

## **Research projects using GUS Data**

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

Valeria Skafida

PhD, ESRC CASE studentship, The University of Edinburgh, completed 2011

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 –**

#### **Collaboration within households: an analysis of birth cohort studies**

Stephen Hinchcliffe

PhD, ESRC Case Studentship, The Scottish Government

This studentship aims to enhance knowledge of parenting in the early years in Scotland. It will explore the concept of collaborative parenting, using birth cohort data, including that from the Growing Up in Scotland study, from Scotland, England, Australia and Denmark, set within the national policy contexts. The aims of the project include understanding how the ability of co-resident parents to work together is influenced by both micro- and macro- level factors, and to determine how collaborative parenting in turn affects the welfare and development of young children.

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### **Understanding the use of alcohol in pregnancy amongst women in Scotland**

Katherine Ford

PhD, ESRC and The Scottish Government Joint PhD Scheme, The University of Liverpool

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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## **Exploring the impact of assets and vulnerabilities of families living in poverty, and persistent poverty, on children's early cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural outcomes, as a predictor of future educational attainment**

Morag Treanor

PhD, University of Edinburgh

There is a strong association between children's early cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural (CSEB) outcomes on school readiness and future educational attainment. Living in poverty, and persistent poverty, is a known risk factor of poor early outcomes and future educational achievement.

The principal aim of this PhD is to explore the impact of assets and vulnerabilities, including family circumstances and change in circumstances, across time, of families living in poverty, and persistent poverty in Scotland, on children's early CSEB outcomes, as a predictor of future educational attainment, using the Growing up in Scotland (GUS) data. To achieve this aim, it will employ longitudinal and cross-sectional quantitative methods to analyse 5 sweeps of GUS data.

This study seeks to address the impact of a far wider set of circumstances, and change in circumstances, longitudinally, on children's CSEB outcomes of children of families living in poverty and families not living in poverty, as a means of identifying factors that are beneficial or detrimental to cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural ability and therefore as a means of identifying factors that can lead to predicted improved educational attainment, than has previously been undertaken in the literature. This study will explore the impact of families living in poverty's assets and vulnerabilities, holistically, to establish if and which adverse or advantageous circumstances and events have an impact on children's early CSEB outcomes, and will compare the impact of these assets and vulnerabilities on children whose families are not living in poverty.

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## **Exploring social and neighbourhood differences in parents' use of personal contacts and statutory services**

Tania Wood  
PhD, University of Edinburgh

This project uses the first four sweeps of birth cohort data from Growing up in Scotland (GUS) to look at whether parenting is a class issue? Although factors at the child, family and neighbourhood levels influence children's outcomes, this work will focus on the family and neighbourhood levels, and in particular on the ways in which parents with different levels of status and power differ in their use of networks of personal contacts and statutory and non-statutory services. It will also look at what effect, if any, neighbourhood context has on these aspects of parents' behaviour. Finally, the project will examine whether there is any meaningful association between parents' use of networks and services and their children's behavioural development by age 4. This study sits within policy debates around, on the one hand, social reproduction and the intergenerational transmission of inequality, and on the other, the professionalisation of parenting.

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## **Feeding environments of infants and toddlers**

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## **Television viewing and diet in young children: the role of the family**

PhD commencing autumn 2011  
University of Aberdeen

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## **Acceptance and use of corporal punishment of children and emotional and behavioural outcomes in a Scottish child cohort**

Sonya Scott  
MSc Dissertation, University of Glasgow

This project looks at the association between acceptance of smacking utility and its subsequent use and then use of ever smacking by age 1-2y and SDQ results in 3-4 year olds for the birth cohort.

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**Factors associated with low birth weight in Scotland:** A secondary analysis of the Growing Up in Scotland study  
Saadiyah Rao  
MSc Dissertation, University of Edinburgh 2011

This project studied the association of maternal health, behaviours, and socio-demographic conditions during pregnancy with low birth weight (LBW), using the birth cohort data. The multivariate analysis has shown strong significant association of LBW with ethnicity, maternal employment, smoking during pregnancy and prematurity. Conversely, no association was observed for known predictors such as maternal age, birth order, gender of the baby, planning of pregnancy and alcohol intake. Besides, odds ratios were also not significant for maternal education, socioeconomic status, antenatal care attendance, and maternal disease conditions. These findings were further assured by our sensitivity analysis.

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**Exploring non-resident fatherhood in Britain: Dynamics, child well-being and implication for law and policy in children's early years**

Sarah Rogers  
PhD, University of Edinburgh

Non-resident fatherhood has long been an issue of concern to policy makers, practitioners and society at large. Contact and the maintenance of relationships between non-resident fathers and children is widely regarded as beneficial, if not crucial to child well-being, with such an approach being evident in the law and policy of Scotland and England & Wales. Despite the wealth of research on on-resident fatherhood, such assertions find no conclusive support in empirical evidence. Previous research however, has predominantly focused on adolescent well-being following relationship breakdown with little consideration of non-resident fatherhood in children's early years. The considerable increase in early years' non-resident fatherhood, changing views of fatherhood and growing evidence of the importance of the early years to future outcomes provides support for the assertion that the experience of non-resident fathers in the early years may be different from other stages.

This research will explore the dynamics of non-resident fatherhood and its impact on child well-being in the early years through secondary quantitative data analysis of two large national longitudinal datasets, GUS and the MCS (Millennium Cohort Study). The legal and policy implications of the project's empirical findings will be considered for Scotland, and England and Wales.

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**An appetite for life? Changing food habits and health from infancy to childhood in the context of family life in Scotland.**

Dr Valeria Skafida, University of Edinburgh  
British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship  
3 year project commencing January 2012

This project will provide a unique understanding of how children's eating habits evolve through birth through the toddler years, within the context of family meal patterns and parents' ideas about health. It will also explore how nutrition and in infancy and early childhood relates to young children's weight, their dental health and their participation in physical activity. It is hoped that the findings will inform health policy which addresses the growing problems caused by sub-optimal nutrition in infancy and early childhood.

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