



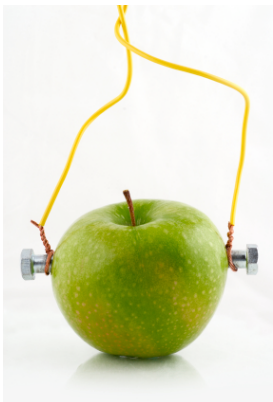
# Otherwise engaged:

Parenting attitudes and survey participation among young, single mothers.

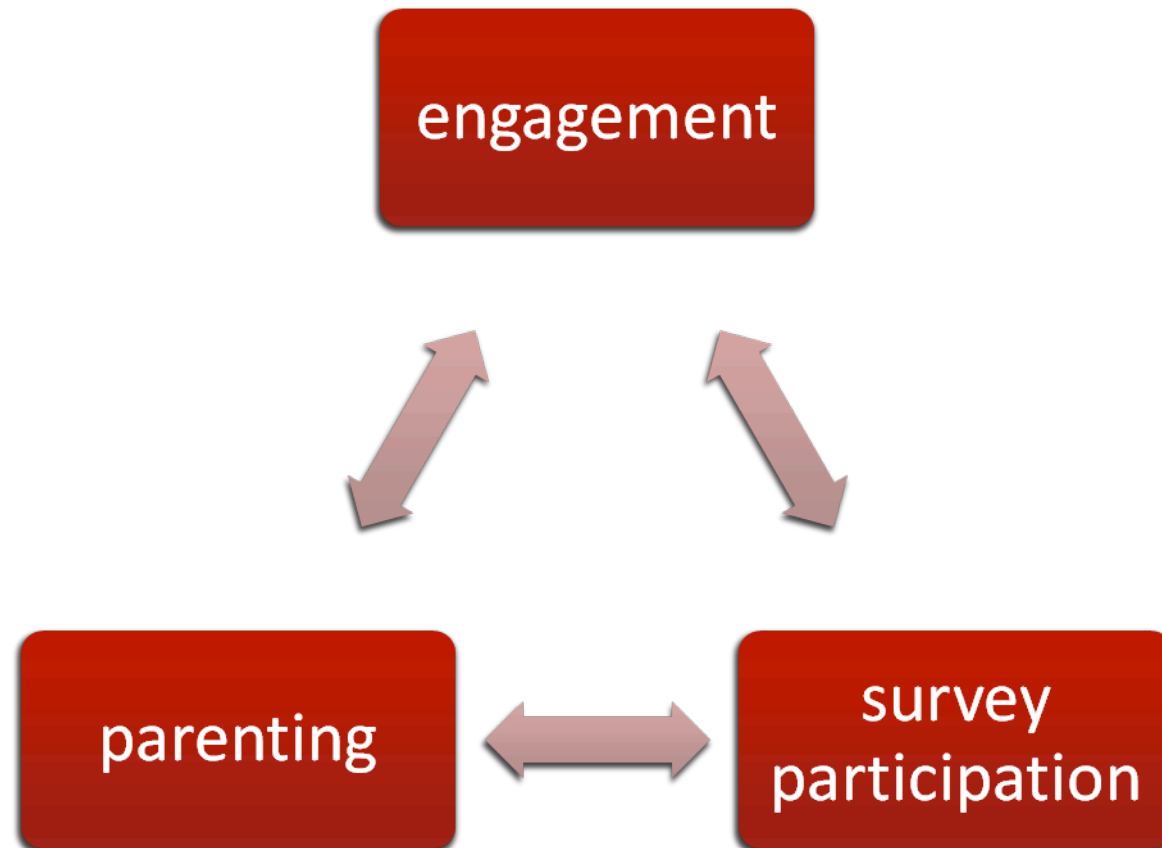


# The context

- Frankenstein's monster or fruitful cross-fertilisation?
- Understanding vulnerable mothers' participation in surveys supports understanding of their parenting beliefs and practices.
- Lessons from parenting interventions can inform attrition studies.



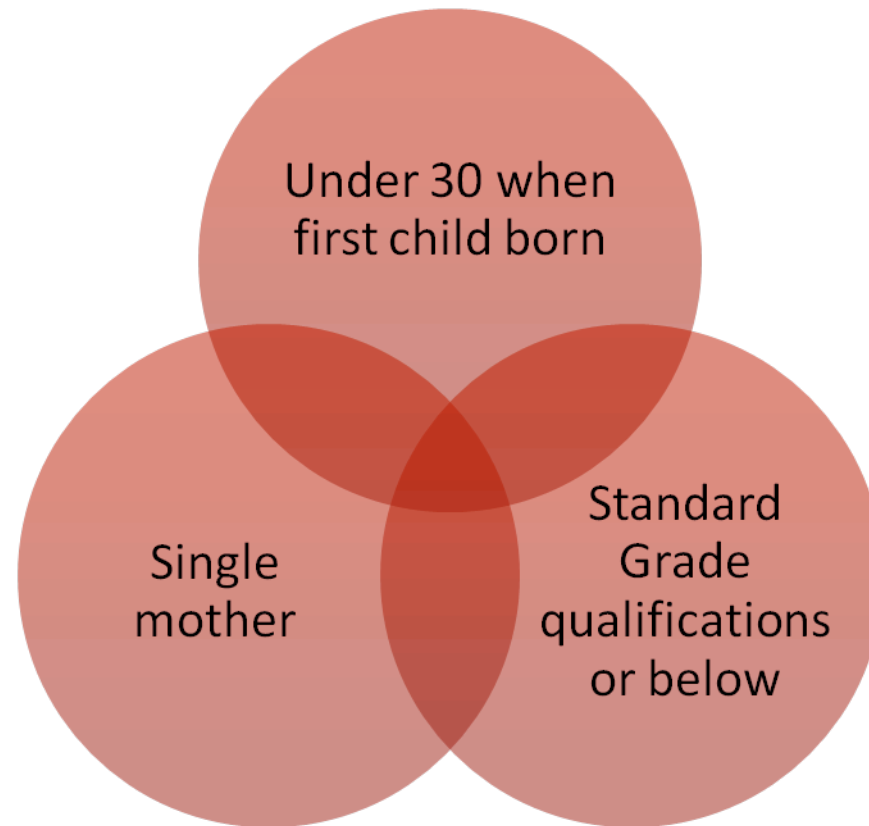
# The link



# The problem

Parenting programmes	Attrition in longitudinal surveys
<i>'Families at risk'</i> – SureStart, Family Nurse Partnership, PPP	The most vulnerable participants are the most likely to drop out of surveys
<i>'Families who pose a risk to others'</i> – parenting orders, compulsory parenting classes	Attrition undermines the representativeness of surveys in unpredictable ways
Economic, cognitive, behavioural	Policies designed to support vulnerable groups on the basis of survey evidence may be less effective
<i>'You can't associate inequality with parenting skills'</i> Gillies 2005: 842	Efforts made to trace and contact 'hard to get' respondents may have unacceptable opportunity costs – more efficient to support participants to stay in surveys
Are 'surprising respondents' also 'surprising parents'?	

# Surprising Respondents



# Growing up in Scotland

- Why Scotland?
- About GUS:
- Birth cohort study - longitudinal design
- 2 cohorts: birth cohort ca 5,000 cases, child cohort ca 3,000 cases
- Primary caregiver reports and interviewer-measured physical and cognitive tests. Some matched data (health records).
- Cluster sampling using 130 randomly selected sample points
- 3 sweeps of data: collection began in 2005/06

# Findings 1

- Attrition affects the most vulnerable groups disproportionately
- 14.5% of Sweep 3 attriters would have been 'surprising respondents'
- Surprising Respondents make a significant contribution to bias reduction in GUS

	Mainstream Respondents	Sweep 3 Attriters	Surprising Respondents
% Living in 15% most deprived data zones	13%	23.7%	44.6%

# Findings 1 cont...

<b>Characteristics at Sw3 (weighted)</b>	<b>Attrition bias – weighted dataset</b>
Smoker (%)	-2.5
Heavy drinker (%)	-1.2
Mother was <30 at birth of first child (%)	-2.7
Respondent is in 15% most deprived data zones (%)	-1.6
Mother has Standard Grade qualifications or below (%)	-5.1
Child looks at books every day (%)	1.4
Child visits friends once or twice a week or more (%)	-1.2
Mother feels that she sees her friends less often since the survey child was born (%)	0.1
Mother is in full time employment (%)	1.1
Respondent uses regular child care including pre-school (%)	-0.5

# Findings 2

<b>Joint distribution of variables (weighted datasets)</b>	<b>Birth cohort Odds ratio full dataset/dataset with surprising respondents excluded</b>	<b>Child cohort Odds ratio full dataset/dataset with surprising respondents excluded</b>
<b>Smoking by age of mother at birth of sample child</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.85</b>
<b>Alcohol consumption by age of mother at birth of sample child</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.85</b>
<b>Deprivation by family type</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.82</b>
<b>Mother's qualifications by frequency of child's book- reading</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.84</b>
<b>Frequency of child's visits by frequency with which mother sees her friends</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>0.99</b>
<b>Child care uptake by employment status</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>1.02</b>

# Findings 3

- Surprising respondents are:
- more likely to breastfeed
- more likely to have frequent meaningful interaction with their child
- less likely to read with their child every day
- less likely to smoke
- .... than mothers who drop out of the survey after 2 years

## Findings 3 cont...

	Exp (B) (std. error)	95% Confidence interval
Breastfed	.486*** (.192)	.334 to .707
Smoker	3.645*** (.185)	2.535 to 5.241
Infrequent interaction with child	2.697*** (.348)	1.365 to 5.332
Reads less than once a day	.488** (.270)	.288 to .828

N= 579; Model Chi-Square = 101.66,  $p < 0.001$ ; Nagelkerke's R<sup>2</sup> = 0.22;

Hosmer and Lemeshow Chi Square= 19.99,  $p = 0.066$

\*\*\* = significant at  $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* = significant at  $p < 0.01$ ; \* = significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

Surprising respondents are the reference category: the analysis is concerned with the correct classification of Sweep 3 attriters on the basis of their scores on the independent variables.

## Findings 4

- 'Mainstream' respondents more likely to display positive health behaviours than surprising respondents.
- More likely to feel comfortable about seeking advice and support from professionals.
- More likely to use formal childcare and to create a stimulating home learning environment.
- BUT – Surprising Respondents are more likely to have a strong attachment to their child.

# Where next?

- Use new techniques from social work to support vulnerable mothers and secure their continued participation in longitudinal surveys.
- 'In group' interviewers; same interviewer: build trust.
- Increased resources could be devoted to field work: flag and support surprising respondents.
- Secure support from friendship networks. Use survey-themed toys etc. to raise awareness of the survey among the surprising respondent's friendship network: aim for positive reinforcement from the group.

# Questions?

- Tania Smith, University of Edinburgh
- [T.S.R.Smith@sms.ed.ac.uk](mailto:T.S.R.Smith@sms.ed.ac.uk)
- Arney, F., Sivak, L. and Lewig, K. (2008) '*A Pilot Exploration of a Family Home Visiting Program for Families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children. Report and Recommendations: Perspectives of Parents of Aboriginal Children and Organisational Considerations*' Magil: University of South Australia.
- Churchill H. and Clarke K. (2009) 'Investing in Parenting Education: A Critical Review of Policy and Provision in England' *Social Policy and Society* 9: 39-53.
- Gillies, V. (2005) 'Raising the "Meritocracy": Parenting and the Individualization of Social Class' *Sociology* 39: 835 -853.

