
Longitudinal studies

Series 33 - British Cohort Survey

Description: The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) began in 1970 when data were collected about the births and families of babies born in the United Kingdom in one particular week in 1970. The original aims were to examine the social and biological characteristics of the mother in relation to neonatal morbidity, and to compare the results with those of the National Child Development Study (NCDS), which commenced in 1958. Since BCS70 began, there have been seven full data collection exercises in order to monitor the cohort members' health, education, social and economic circumstances. These took place when respondents were aged 5, in 1975 (held under SN 2699), aged 10, in 1980 (SN 3723), aged 16, in 1986 (SN 3535), aged 26, in 1996 (SN 3833), aged 30, 1999-2000 (SN 5558), and aged 34, in 2004-2005 (SN 5585). Earlier waves were known by different names (the British Births Survey in 1970, the Child Health and Education Survey in 1975 and 1980). With each successive attempt, the scope of BCS70 has broadened from a strictly medical focus at birth, to encompass physical and educational development at the age of 5, physical, educational and social development at the ages of 10 and 16, and physical, educational, social and economic development at 26 years and beyond.

- **Available years:** 1970-2004/5 (waves 1-7)
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#33:286 – British Cohort Survey 1970-2004/5

Universe: All babies born (either alive or dead) after the 24th week of gestation from 5-11 Apr 1970 in Britain.

Sample size: 16,955 livebirths.

Methods: Medical reports; face-to-face interviews; self-completion interview; test booklets.

Sample: All babies within a specified birth range.

Fieldwork: Apr 1970 (Wave 1).

Geography: .

Access: SN 5585 (2004-5 follow-up).

Alcohol consumption

Consumption: beverage-specific volume and spending and frequency (Past-day beverage-specific volume, 7day beverage-specific volume, 7 day spending, 7 day frequency, 12mth

frequency, preferred beverage types, parents' perception of respondent drinking frequency, parents' perception of respondent favourite beverage type - 1986 wave; general frequency, 7day beverage-specific volume - 1996 wave; general frequency, 7day beverage-specific consumption - 2000 wave; general frequency, 7day beverage-specific volume - 2004 wave).

Single occasion: binge-drinking (14day freq of drinking 4+ drinks) and drunkenness (Ever been 'really drunk' - 1986 wave).

Other drinking

- Status (Reasons for drinking or not drinking - 1986 wave)
- Drinking location/source (7day source of alcohol, where drunk alcohol, 14day pub visit frequency, lifetime frequency of buying alcohol in a pub, alcohol as

reason to go disco/dance - 1986 Wave (age 16))

- Drinking context (who drunk alcohol with, with other people on pub visits - 1986 Wave (age 16))
- Age of first drink
- Self-perceived drinking (Perceived drinking compared to peers, whether drinks more than you should (and why) - 1986 wave; ever felt should cut down - 2000 and 2004 waves)
- Symptoms of addiction (CAGE (ever felt should cut down, guilt about drinking, criticised by others, need drink first thing) - 2000 and 2004 waves)
- Trying to cut down (ever felt should cut down)

Other alcohol variables

- Attitudes to alcohol (attitudinal qs on effects of drinking, moral view, association with masculinity and adulthood, preferences for alcoholic vs. non-alcoholic drinks, alcohol as reason to go disco/dance, reason for non-drinking - 1986 wave (age 16))
- Cause of harm - health (Perceived level of danger of alcohol, interest in health effects of alcohol, harm of drinking in pregnancy, unpleasant effects - 1986 wave (age 16))
- Cause of harm - social (likelihood of getting into fights, alcohol as cause of football violence, unpleasant effects - 1986 wave (age 16))
- Experience of harm (Fights, damage, relationships, upset parents, stayed out, police contact ALL after drinking - 1986 wave)
- Drink driving (Whether ever driven after drinking - 1986 wave)
- Polices - attitudes and knowledge (Knowledge of legal drinking age, whether been given information on alcohol, whether alcohol should be illegal - 1986 wave)
- Family attitudes (Whether mother/father knows about drinking, whether arguments, whether children should be taught about alcohol at school

- 1986 wave)

- Family drinking behaviour (Respondents' views on parents/siblings/friends drinking, parents' reported spending on alcohol, parents reported drinking frequency, parents reported favourite beverage type - 1986 wave; CHILDREN of respondent's drinking behaviour (ever drunk, rough frequency) if 10-16 in 2004 wave)
- Peers (View of peers drinking - 1986 wave)
- Advice to cut down (Others' annoyed you by criticising drinking - 2000 and 2004 waves)
- Alcohol - misc (Whether would spend money on alcohol if had doubled disposable income, what stops you from drinking too much, what makes a good pub - 1986 wave; drinking at work - 2000 and 2004 waves)

Health status and behaviour:

- Mental health (High from infancy)
- Self-reported health (High - inc. parental health)
- Measured health (High for mother in pregnancy, birth)
- Smoking (High - inc. parental smoking in pregnancy)
- Drugs (High from age 16)
- Diet (High, inc. diary at 16)
- Fitness (High from 16)
- Sexual behaviour (High)
- Sexual health (High, inc. on infertility)

Other variables

- Socialising (High from 16)
- Leisure (High from infancy, inc. leisure diary in 1986 wave)
- Caring (Low)
- Personality (High from infancy)
- Cognitive skills (From age 5, inc. basic skills competences in 2000 wave)
- Political opinions (High inc. parental views)
- Use of services (High - health and welfare services)

- Attitude (fear) of crime (Medium - 1986 wave)
- Perpetrating crimes (Trouble with the police, theft, damage, violence - 1986 wave; general in 2004 wave)
- Victim of crime (High - 1986 wave)

Demographics

- Material quality of life (High)
- Income (Personal and family income

from age 16, inc. benefits)

- Household type/composition (High)
- Employment (High - inc. parental, and respondent from 16)
- Education (High - inc. parental education)
- Ethnicity and religion (Low in initial waves, higher in later ones)