

Maternal and Child Health Network (MatCHNet) Webinar Series: Policy Evaluations in the Early Years

How can administrative data be used to evaluate policies in the early years?

- The Maternal and Child Health Network warmly invites you to join our lunchtime webinar series, which will showcase existing evaluations of policy in the early years. This will include work in progress as well as completed projects from across the 4 UK nations. Presentations will focus on evaluations of policies using routine and administrative data or secondary analysis of existing data.
- The webinar series is open to anyone with an interest in child and maternal health including academics, policymakers, administrative data controllers, third sector organisations.
- Each webinar will feature a 12-minute presentation followed by 10-15 minutes for questions and discussion.

Please join our lunchtime webinar series (Spring/Summer 2022):

From 12.30-1pm on the following dates:

Thursday 28th April; Tuesday 17th May; Thursday 16th June

Webinar 4:

Thursday 28th April at 12.30pm

Topic: Exploring the impact of the Flying Start programme in Wales using linked administrative data

Speaker: Tony Whiffen

[Register on Eventbrite](#)

Webinar 5:

Tuesday 17th May at 12.30pm

Topic: Evaluations of the ban on smoking inside cars with children present

Speaker: Anthony Laverty

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Webinar 6:

Thursday 16th June at 12.30pm

Topic: Using linked administrative data to evaluate Scotland's Baby Box Scheme

Speaker: Ronan McCabe

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Topic: Exploring the impact of the Flying Start programme in Wales using linked administrative data
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- Flying Start is the Welsh Government's (WG) flagship Early Years programme for families with children aged less than 4 years of age.
- We linked administrative data for Flying Start in Swansea to investigate the potential impact of the Flying Start programme in terms of healthcare utilisation, school absence and school readiness, including trends over time.
- We also examined the amount of free childcare children received under the programme and explored the potential effect of 'dosage' on school readiness in terms of baseline assessment on entry to school.
- We found possible impacts of the Flying Start programme on low birth weight, teenage pregnancies and unauthorised absence from primary school. Baseline assessment outcomes may also be more strongly related to the percentage attendance at agreed childcare sessions than the amount of sessions ('dosage') agreed to at the outset.
- *Speaker:* Tony Whiffen is a Linked Data Analyst based in the Administrative Data Research Unit (ADRU) within Welsh Government. He manages linked admin data research in the SAIL Databank related to the Early Years and Housing themes as well as the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

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Tuesday 17th May at 12.30pm
Topic: Evaluations of the ban on smoking inside cars with children present
Speaker: Anthony Laverty



- England and Wales banned smoking tobacco inside cars with children present in 2015, and Scotland followed in 2016.
- The aims of this policy were to reduce exposure of children to second-hand smoke, as well as being part of a wider ambition to de-normalise smoking.
- We conducted two natural experiments comparing levels of second-hand smoke exposure among children before and after policy implementation.
- These estimated reductions in exposure after policy implementation, with some evidence that any impacts may be mainly among girls, younger children, and those in less deprived areas.
- *Speaker:* Anthony Laverty is a Lecturer in the Public Health Policy Evaluation Unit in the Department of Primary Care & Public Health at Imperial College London.

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Topic: Using linked administrative data to evaluate
Scotland's Baby Box Scheme
Speaker: Ronan McCabe



- Scotland's Baby Box Scheme was introduced by the Scottish Government in 2017 and made available to all parents in Scotland.
- As a universal, unconditional, and non-commercial policy it has implications for maternal and infant health.
- It is a good example of where linked administrative data can be used to evaluate the health impact of a policy.
- Scotland's Baby Box Scheme may have had a beneficial impact on infant and maternal tobacco smoke exposure and breastfeeding in young mothers.
- However, the policy does not appear to have had any impact on infant sleeping position.
- *Speaker:* Ronan McCabe is coming to the end of his PhD at the University of Glasgow's MRC/CSO Social & Public Health Sciences Unit. He has an interest in the social determinants of health and policy evaluation.