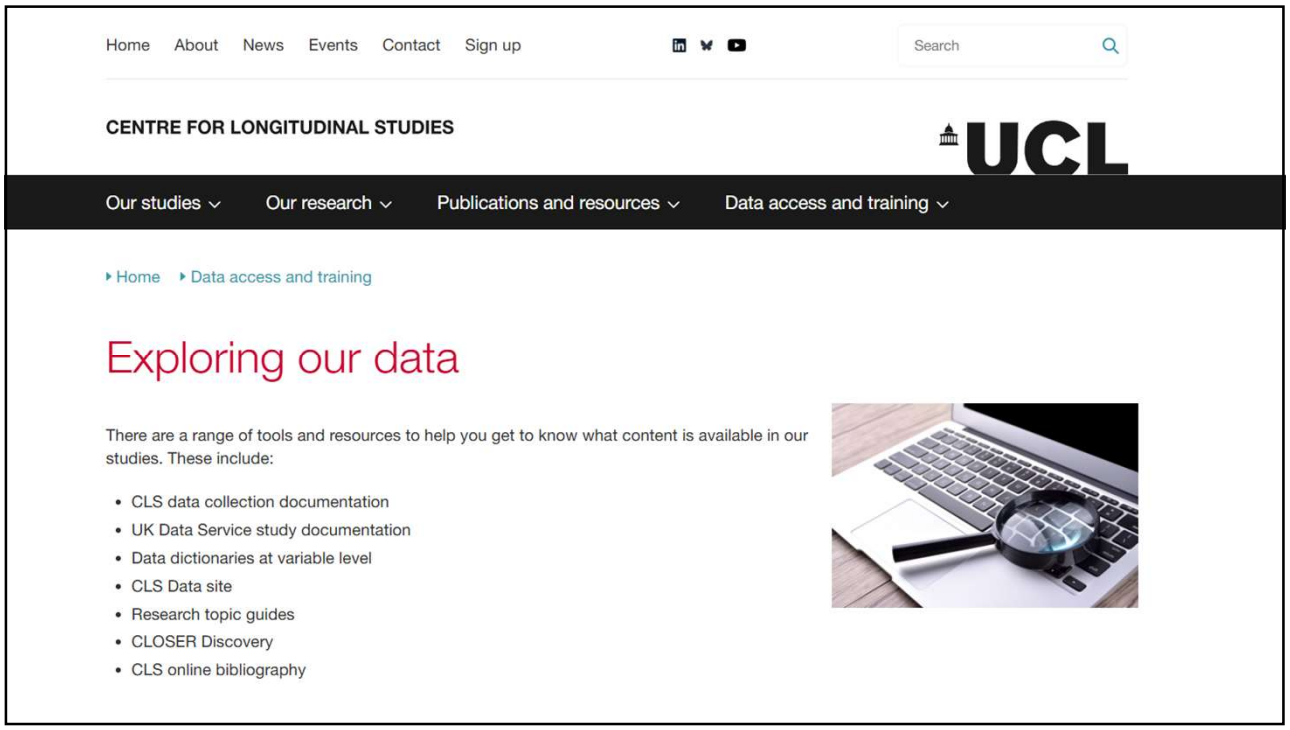

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Data Dictionaries

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- NCDS Data Dictionary
- BCS70 Data Dictionary
- Next Steps Data Dictionary
- MCS Data Dictionary

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Data Dictionaries

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Sweep / Year / Age	Dataset name	Topic	Subtopic	Variable label	Value labels	Variable name
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - A childminder	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOd
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - A baby-sitter who comes to the home	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOe
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - Your ex-husband/partner/the child's non	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOf
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - The child's grandparent(s)	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOg
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - Another relative	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOh
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - A friend or neighbour	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOi
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - Any other type of childcare	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOj
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - No answer	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOk
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - Don't know	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOl
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Types of childcare used - Refused	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6CintroYPOm
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Reasons for choosing childcare - Quality of provision	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6iR2YPOa
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Reasons for choosing childcare - Location	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6iR2YPOb
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Reasons for choosing childcare - Availability	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6iR2YPOc
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Reasons for choosing childcare - Cost	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6iR2YPOd
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Reasons for choosing childcare - Trust	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6iR2YPOe
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Reasons for choosing childcare - Other	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6iR2YPOf
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Reasons for choosing childcare - Don't know	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (C	W6iR2YPOg
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Reasons for choosing childcare - Refused	(-997) Script error (-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable	W6iR2YPOh
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Amount of information available about childcare in local area	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (1	W6Info2YP
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Level of knowledge about childcare provided in local area	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (1	W6CCknowlYP
Sweep6 - 2009 - 19 years old	wave_six_lsype_young_person_2020.sav	Family & social networks	Childcare	YP: Quality of childcare in local area	(-92) Refused (-91) Not applicable (-1) Don't know (1	W6CCQualYP

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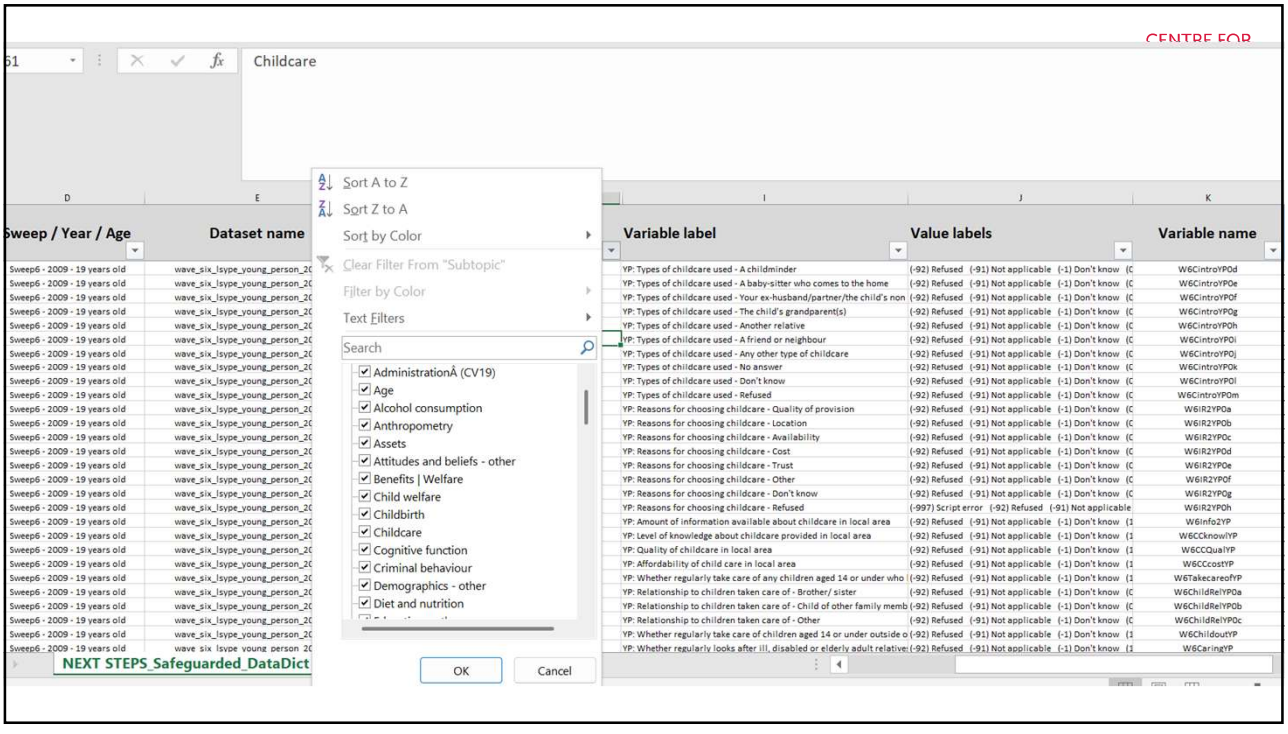

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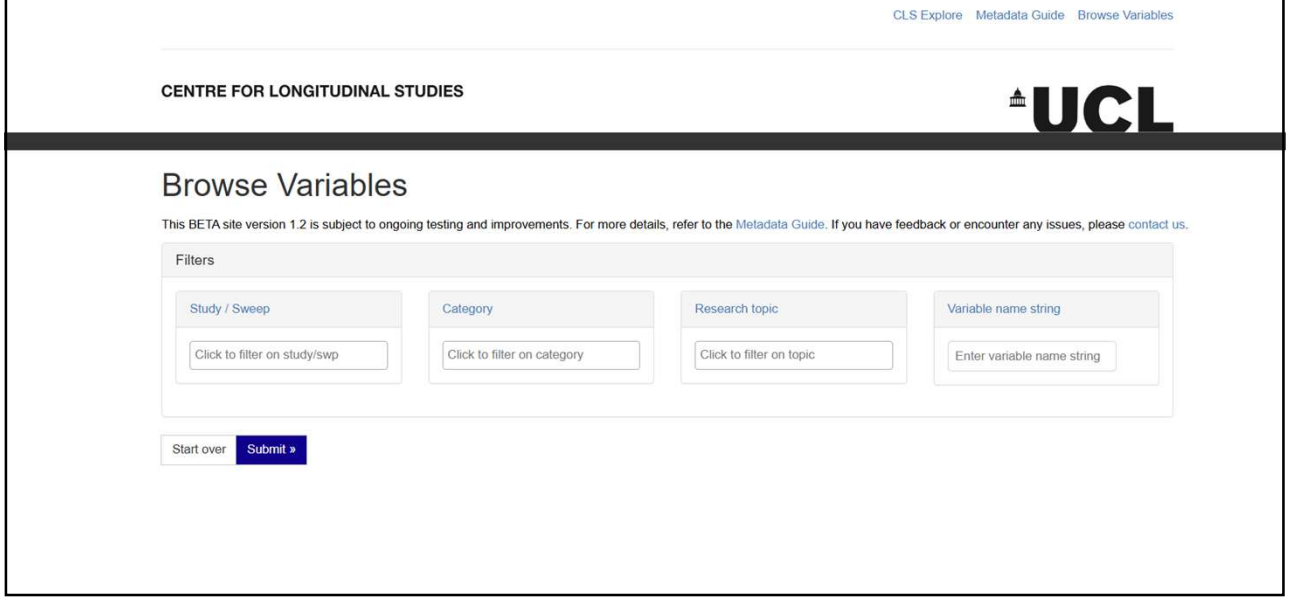
CLS Variable Search tool

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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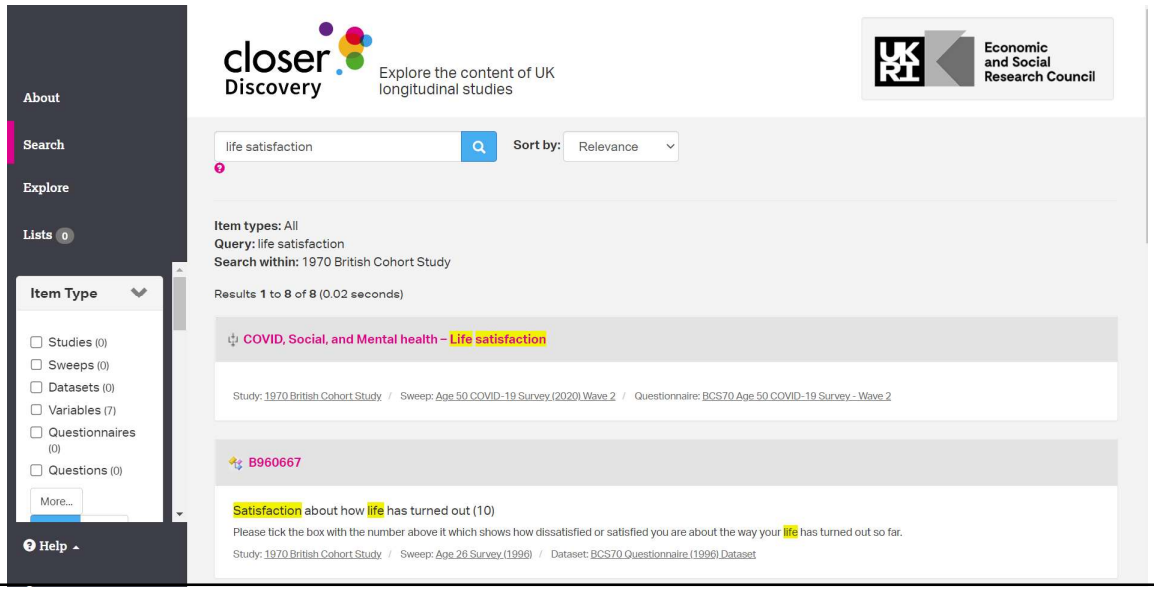
SEARCH Closer Discovery

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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Alternative methods for identifying variables

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- Search in questionnaires (available from UK Data Service or CLS website)
- Or download the actual datasets and search the variables (UK Data Service)
- Descriptions of variables in published papers (most of which can be found in the CLS bibliography)

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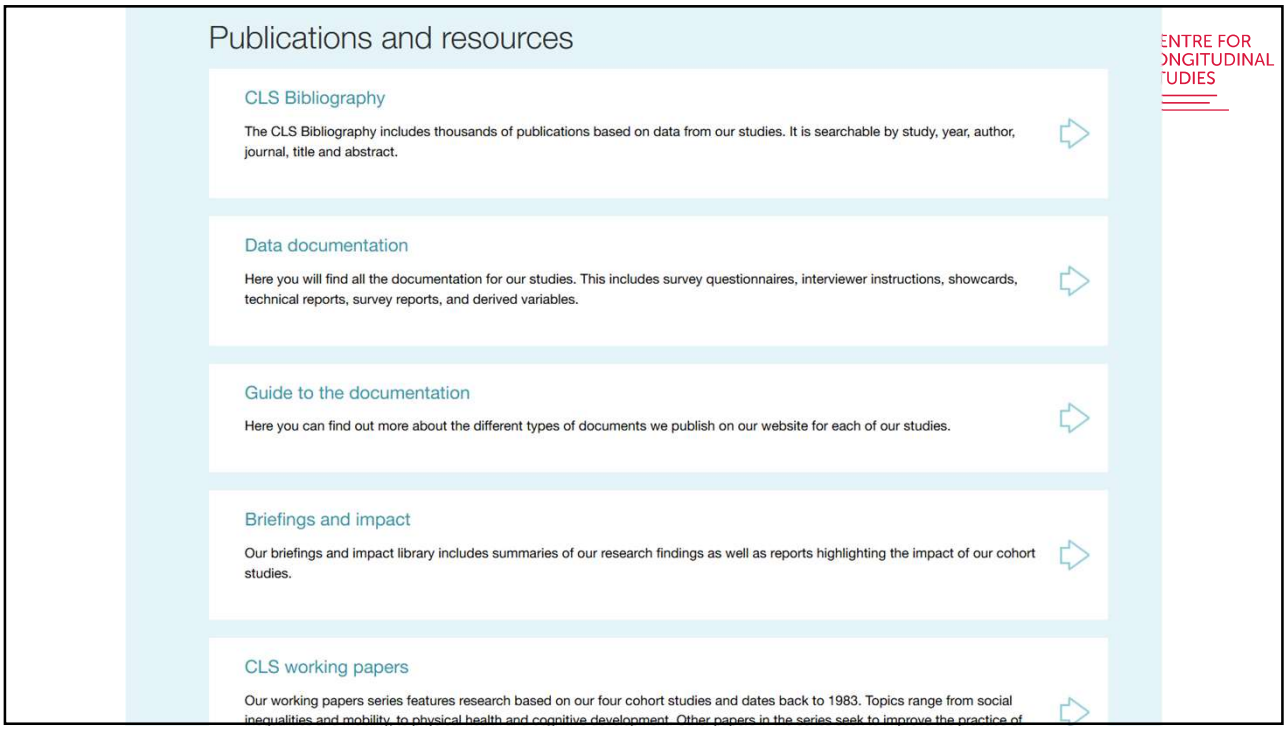

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Additional sources of information

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Physical health

- Fluharty, M., Villadsen, A., Kandola, A., Griffiths, L., O'Neill, D., Pinto Pereira, S., Timpson, N., Cooper, R., Bann, D.(2020). Physical activity across age and study: a guide to data in six CLOSER studies. London, UK: CLOSER.
- Rajatileka S, Groom A, Ring S. Harmonisation of strategies for exploitation of biological sample collections. London, UK: CLOSER; 2017.
- Ruiz M, Benzeval M, Kumari M. A guide to biomarker data in the CLOSER studies: A catalogue across the cohort and longitudinal studies. London, UK: CLOSER; 2017.
- Maddock, J., O'Neill, D., Robinson, S., Crozier, S., Jameson, K., Dodgeon, B., Suderman, M., Emmett, P., Gush, K., Burton, J., Payne, J., Kumari, M., & Hardy, R. (2020). A guide to the dietary data in eight CLOSER studies. London, UK: CLOSER.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- McElroy, E., Villadsen, A., Patalay, P., Goodman, A., Richards, M., Northstone, K., Fearon, P., Tibber, M., Gondek, D., & Ploubidis, G.B. (2020). Harmonisation and Measurement Properties of Mental Health Measures in Six British Cohorts. London, UK: CLOSER.

Cognitive ability

- Moulton, V., McElroy, E., Richards, M., Fitzsimons, E., Northstone, K., Conti, G., Ploubidis, G.B., Sullivan, A., O'Neill, D. (2020). A guide to the cognitive measures in five British birth cohort studies. London, UK: CLOSER.

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Next ….

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Examples of the types of analyses that can be undertaken using CLS cohort data

Richard Silverwood

Professor of Statistics & CLS Chief Statistician

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

27 November 2025

Economic and Social Research Council

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Outline

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

1. Simple analyses
2. Confounder control
3. Repeated measures
4. Cross-cohort analysis

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Simple analyses

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Simple analyses

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- The cohorts provide rich data collected on cohort members over many years/decades, so complex analyses possible.
- But let's start with some simple (more descriptive) examples…

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Simple analyses: Examples

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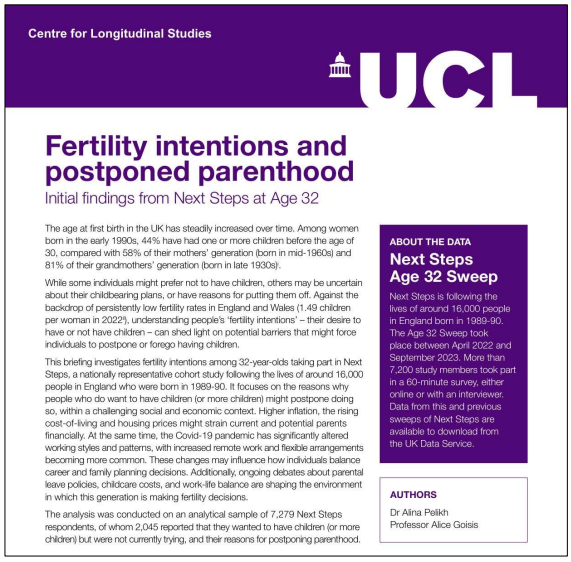

Centre for Longitudinal Studies

UCL

Fertility intentions and postponed parenthood

Initial findings from Next Steps at Age 32

The age at first birth in the UK has steadily increased over time. Among women born in the early 1990s, 44% have had one or more children before the age of 30, compared with 58% of their mothers' generation (born in mid-1960s) and 81% of their grandmothers' generation (born in late 1930s).

While some individuals might prefer not to have children, others may be uncertain about their childbearing plans, or have reasons for putting them off. Against the backdrop of persistently low fertility rates in England and Wales (1.49 children per woman in 2022[1]), understanding people's 'fertility intentions' – their desire to have or not have children – can shed light on potential barriers that might force individuals to postpone or forego having children.

This briefing investigates fertility intentions among 32-year-olds taking part in Next Steps, a nationally representative cohort study following the lives of around 16,000 people in England who were born in 1989-90. It focuses on the reasons why people who do want to have children (or more children) might postpone doing so, within a challenging social and economic context. Higher inflation, the rising cost-of-living and housing prices might strain current and potential parents financially. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly altered working styles and patterns, with increased remote work and flexible arrangements becoming more common. These changes may influence how individuals balance career and family planning decisions. Additionally, ongoing debates about parental leave policies, childcare costs, and work-life balance are shaping the environment in which this generation is making fertility decisions.

The analysis was conducted on an analytical sample of 7,279 Next Steps respondents, of whom 2,045 reported that they wanted to have children (or more children) but were not currently trying, and their reasons for postponing parenthood.

ABOUT THE DATA

Next Steps Age 32 Sweep

Next Steps is following the lives of around 16,000 people in England born in 1989-90. The Age 32 Sweep took place between April 2022 and September 2023. More than 7,200 study members took part in a 60-minute survey, either online or with an interviewer. Data from this and previous sweeps of Next Steps are available to download from the UK Data Service.

AUTHORS

Dr Alina Pelikh
Professor Alice Goisis

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Simple analyses: Examples

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Which of these statements best describes the way you feel about having (more) children?

- I would definitely like (more) children, and I'm currently trying
- I would definitely like (more) children, but I'm not currently trying
- I might like (more) children in the future, I'm not sure yet
- I would definitely not like (more) children
- I don't know
- Prefer not to say

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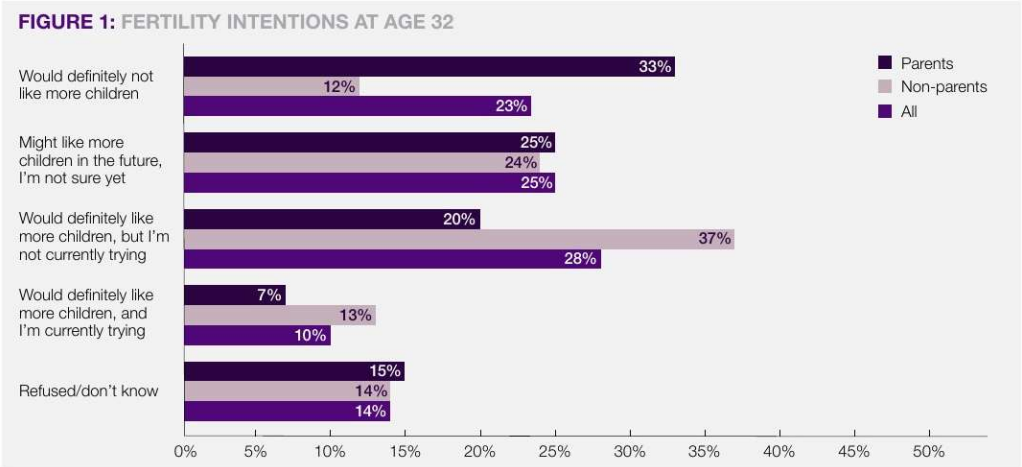
Simple analyses: Examples

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



Simple analyses: Examples

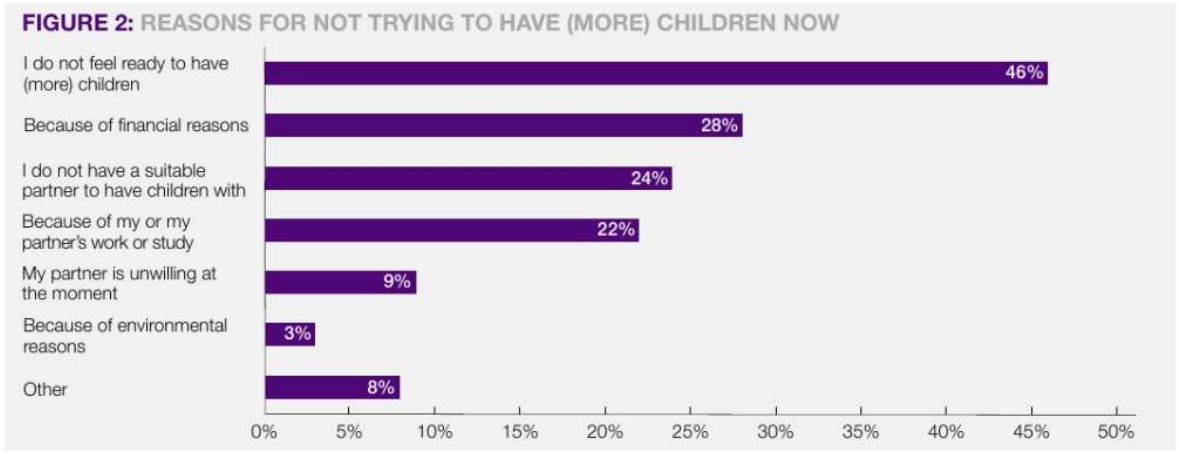
CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Which one of the following best describes the main reason you are not currently trying to have (more) children?

- I do not feel ready to have (more) children yet
- I do not have a suitable partner to have children with
- My partner is unwilling at the moment
- Because of financial reasons
- Because of my work or study
- Because of my partner's work or study
- Because of environmental reasons
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know/Prefer not to say

Simple analyses: Examples

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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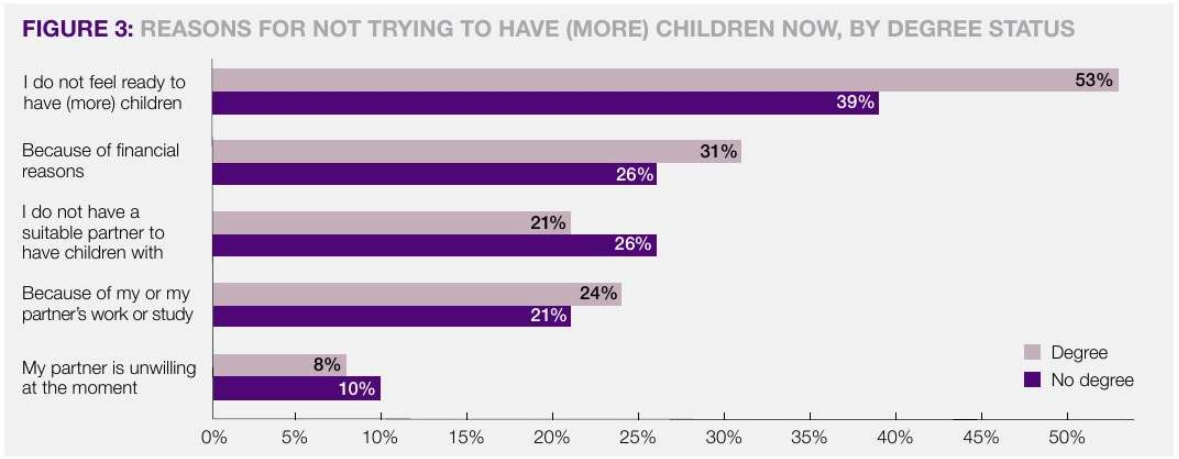
Simple analyses: Examples

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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Simple analyses: Key message

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- Great opportunity for simple (more descriptive) analyses – literally thousands of interesting variables collected in the cohorts.

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Confounder control

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Confounder control

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- If we want an estimated association between an independent variable and a dependent variable to have any causal interpretation, we need to consider confounder control.
- Confounder: A variable that causes non-causal (spurious) association between an independent variable (exposure) and a dependent variable (outcome).

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Confounder control

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

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Confounder control

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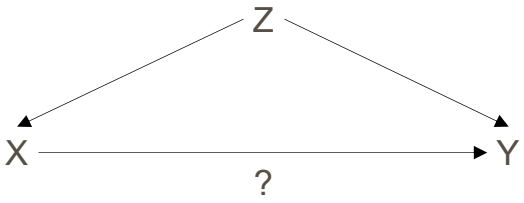

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Confounder control

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

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Confounder control

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

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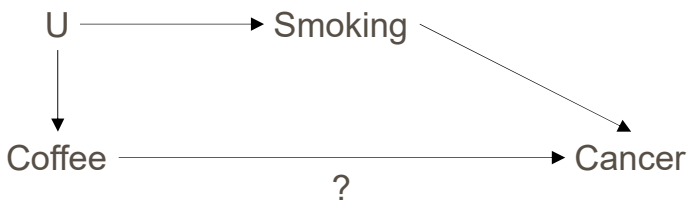

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Confounder control

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- If we want an estimated association between an independent variable and a dependent variable to have any causal interpretation, we need to consider confounder control.
- Confounder: A variable that causes non-causal (spurious) association between an independent variable (exposure) and a dependent variable (outcome).
- Thankfully, the rich data collected on cohort members over many years/decades provide great opportunity for confounder control.

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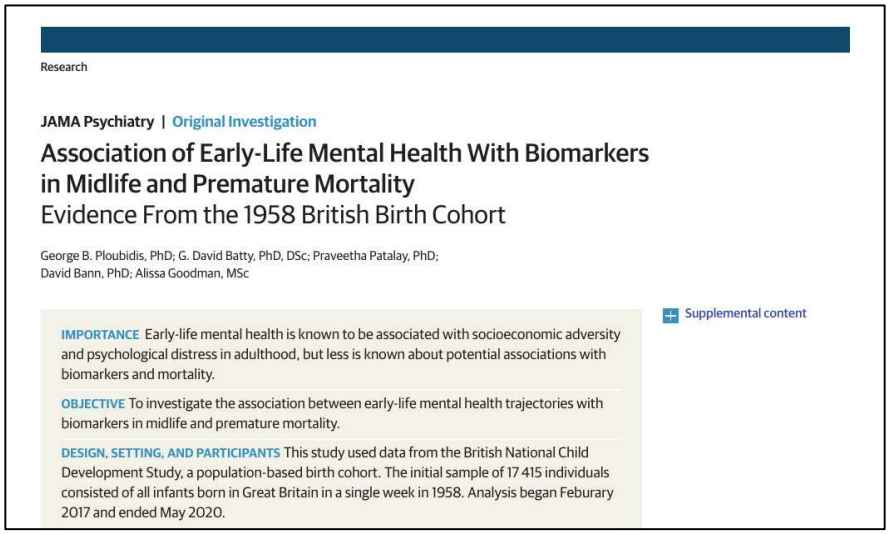
Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



Research

JAMA Psychiatry | Original Investigation

Association of Early-Life Mental Health With Biomarkers in Midlife and Premature Mortality
Evidence From the 1958 British Birth Cohort

George B. Ploubidis, PhD; G. David Batty, PhD, DSc; Praveetha Patalay, PhD; David Bann, PhD; Alissa Goodman, MSc

Supplemental content

IMPORTANCE Early-life mental health is known to be associated with socioeconomic adversity and psychological distress in adulthood, but less is known about potential associations with biomarkers and mortality.

OBJECTIVE To investigate the association between early-life mental health trajectories with biomarkers in midlife and premature mortality.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS This study used data from the British National Child Development Study, a population-based birth cohort. The initial sample of 17 415 individuals consisted of all infants born in Great Britain in a single week in 1958. Analysis began Feburary 2017 and ended May 2020.

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Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Early-life mental health (age 7-16) → Biomarkers in midlife (age 44-45)

?

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Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Early-life mental health (age 7-16)
Rutter Child Scale A at ages 7 and 11 (mothers) and at age 16 (teachers):
- Conduct problems
- Affective symptoms

Early-life mental health (age 7-16) → Biomarkers in midlife (age 44-45)

?

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Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Biomarkers in midlife (age 44-45)
- Fibrinogen
- C-reactive protein
- Glycated haemoglobin
- High-density lipoprotein
- Low-density lipoprotein
- High blood pressure

Early-life mental health (age 7-16) → Biomarkers in midlife (age 44-45)

?

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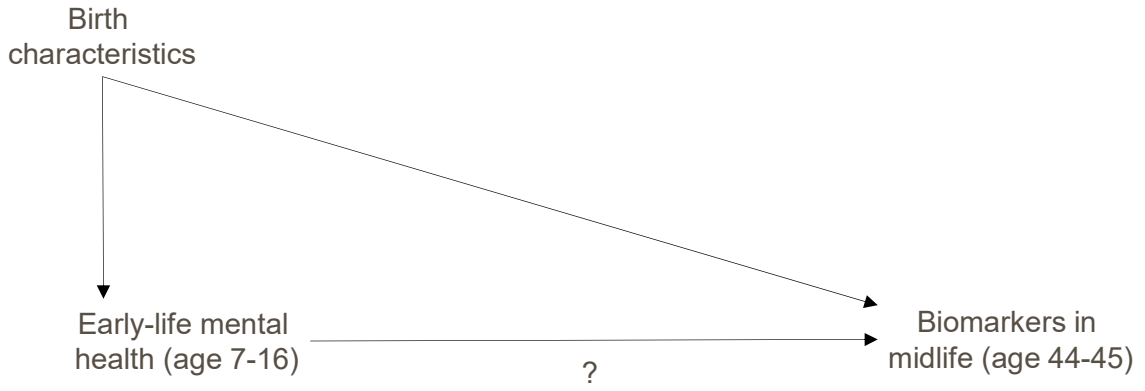
Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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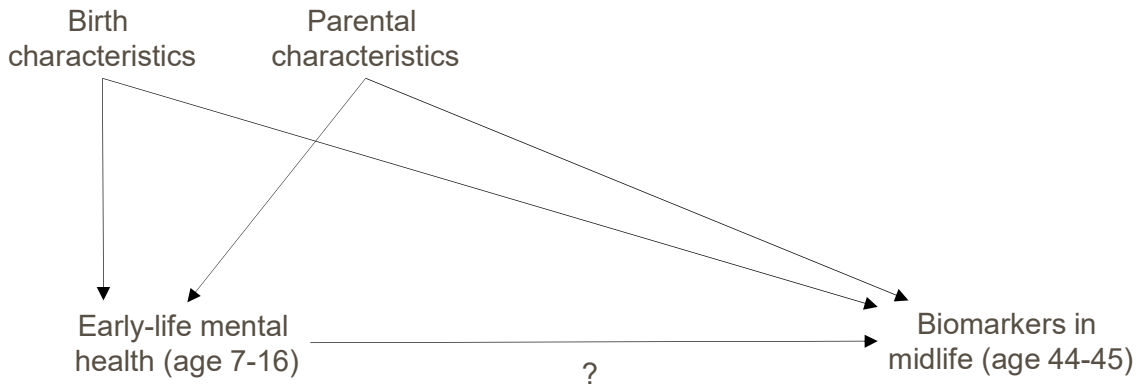
Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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Confounder control: Example

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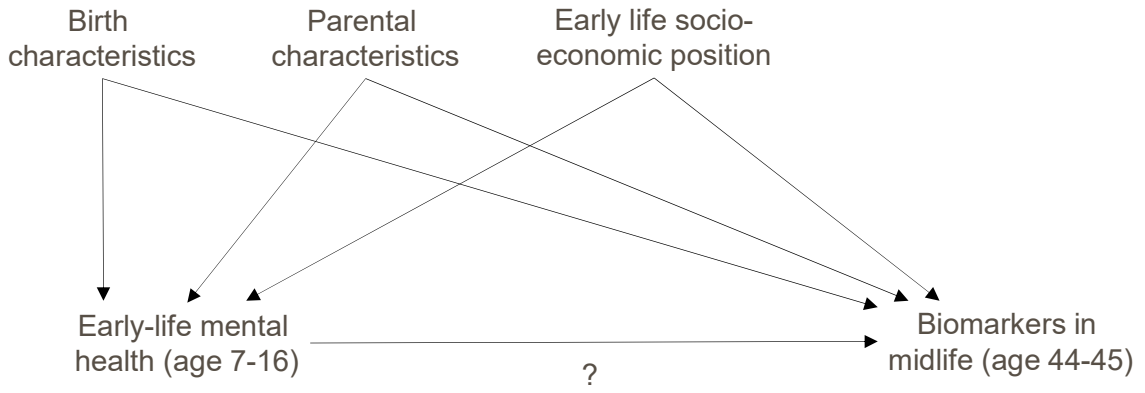

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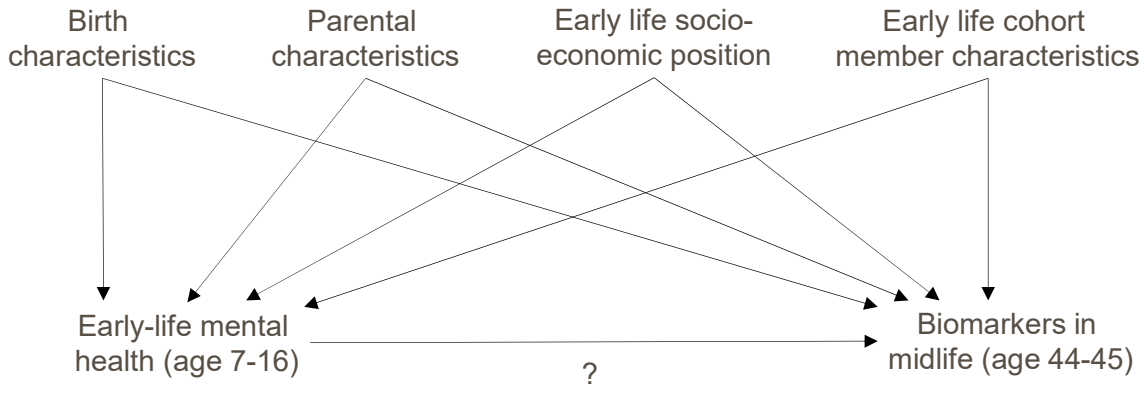
Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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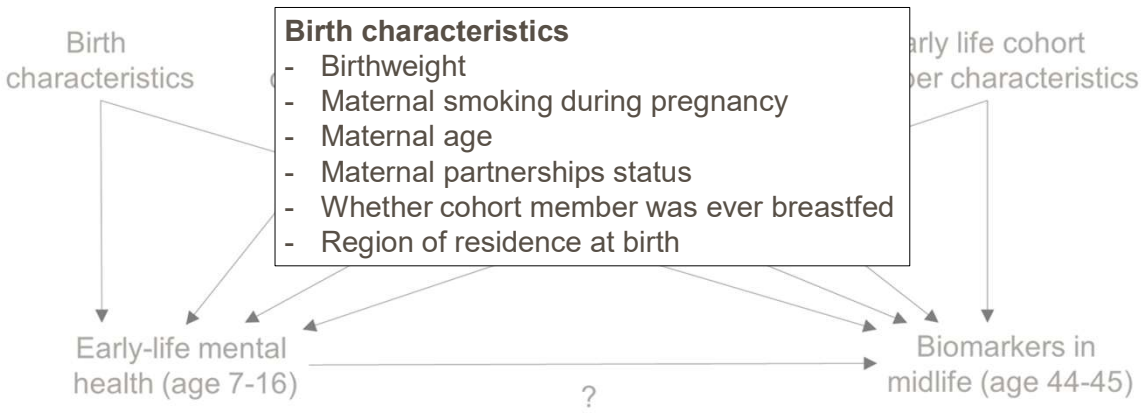
Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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Confounder control: Example

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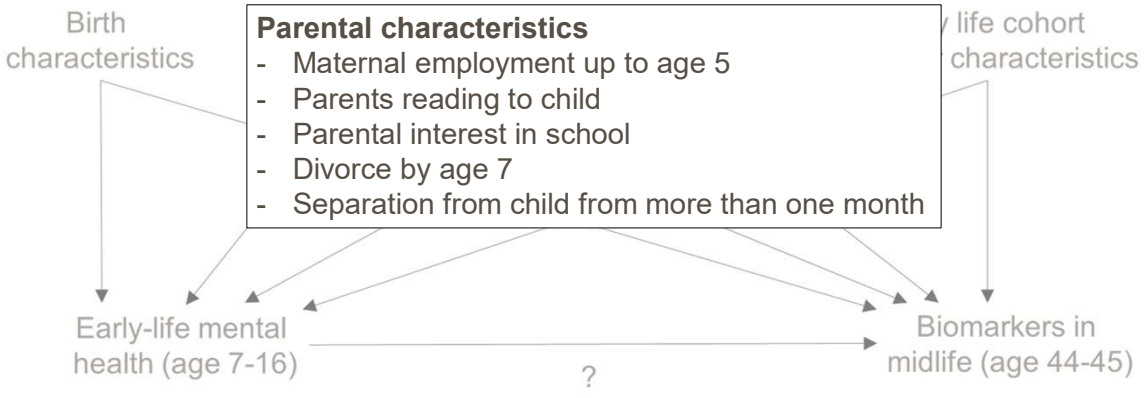

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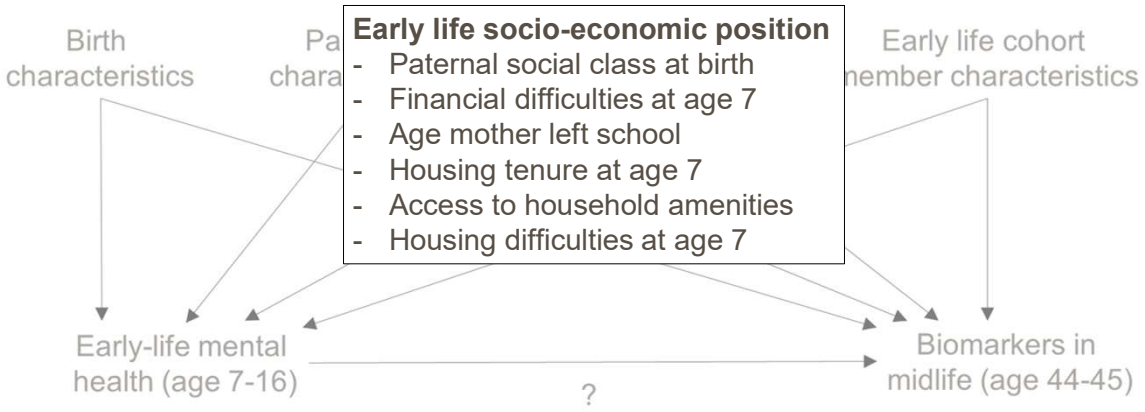
Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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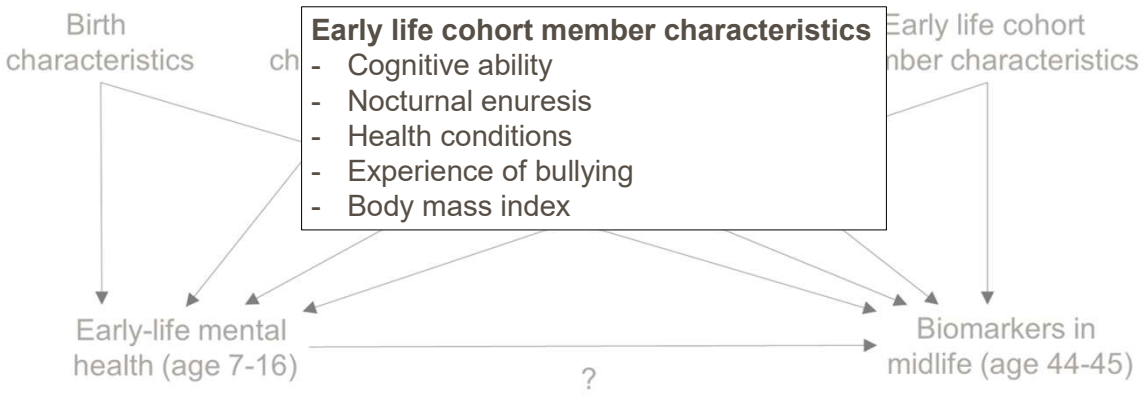
Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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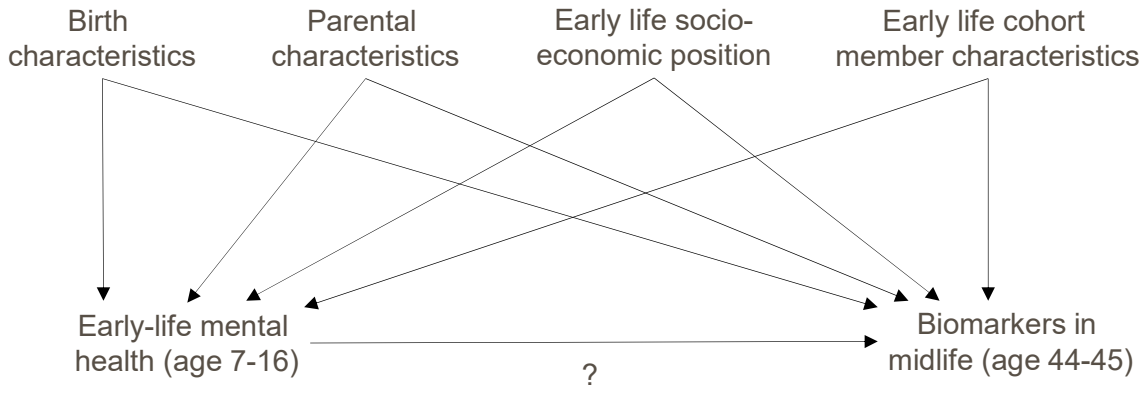
Confounder control: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



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Confounder control: Key message

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- The rich data collected on cohort members over many years/decades provide great opportunity for confounder control.

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Repeated measures

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Repeated measures

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- Long-running cohorts measuring consistent topics over time provide repeated measures of the same measurement/construct.
- Examples:
  - Physical measurements
  - General physical health, mental health, specific diseases/conditions, health behaviours
  - Relationships, marital status, household composition
  - Employment status, occupation, earnings and income
- Allows you to characterise *changes* or *trajectories* over time.

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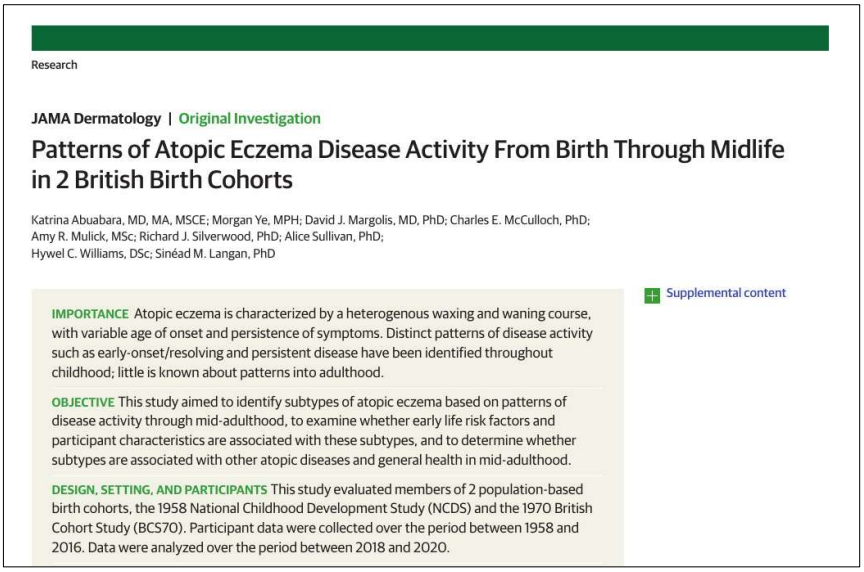
Repeated measures: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



Research

JAMA Dermatology | Original Investigation

Patterns of Atopic Eczema Disease Activity From Birth Through Midlife in 2 British Birth Cohorts

Katrina Abuabara, MD, MA, MSCE; Morgan Ye, MPH; David J. Margolis, MD, PhD; Charles E. McCulloch, PhD; Amy R. Mulick, MSc; Richard J. Silverwood, PhD; Alice Sullivan, PhD; Hywel C. Williams, DSc; Sinéad M. Langan, PhD

Supplemental content

IMPORTANCE Atopic eczema is characterized by a heterogenous waxing and waning course, with variable age of onset and persistence of symptoms. Distinct patterns of disease activity such as early-onset/resolving and persistent disease have been identified throughout childhood; little is known about patterns into adulthood.

OBJECTIVE This study aimed to identify subtypes of atopic eczema based on patterns of disease activity through mid-adulthood, to examine whether early life risk factors and participant characteristics are associated with these subtypes, and to determine whether subtypes are associated with other atopic diseases and general health in mid-adulthood.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS This study evaluated members of 2 population-based birth cohorts, the 1958 National Childhood Development Study (NCDS) and the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70). Participant data were collected over the period between 1958 and 2016. Data were analyzed over the period between 2018 and 2020.

Repeated measures: Example

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- Aimed to identify subtypes of eczema based on patterns of disease activity in NCDS and BCS70.
- Parent-reported or self-reported eczema period prevalence available from standardised questions at ages 7, 11, 16, 23, 42 and 50 in NCDS and ages 5, 10, 16, 26, 30, 34, 38, 42 and 46 in BCS70.
- Then examined whether:
  - early life risk factors associated with eczema subtypes
  - eczema subtypes associated with other atopic diseases and general health in mid-adulthood

Repeated measures: Example

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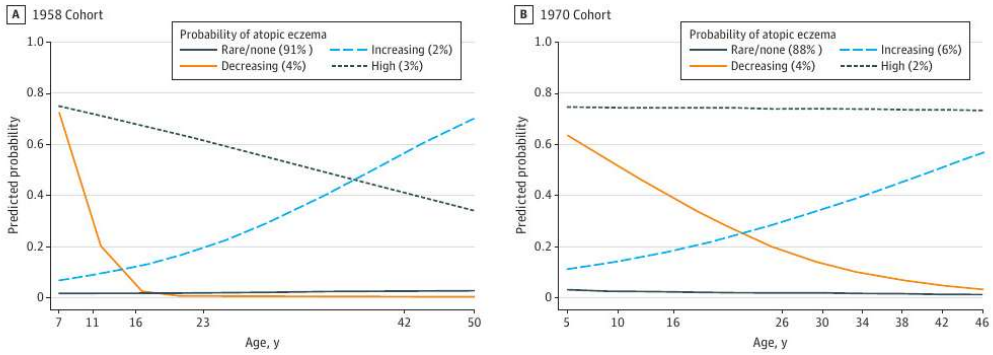
Figure. Estimated Probabilities of Atopic Eczema Symptoms at Each Age for Each Subtype in 4 Class Models From 2 British Birth Cohorts



Predicted probabilities at each age generated from generalized linear and latent mixed models.

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Repeated measures: Key message

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- The CLS cohort studies provide repeated observations of the same measurement/construct.
- Allows you to characterise changes or trajectories over time.

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Cross-cohort analysis

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Cross-cohort analysis

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- Conducting analyses across multiple cohorts allows us to extend our hypotheses: how do things change over time or between cohorts?
- Ideally want to analyse *identical* measures across cohorts.
- In absence of this, need consider how measures can best be *harmonised*.

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Cross-cohort analysis: Example

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Socioeconomic inequalities in childhood and adolescent body-mass index, weight, and height from 1953 to 2015: an analysis of four longitudinal, observational, British birth cohort studies

David Bann, William Johnson, Leah Li, Diana Kuh, Rebecca Hardy

Summary

Background Socioeconomic inequalities in childhood body-mass index (BMI) have been documented in high-income countries; however, uncertainty exists with regard to how they have changed over time, how inequalities in the composite parts (ie, weight and height) of BMI have changed, and whether inequalities differ in magnitude across the outcome distribution. Therefore, we aimed to investigate how socioeconomic inequalities in childhood and adolescent weight, height, and BMI have changed over time in Britain.

Methods We used data from four British longitudinal, observational, birth cohort studies: the 1946 Medical Research Council National Survey of Health and Development (1946 NSHD), 1958 National Child Development Study (1958 NCDS), 1970 British Cohort Study (1970 BCS), and 2001 Millennium Cohort Study (2001 MCS). BMI (kg/m²) was derived in each study from measured weight and height. Childhood socioeconomic position was indicated by the

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Cross-cohort analysis: Example

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- Investigated how socioeconomic inequalities in childhood and adolescent weight, height, and BMI have changed over time.
- Used data from NSHD (BMI at ages 7, 11 and 15), NCDS (7, 11 and 16), BCS70 (10 and 16) and MCS (7, 11 and 14).
- Childhood socioeconomic position indicated by father's occupational social class reported at age 10-11.
- Examined associations between childhood socioeconomic position and BMI to assess socioeconomic inequalities.
- Examined whether inequalities widened or narrowed from childhood to adolescence.

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Cross-cohort analysis: Example

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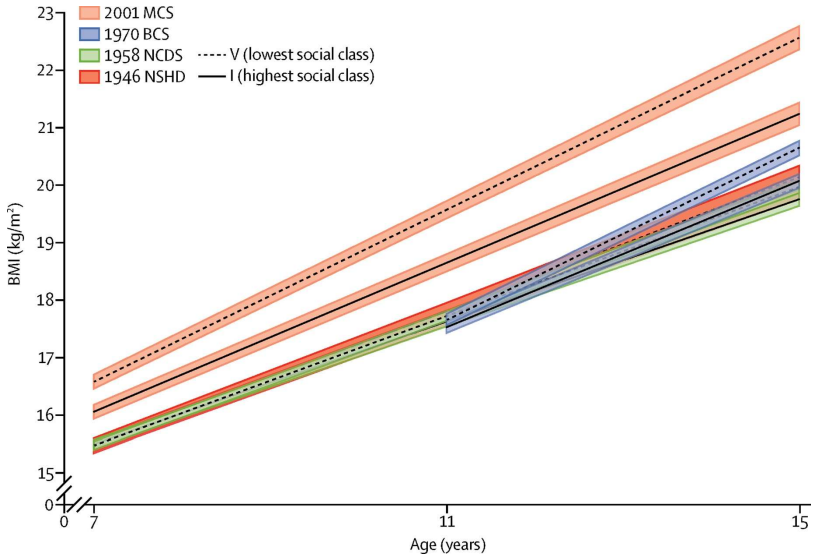

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Cross-cohort analysis: Example

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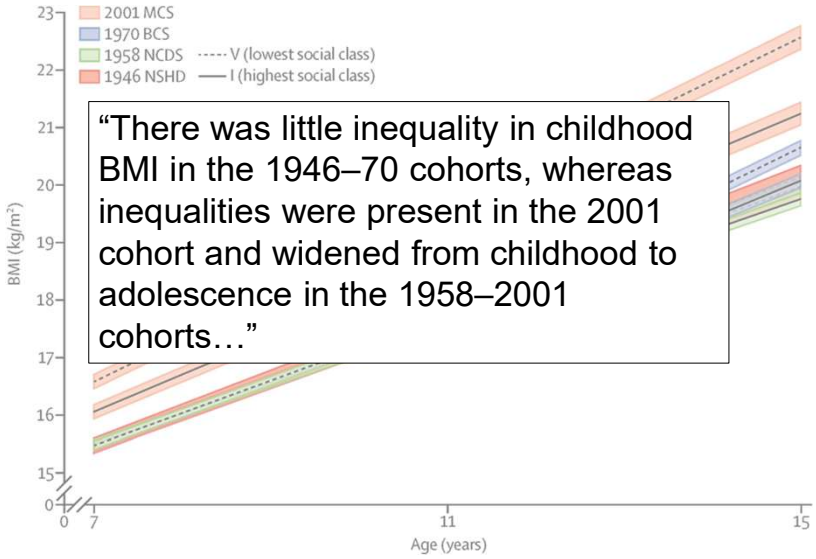

"There was little inequality in childhood BMI in the 1946–70 cohorts, whereas inequalities were present in the 2001 cohort and widened from childhood to adolescence in the 1958–2001 cohorts…"

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Cross-cohort analysis: Key message

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- Conducting analyses across multiple cohorts allows us to extend our hypotheses: how do things change over time or between cohorts?

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Cross-cohort analysis: Key message

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- Conducting analyses across multiple cohorts allows us to extend our hypotheses: how do things change over time or between cohorts?

Discover Social Science and Health

Discover

Perspective

Investigating change across time in prevalence or association: the challenges of cross-study comparative research and possible solutions

David Bann[1] · Liam Wright[1] · Alice Goisis[1] · Rebecca Hardy[2,3] · William Johnson[2] · Jane Maddock[4] · Eoin McElroy[5] · Vanessa Moulton[1] · Praveetha Patalay[1,4] · Shaun Scholes[6] · Richard J. Silverwood[1] · George B. Ploubidis[1] · Dara O'Neill[2]

Received: 9 May 2022 / Accepted: 18 October 2022
Published online: 27 October 2022

Abstract
Cross-study research initiatives to understand change across time are an increasingly prominent component of social and health sciences, yet they present considerable practical, analytical and conceptual challenges. First, we discuss the key challenges to comparative research as a basis for detecting societal change, as well as possible solutions. We focus on studies which investigate changes across time in outcome occurrence or the magnitude and/or direction of associations. We discuss the use and importance of such research, study inclusion, sources of bias and mitigation, and interpretation. Second, we propose a structured framework (a checklist) that is intended to provide guidance for future authors and reviewers. Third, we outline a new open-access teaching resource that offers detailed instruction and reusable analytical syntax to guide newcomers on techniques for conducting comparative analysis and data visualisation (in both R and Stata formats).

Keywords Comparative research · Time trends · Cross-study analysis · Measurement · Missing data

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CLS bibliography

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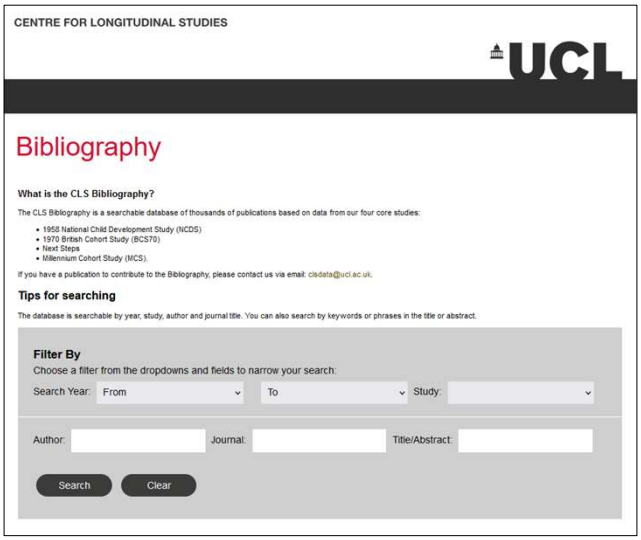

https://www.bibliography.cls.ucl.ac.uk

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UCL

Getting started with the data

Richard Silverwood

Professor of Statistics & CLS Chief Statistician

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27 November 2025

UKRI Economic and Social Research Council

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This section

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- Accessing the data
- Additional resources
- Datasets, key identifiers (IDs)
- Study design and survey variables
- Non-response and attrition
- Where to go for more information

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Accessing the data

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CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Researchers in the UK and around the world can access data from our cohort studies free of charge.

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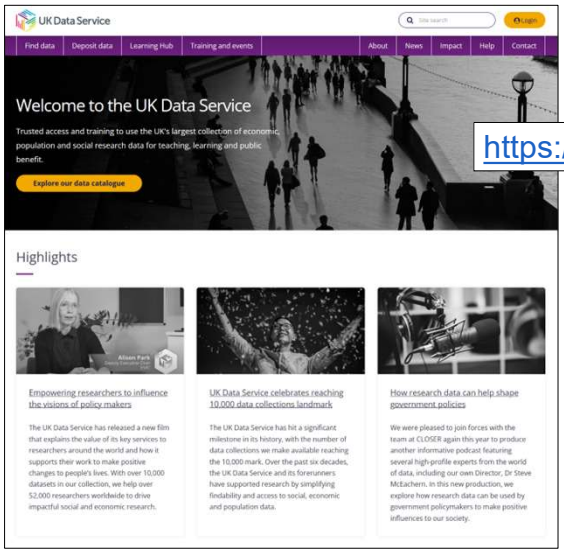
UK Data Service



https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/

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Access to different types of data at UKDS

Safeguarded data: End User Licence (EUL)	Special safeguarded data: Special Licence (SL)	Controlled data: Secure Access Licence (SA)
• Low level of sensitivity and disclosivity. • Most of our data are available under this licence. • Application approved directly by UKDS. • Download data from UKDS.	• Moderately sensitive or disclosive data. • Application approved by CLS. • Download data from UKDS.	• The most sensitive and/or potentially disclosive data. • Application approved by CLS. • Attend specialised training. • Access via UKDS SecureLab.

More information: https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/data-access-training/data-access/

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Logging in to UKDS

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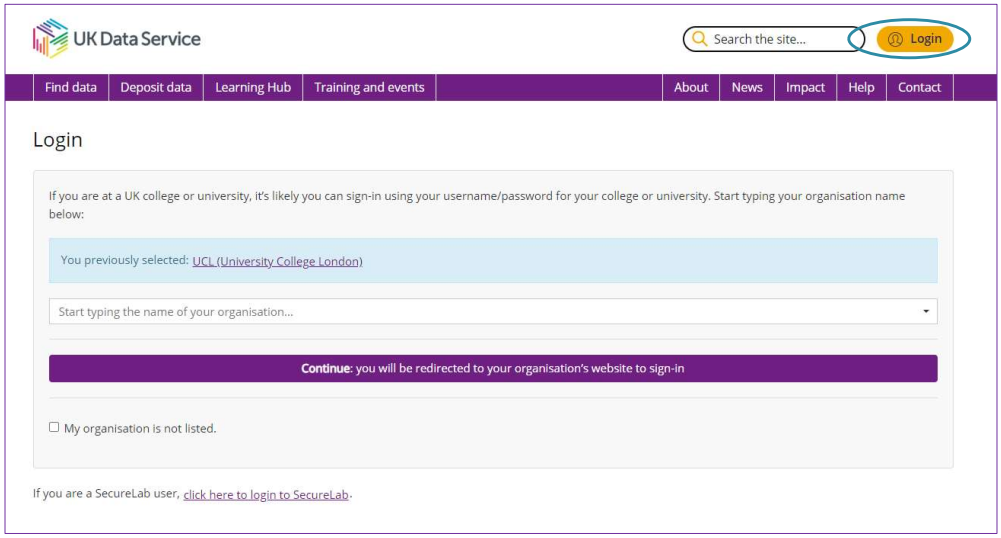

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CLS cohort data at UKDS

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Links to the relevant area of UKDS for each study:

- 1958 National Child Development Study
- 1970 British Cohort Study
- Next Steps
- Millennium Cohort Study

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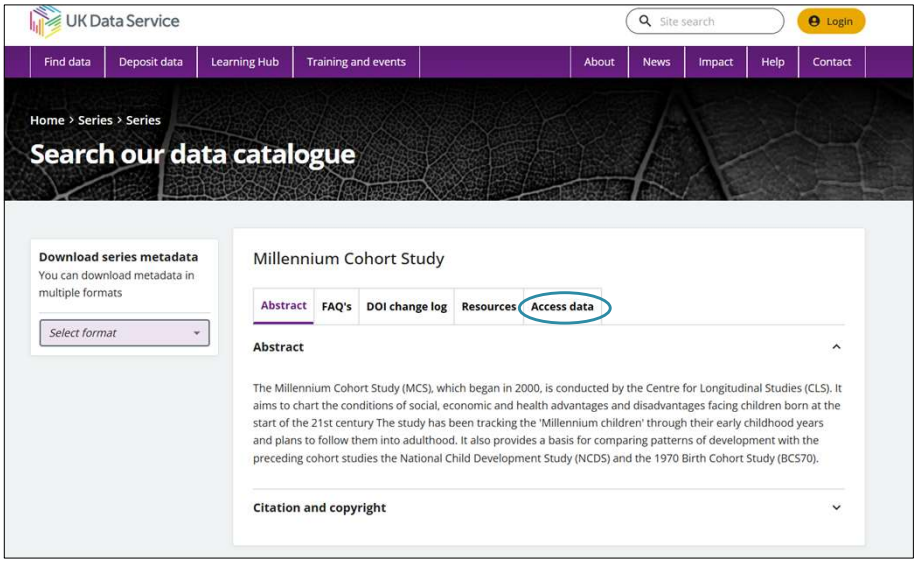
Accessing CLS cohort data



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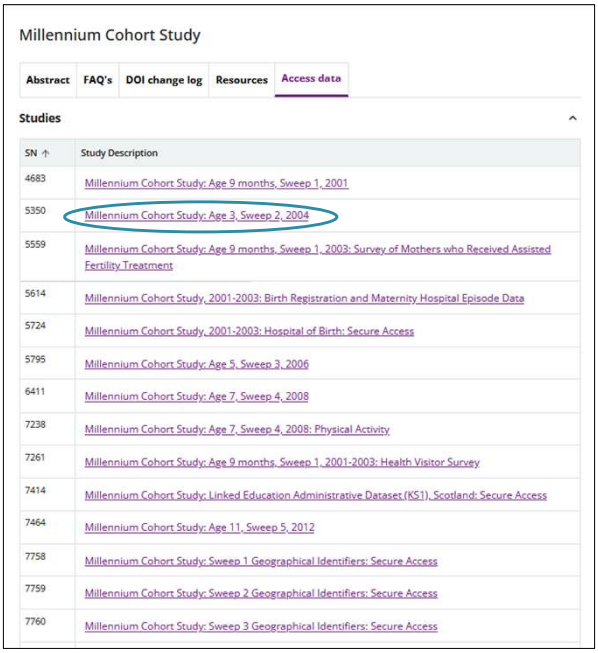
Millennium Cohort Study
Abstract
FAQ's
DOI change log
Resources
Access data
Studies
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Study Description
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Millennium Cohort Study: Age 9 months, Sweep 1, 2001
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Millennium Cohort Study: Age 3, Sweep 2, 2004
5559
Millennium Cohort Study: Age 9 months, Sweep 1, 2003: Survey of Mothers who Received Assisted Fertility Treatment
5614
Millennium Cohort Study, 2001-2003: Birth Registration and Maternity Hospital Episode Data
5724
Millennium Cohort Study, 2001-2003: Hospital of Birth: Secure Access
5795
Millennium Cohort Study: Age 5, Sweep 3, 2006
6411
Millennium Cohort Study: Age 7, Sweep 4, 2008
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Millennium Cohort Study: Age 7, Sweep 4, 2008: Physical Activity
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Millennium Cohort Study: Age 9 months, Sweep 1, 2001-2003: Health Visitor Survey
7414
Millennium Cohort Study: Linked Education Administrative Dataset (KS1), Scotland: Secure Access
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Millennium Cohort Study: Age 11, Sweep 5, 2012
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Millennium Cohort Study: Sweep 1 Geographical Identifiers: Secure Access
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Millennium Cohort Study: Sweep 2 Geographical Identifiers: Secure Access
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Millennium Cohort Study: Sweep 3 Geographical Identifiers: Secure Access

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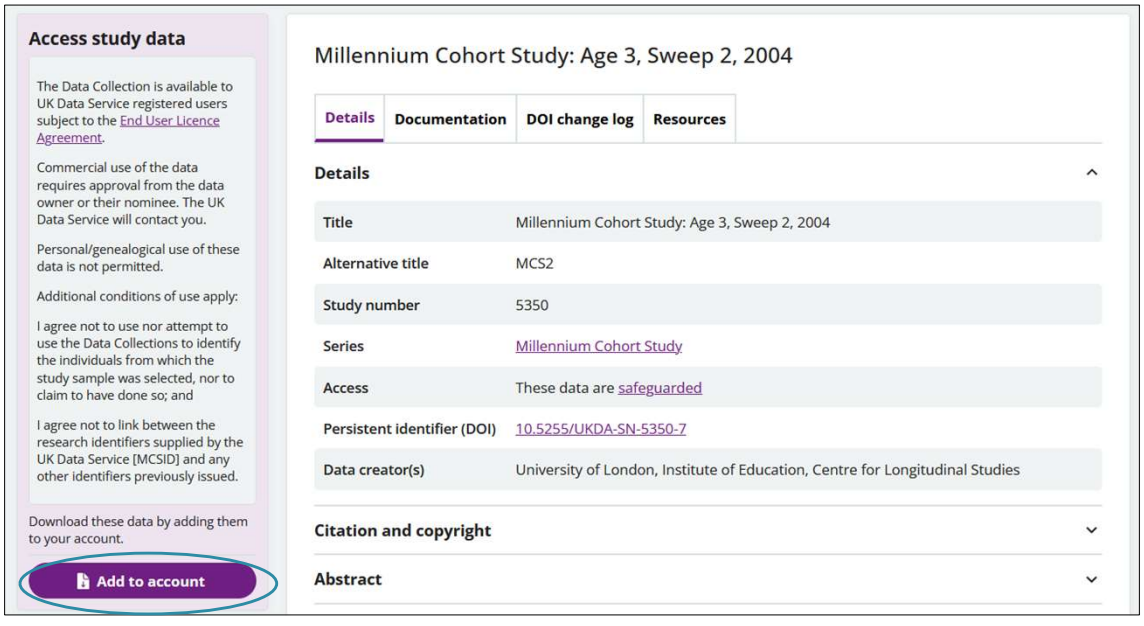
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Download these data by adding them to your account.
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Millennium Cohort Study: Age 3, Sweep 2, 2004
Details
Documentation
DOI change log
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Details
Title
Millennium Cohort Study: Age 3, Sweep 2, 2004
Alternative title
MCS2
Study number
5350
Series
Millennium Cohort Study
Access
These data are safeguarded
Persistent identifier (DOI)
10.5255/UKDA-SN-5350-7
Data creator(s)
University of London, Institute of Education, Centre for Longitudinal Studies
Citation and copyright
Abstract

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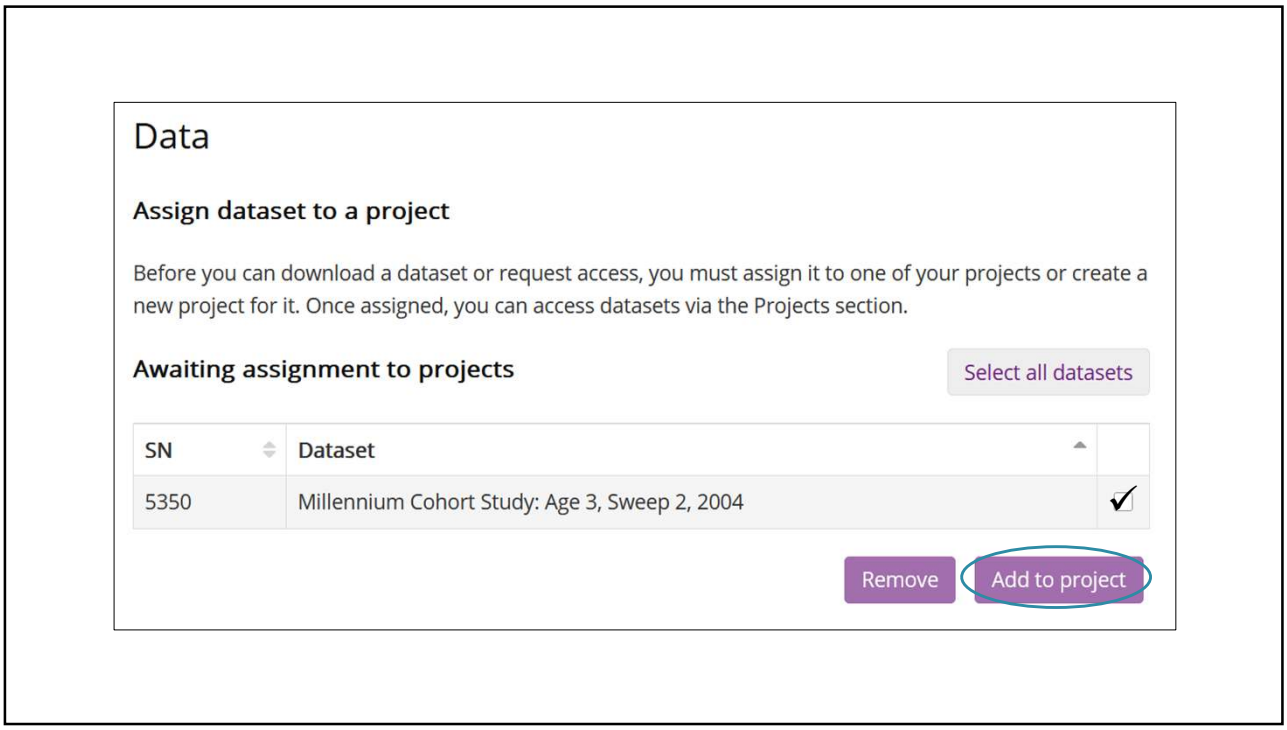
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Before you can download a dataset or request access, you must assign it to one of your projects or create a new project for it. Once assigned, you can access datasets via the Projects section.
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Millennium Cohort Study: Age 3, Sweep 2, 2004
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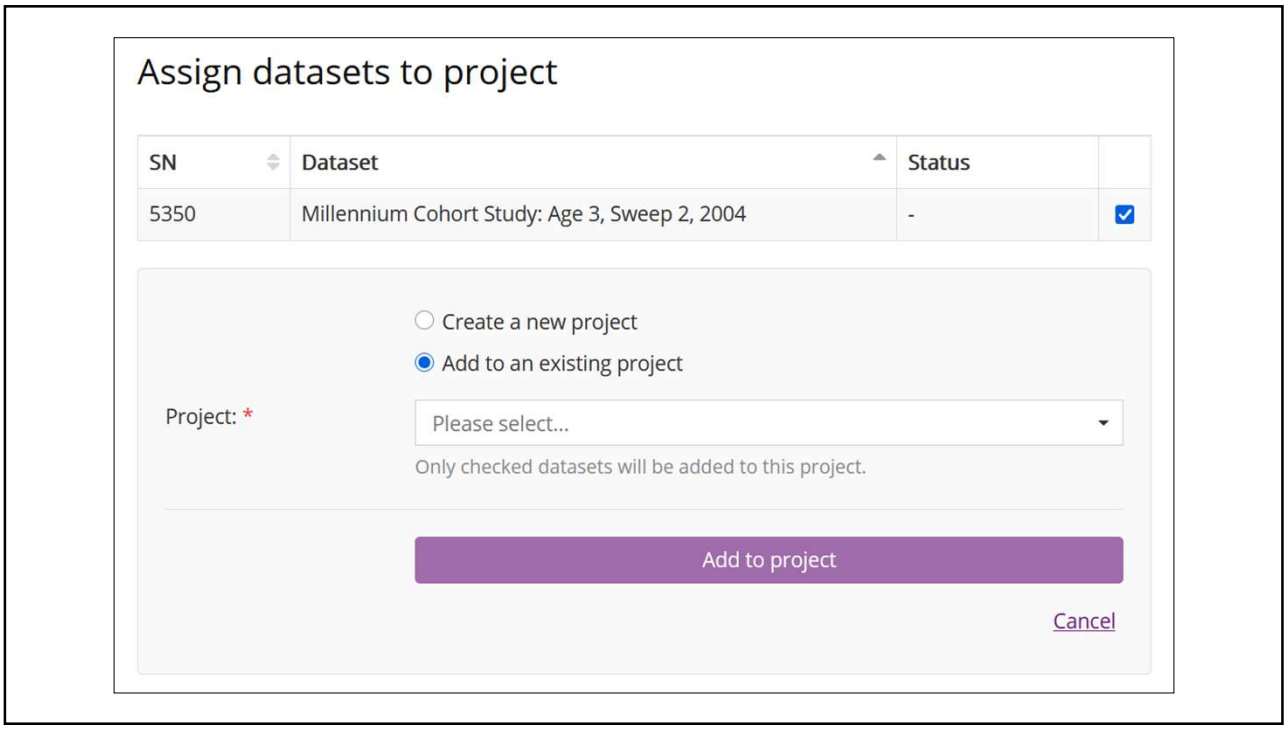
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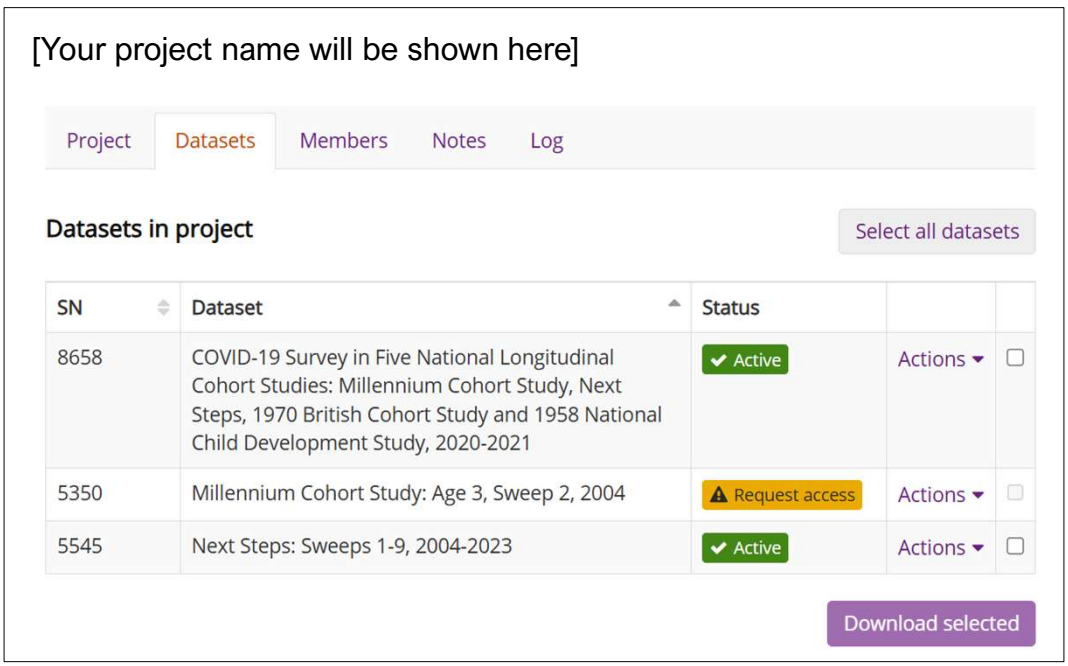
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COVID-19 Survey in Five National Longitudinal Cohort Studies: Millennium Cohort Study, Next Steps, 1970 British Cohort Study and 1958 National Child Development Study, 2020-2021
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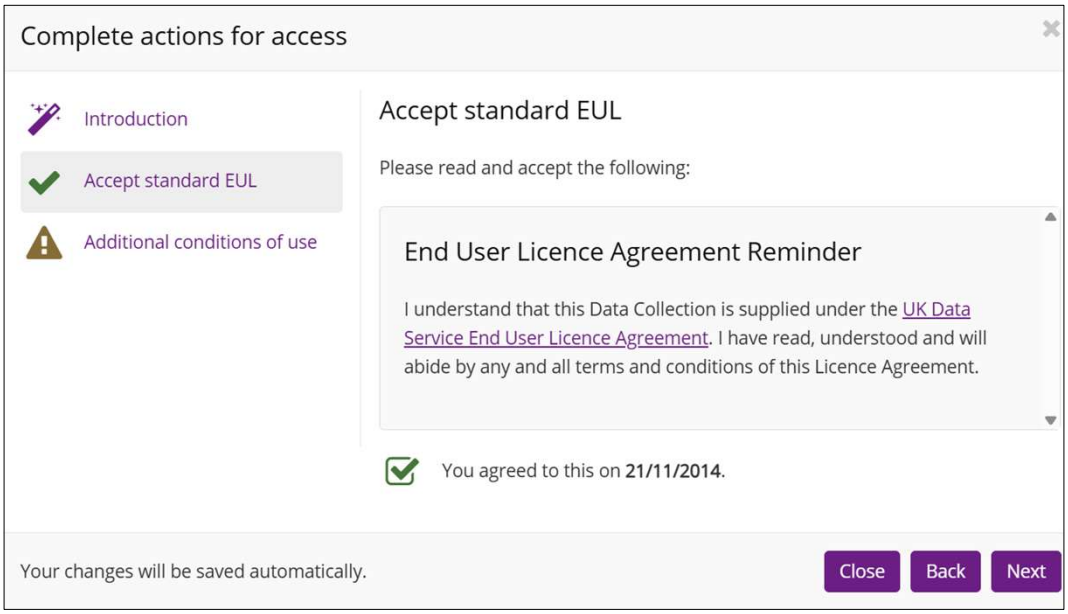
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Please read and accept the following:
End User Licence Agreement Reminder
I understand that this Data Collection is supplied under the UK Data Service End User Licence Agreement. I have read, understood and will abide by any and all terms and conditions of this Licence Agreement.
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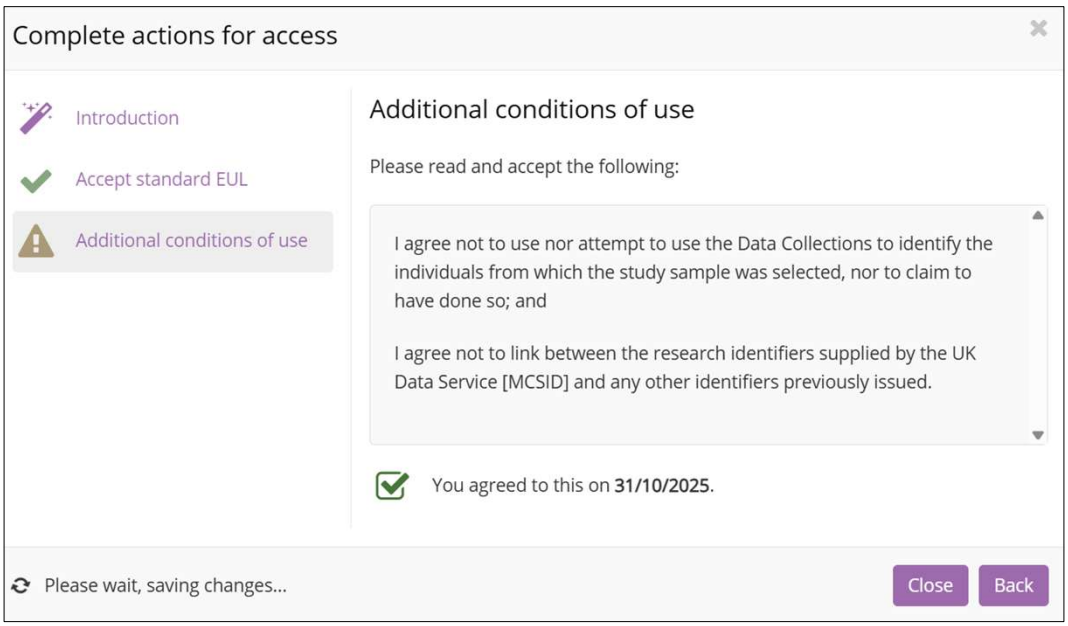
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Additional conditions of use
Additional conditions of use
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You agreed to this on 31/10/2025.
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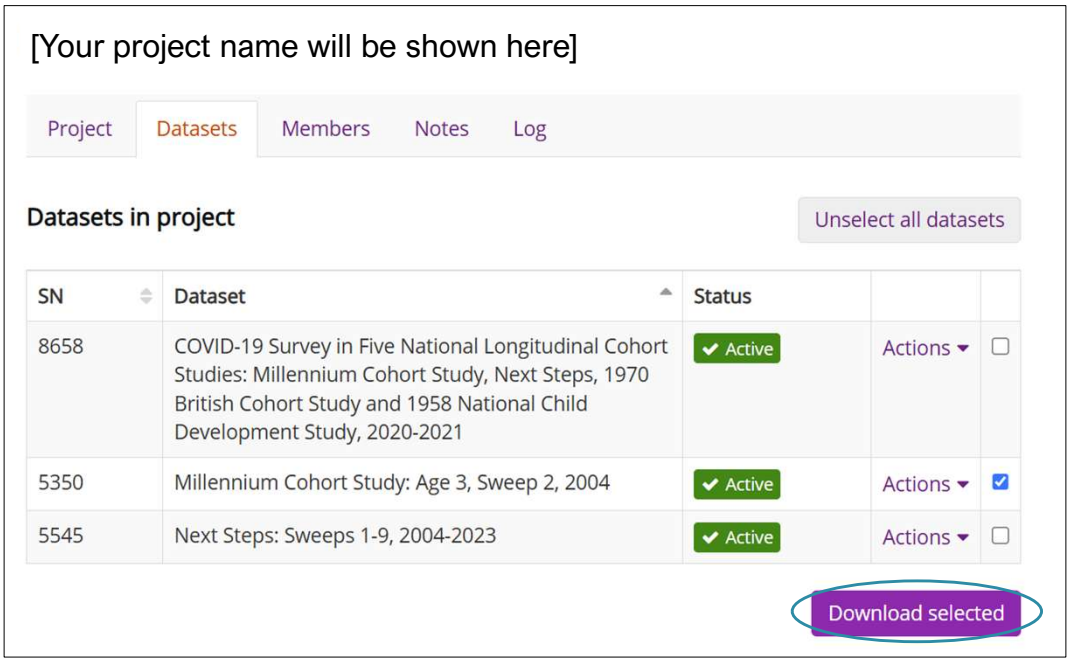
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Millennium Cohort Study: Age 3, Sweep 2, 2004
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Next Steps: Sweeps 1-9, 2004-2023
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Additional resources

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Other resources

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

User guides
- Overview of measures
- Response and weights

Questionnaires
- Exact question wording
- Questionnaire routing
- Variable names

Data documentation
- Data notes
- Coding frames
- Variables lists, including derived variables

Technical reports
- Sample and questionnaire design, development
- Fieldwork, response, ethics
- Coding, editing

Cohort profiles…

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Cohort profiles

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- Power C, Elliott J. Cohort profile: 1958 British birth cohort (National Child Development Study). Int J Epidemiol. 2006;35(1):34-41. https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyi183
- Sullivan A, Brown M, Hamer M, et al. Cohort Profile Update: The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70). Int J Epidemiol. 2023;52(3):e179-e86. https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyac148
- Wu AF, Henderson M, Brown M, et al. Cohort Profile: Next Steps – the longitudinal study of people in England born in 1989-90. Int J Epidemiol. 2024;53(6). https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyae152
- Joshi H, Fitzsimons E. The Millennium Cohort Study: the making of a multi-purpose resource for social science and policy. Longitudinal and Life Course Studies. 2016;7(4):409-30. https://doi.org/10.14301/llcs.v7i4.410

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Datasets, key identifiers (IDs)

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Example datasets

Name	Contents	Structure
NS8_2015_Main_Interview	Modules 1 to 7	Flat
NS8_2015_Self_Completion	Module 8	Flat
NS8_2015_Partnerships	Relationship histories	Hierarchical
NS8_2015_Children	Details of children of CM	Hierarchical
NS8_2015_Household_Members	Details of members living in same household as CM	Hierarchical
NS8_2015_Activity_History	Activities and Employment histories	Hierarchical
NS8_2015_Benefits	Details of individual benefits received	Hierarchical
NS8_2015_Income_Unfolding_brackets	Unfolding brackets questions for payments and income	Flat
NS8_2015_Benefits_Unfolding_brackets	Unfolding brackets questions for benefits	Hierarchical
NS8_2015_Derived_variables	Derived variables	Flat

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Key identifiers (IDs)

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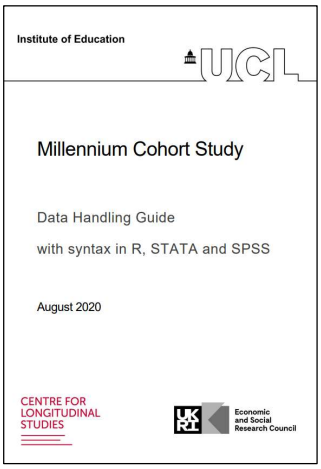
- Cohort members have their own consistent identifiers (IDs):
  - NCDS: NCDSID
  - BCS70: BCSID
  - Next Steps: NSID
- Further IDs in MCS:
  - MCSID identifies families
  - CNUM identifies cohort members within families
  - PNUM identifies everyone else in the family
- Use these IDs to combine datasets.



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Study design and survey variables

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Study design and survey variables

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Cohort	Target population	Study design	Survey variables
NCDS	All born in GB in one week in 1958	Captured 98% of all births in GB in target week	None
BCS70	All born in GB in one week in 1970	Captured 95-98% of all births in GB in target week	None
Next Steps	Young people in England in 2004 born Sept 1989 to Aug 1990	Schools first sampled, then pupils within schools Deprived schools and pupils from minority ethnic groups oversampled	PSU: SampPSU Strata: SampStratum Design weight: DESIGNWEIGHT
MCS	Children born Sept 2000 to Jan 2002 and living in UK at age nine months	Areas of residence first sampled, then all eligible children selected Children living in disadvantaged areas, children of ethnic minority backgrounds and children growing up in the smaller nations of the UK all oversampled	PSU: sptn00 Strata: PTTYPE2 Design weight: WEIGHT2

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Non-response and attrition

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Non-response and attrition

Sweep non-response

- Cohort members not responding to a particular sweep.
- Common in longitudinal surveys.

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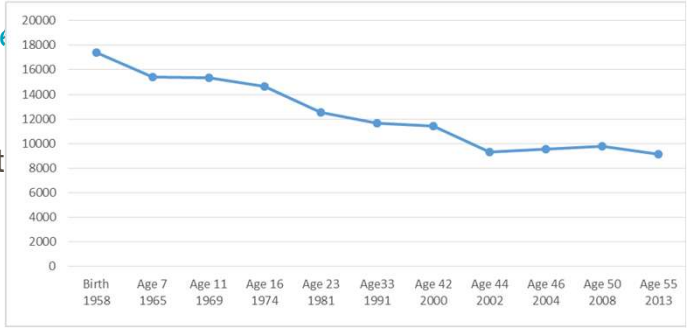

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Complete case analysis

- Missing data reduce analysis sample size → lower statistical power.
- Potential risk to representativeness as respondents often systematically different from non-respondents.
- Analysing only cohort members with observed data ('complete case analysis') may therefore lead to bias.

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Non-response weights

- Reweight the respondents at a given sweep to be representative of the original sample.
- Provided in:
  - MCS: all sweeps; country-specific and UK-wide versions
  - Next Steps: all sweeps
  - NCDS: most recent sweep only
  - BCS70: most recent sweep only
- See relevant user guides for full details.
- Can derive own analysis-specific weights.

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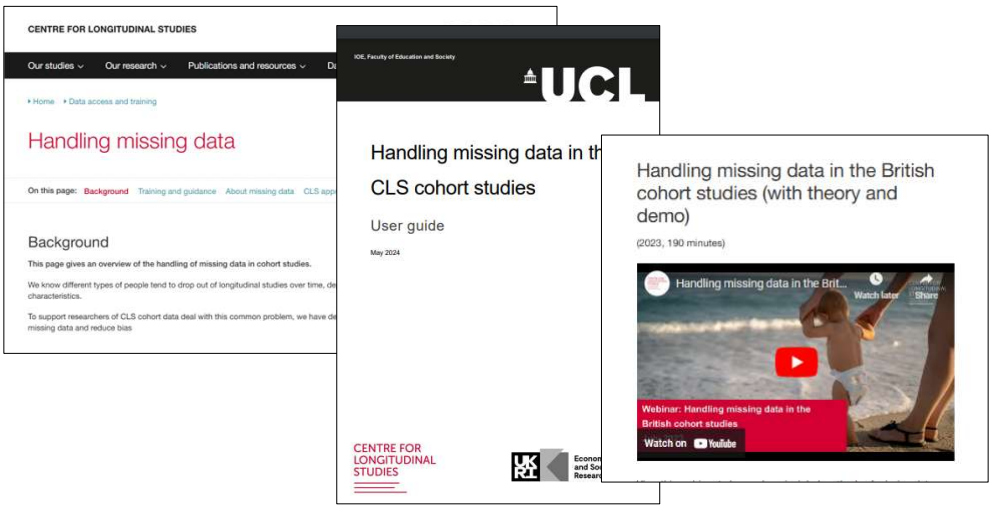
Dealing with non-response: resources



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Where to go for more information

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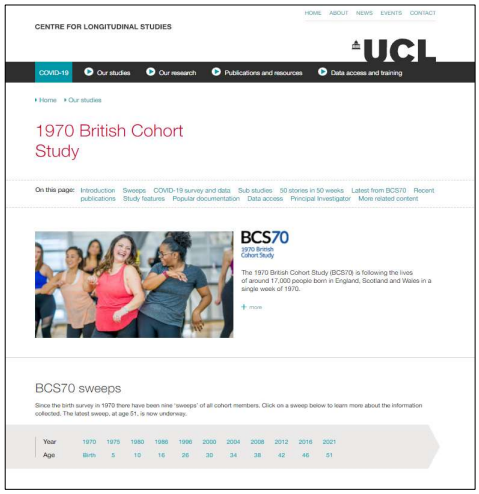
CLS website



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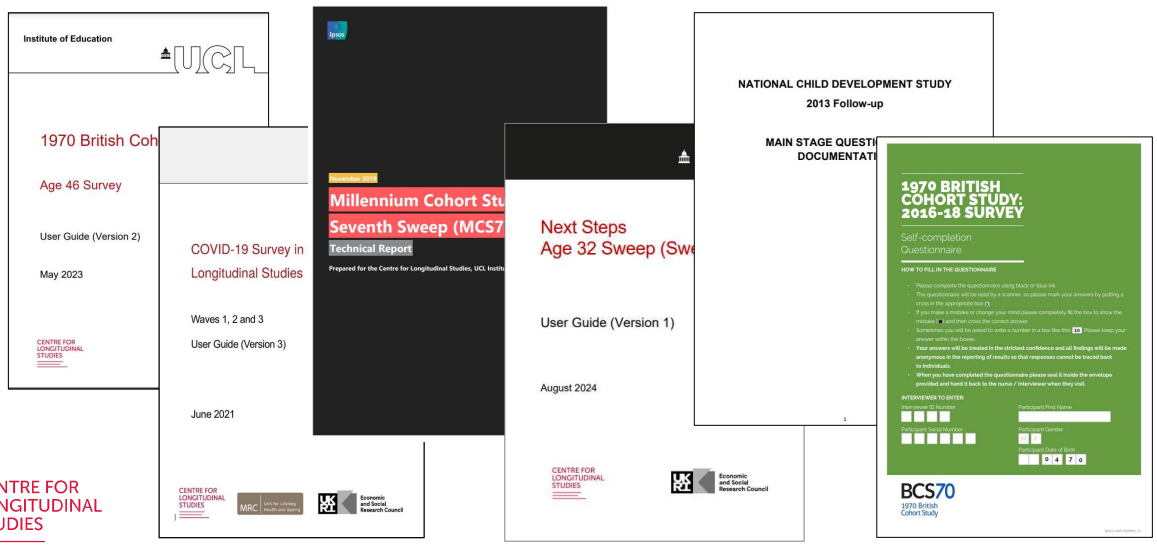
User guides, technical reports, questionnaires



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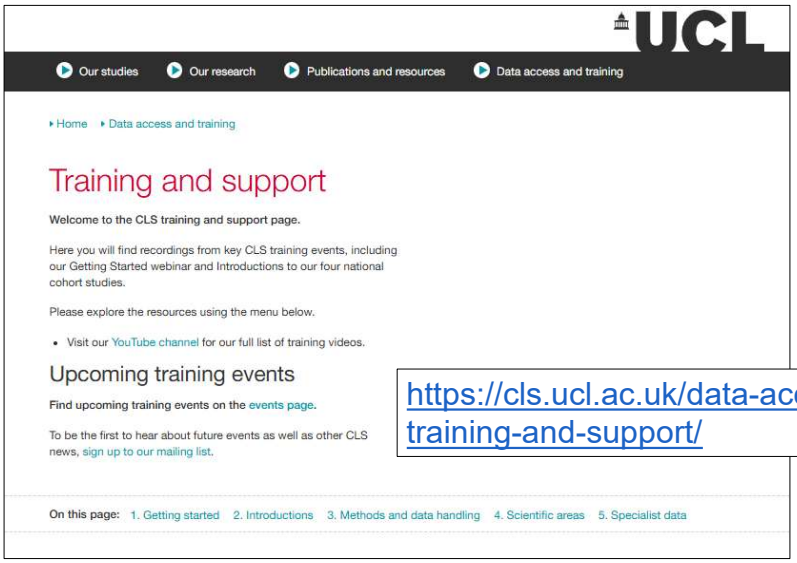
CLS training and support



https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/data-access-training/training-and-support/

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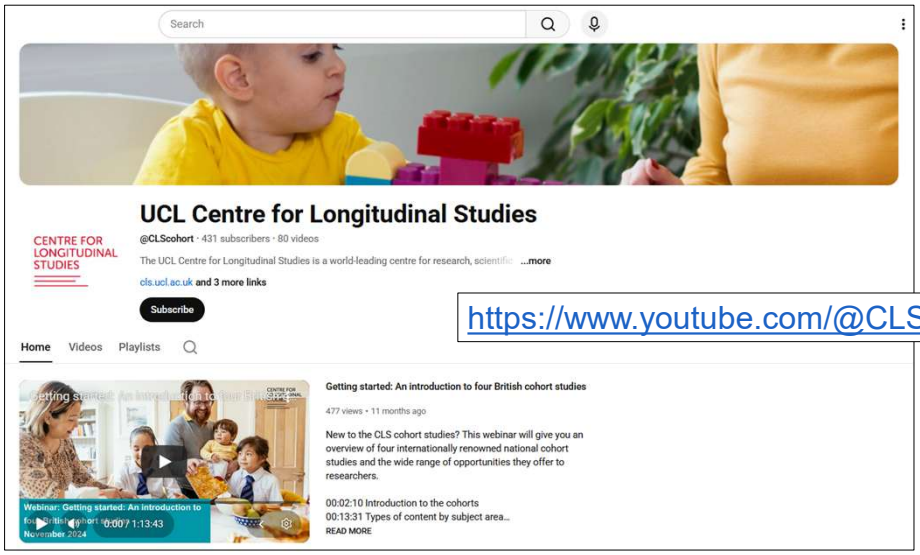
CLS YouTube channel



https://www.youtube.com/@CLScohort

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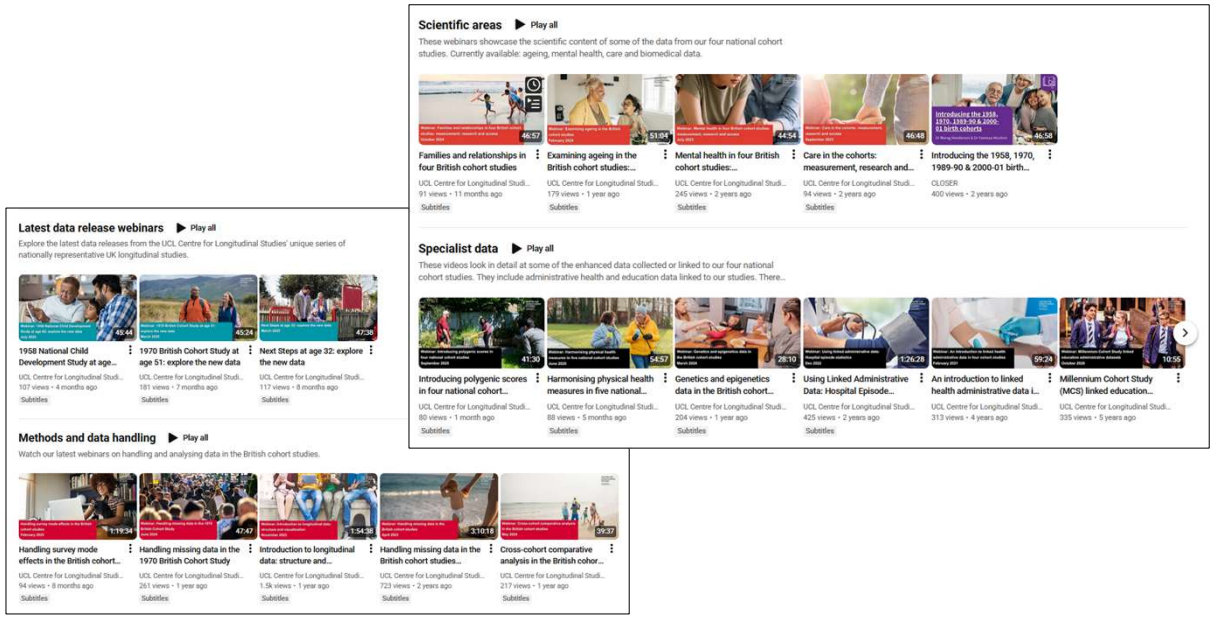

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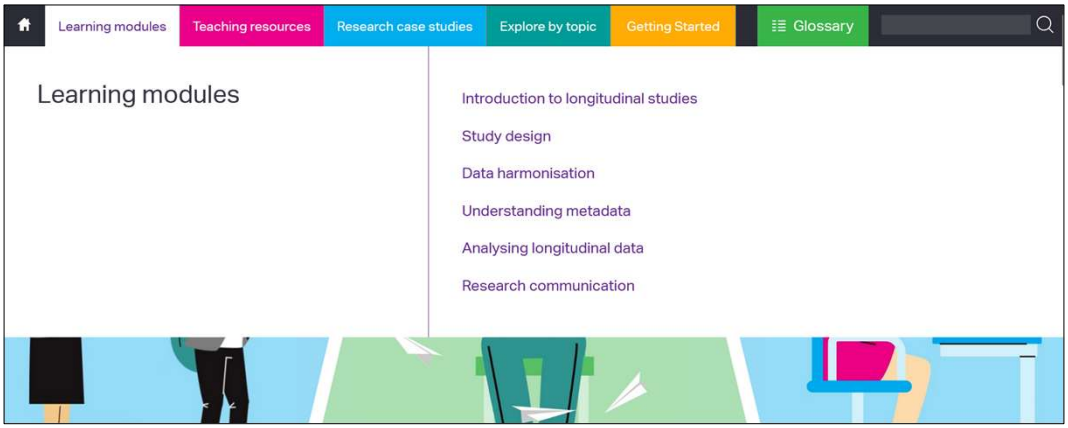
CLOSER Learning Hub



https://learning.closer.ac.uk/

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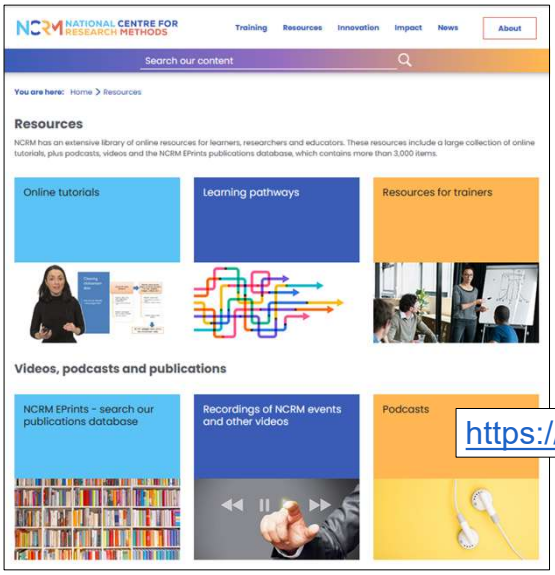
National Centre for Research Methods

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/

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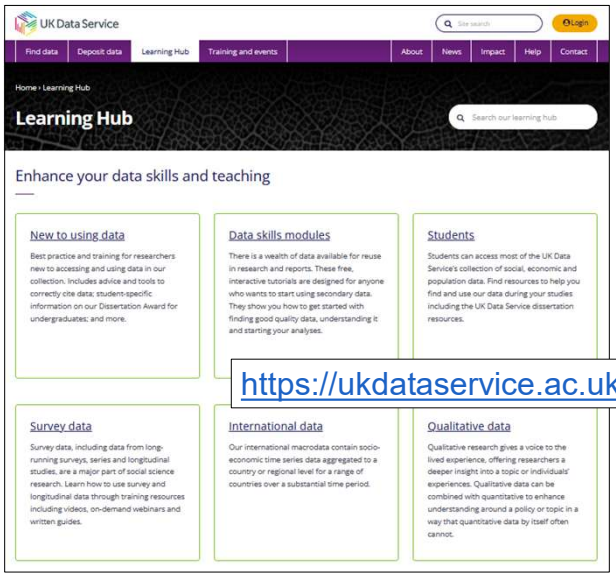
UKDS Learning Hub

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES



https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/learning-hub/

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What we've covered

CENTRE FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- An introduction to birth cohorts
- Some of the content in the CLS cohorts by subject areas
- Examples of the types of analysis
- Getting started with the data
- Where to go for more information

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