

Research projects using GUS Data

Habits of a lifetime? Babies diets and family life in Scotland

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Children's diets in Scotland and particularly issues around increasing obesity levels have come to the fore recently. So far, however, despite the considerable research on food and diet in childhood, less attention has been paid to the diets of babies and toddlers. As patterns of food consumption set in infancy are likely to impact significantly on dietary patterns and health in later life, there is scope for research and policy which address issues of nutrition and health for toddlers, not only for children of school age or older. GUS, which focuses on, among other things, food and nutrition within the context of family life, will provide the key platform for secondary data analysis for the research. The study aims to take advantage of this large source of data and make a major contribution to our understanding of young children's diets and how these are shaped by parental and family practices and attitudes, by wider social circumstances, and how these develop over time. It aims to produce nationally representative evidence of the food consumption patterns of babies in Scotland and assess the implications for child health and social policy.

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GUS within an international context

Stephen Hinchcliffe

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This studentship will extend the existing evidence base for policy, enhancing knowledge of early years in Scotland and how it compares to early years experiences and contexts elsewhere. It will set GUS in a comparative framework, making international comparisons based on analysis of similar early years longitudinal datasets in countries with significant similarities to Scotland. It will also draw upon such studies to identify areas for future development of GUS. Countries currently being considered for comparisons are England, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA and Denmark. The exact direction of the studentship remains to be agreed with the GUS team in the Scottish Government. It will focus on an area of relevance to government policy, such as early intervention, patterns of service use, or parenting practices.

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Understanding the use of alcohol in pregnancy amongst women in Scotland

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The overall aim of the project is to understand women's alcohol consumption during pregnancy in Scotland. Data from the first year of GUS has been used to inform the first stage of this research. Three logistic regression models were run with the three dependent variables of alcohol consumption in pregnancy, smoking in pregnancy and low birth weight. Follow the link below to read about the findings:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/175356/0066306.pdf>

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The social stratification of childcare

Judith Mabelis

MSc Dissertation, the University of Edinburgh

This project looks at the use of formal group childcare (including time spent) amongst the cohorts at three different ages (10 months, 22.5 months and 34 months) according to certain socio-characteristics including family income and maternal level of education, class and employment status. The research also considered the effect of maternal education on use of formal group care, when controlling for the other variables listed above. The dissertation discussed the use of formal group care within the wider context of equality of access to education.

Key findings:

- Use of all types of childcare increases with the age of a child;
- Generally across all ages, it emerged that the higher the level of maternal education, class and income the more likely the mother is to use formal group childcare but maternal class has a less significant impact;
- The differences outlined above are more pronounced at the youngest age (10 months);
- Time spent in formal group care is linked to maternal employment: full-time and part-time working mothers use formal group care for longer;
- In terms of maternal education: On average, across both cohorts and ages, mothers with degrees are about 50% more likely to use formal group care than mothers with no qualifications. Level of maternal education still has an impact, even when taking into account the other characteristics, such as maternal income and employment status. This may point to a greater awareness and value placed on the 'educative experience' of formal group childcare amongst better educated mothers.

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