MatCHNet
Maternal and Child Health Network

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 2023)
From 12.30-1pm on the following dates:
Wednesday 29 March; Tuesday 25 April; Tuesday 23 May

Webinar 7
29 March at 12.30pm
Topic: Impact of the UK Healthy Start Voucher Scheme on maternal and infant health
Speaker: Ruth Dundas
Register on Eventbrite

Webinar 8
25 April at 12.30pm
Topic: Challenges in evaluating health visiting for under 5s in England
Speakers: Jenny Woodman/Katie Harron
Register on Eventbrite

Webinar 9
23 May at 12.30pm
Topic: Using the ECHILD database to explore variation in school-recorded SEN for children with major congenital anomalies
Speakers: Kate Lewis/Ruth Gilbert
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UKPRP Prevention Research Partnership
Joint action for a healthier, fairer future

MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit

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Webinar 7: Wednesday 29 March at 12.30pm

Topic: Impact of the UK Healthy Start Voucher Scheme on maternal and infant health
Speaker: Ruth Dundas

- The Healthy Start Voucher (HSV) Scheme is a targeted scheme for low-income pregnant women and their children in the UK. Previous evaluations have focused on the implementation and acceptability of the scheme.
- This evaluation was a mixed methods study, using a natural experiment design to evaluate the impact of HSV on health outcomes. We conducted secondary analysis of two existing survey data sets – Growing up in Scotland and the Infant Feeding Survey – integrated with a qualitative study with mothers to understand the processes involved in the (non)take-up or discontinuation of HSV and the everyday experiences of using the vouchers.
- We used a range of outcomes including breastfeeding & vitamin use in pregnancy; other outcomes were child weight (birthweight, low birthweight), child morbidity (pre-term birth, hospitalisations in first year), infant & child feeding (use of formula milk and cow's milk, age at introduction of solid food); and maternal health (mental health, smoking, alcohol use & financial strain).
- This evaluation provides useful insights about policies aimed at changing behaviour and the use of voucher incentives.
- *Speaker*: Ruth Dundas is Professor of Social Epidemiology at the University of Glasgow and is Principal Investigator of the Maternal and Child Health Network (MatCHNet).

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Webinar 8: Tuesday 25 April at 12.30pm

Topic: Challenges in evaluating health visiting for under 5s in England
Speakers: Jenny Woodman and Katie Harron

- Supporting children and families in the early years can help ensure every child reaches their potential, including those who need extra help. Health visitors are qualified public health nurses who support families and work with other professionals such as social workers GPs.
- However, there is limited research into understanding whether seeing the same health visitor regularly and face-to-face is the best way of supporting most families.
- We have been aiming to determine how much difference health visiting makes to a child's health, and to answer questions about the importance of number of visits and which member of the health visiting team delivers these contacts.
- In this webinar, we discuss the challenges of evaluating universal interventions, and how we plan to address these by using mixed methods to integrate analyses of national linked administrative data with in-depth case studies, to provide evidence to inform decision making by government and professionals.
- *Speakers*: Jenny Woodman is Associate Professor in Child and Family Policy and Co-Director of the NIHR Children and Families Policy Research Unit. Katie Harron is Professor of Statistics at the UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health.

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Webinar 9: Tuesday 23 May at 12.30pm

Topic: Using the ECHILD database to explore variation in school-recorded SEN for children with major congenital anomalies
Speakers: Kate Lewis and Ruth Gilbert

- The ECHILD (Education and Child Health Insights from Linked Data) project joins together existing health, education and social care information for all children in England for the first time.
- We will provide an update on when and how the ECHILD database will be available for wider research use.
- We present a study using ECHILD to look at school-recorded special educational needs (SEN) for children with hospital-identified major congenital anomalies.
- We found that recorded SEN among children with major congenital anomalies was markedly higher than for those without these conditions, but over 50% had no recorded SEN.
- Our findings suggest government reforms to the SEN system in 2014/15 reduced SEN provision for children with major congenital anomalies.
- Continued work as part of the HOPE study includes local authority-level variation in recorded SEN and assessment of the impact of SEN on later health outcome using causal inference methods.
- *Speakers*: Ruth Gilbert is Professor of Clinical Epidemiology and Kate Lewis is a Research Fellow, both in the Population, Policy and Practice Research and Teaching Department at UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health.

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