
A FOCUS ON HEALTH

Update 2016



BCS70

1970 British
Cohort Study

CHILDHOOD SLEEPING PROBLEMS AND ADULT MENTAL HEALTH

Findings from BCS70 have shown that people who have trouble sleeping during childhood are more likely to have mental health problems in later life.

Research from Cardiff University and Goldsmiths, University of London, revealed that children who experienced severe sleeping difficulties at age 5 were more likely to suffer from depression at age 34.



WHAT WE ASKED YOU

When you were 5 years old, your parents told us whether you had trouble sleeping.

When we visited you at age 34, we asked you about your health over the previous year, and whether you had any specific medical conditions, including depression.

Just under a quarter of you were reported to have experienced mild problems sleeping at age 5. Severe problems were much rarer – about 1 per cent. However, these children were twice as likely to suffer from depression in their 30s as those who had no sleeping difficulties.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDHOOD SLEEP AND DEPRESSION

Depression was more common in people who had mild (12%) or severe (21%) sleeping difficulties in childhood, compared to those who had no problems (11%).

Depression was also more common among women, and those whose mothers reported feeling depressed when they were children.

Childhood sleeping problems were not connected to your gender, family background, or whether your parents divorced or remarried while you were growing up. There was also no connection between trouble sleeping in childhood and your social class, marital status or employment in adulthood.

WIDER BENEFITS

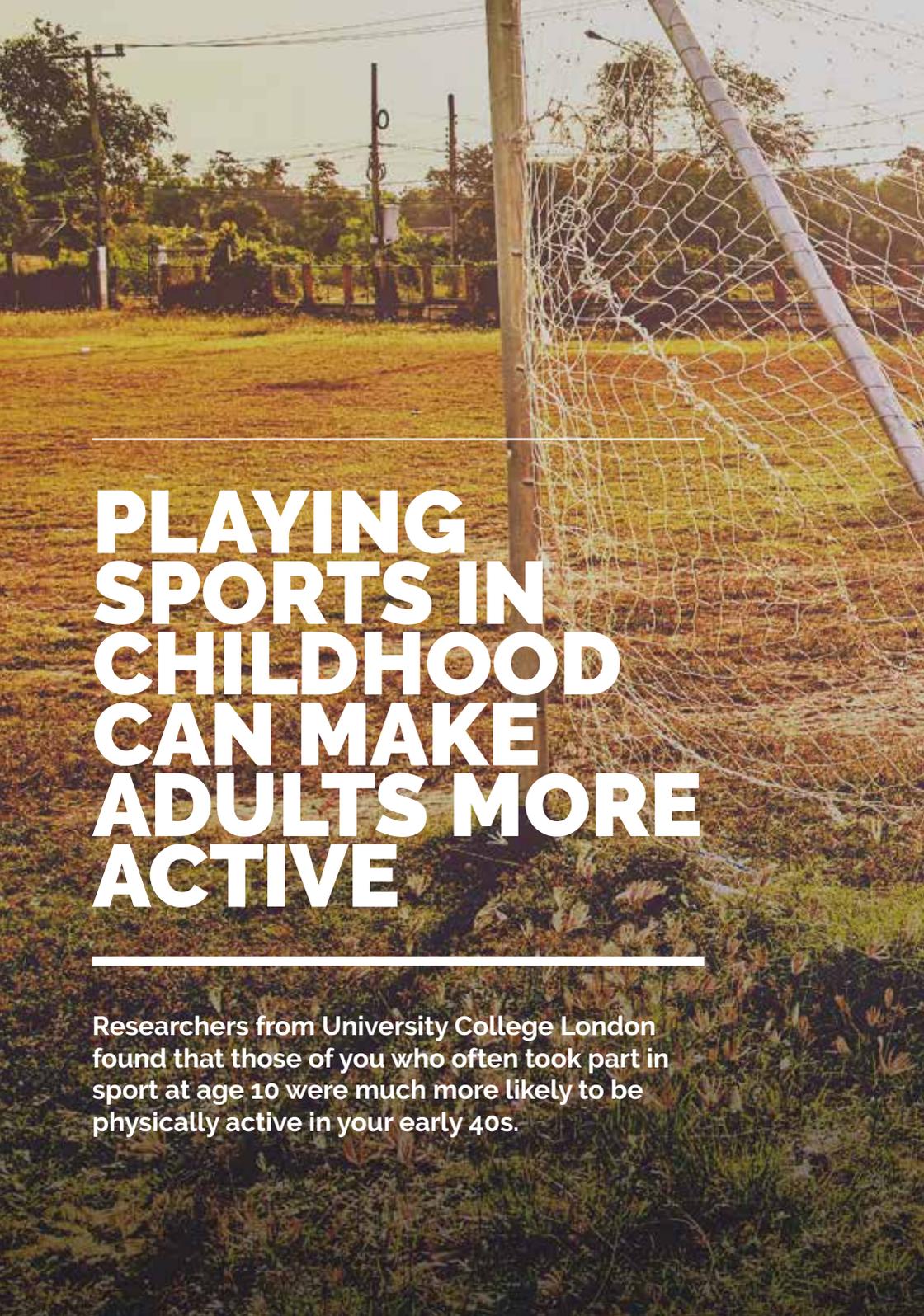
The researchers explained: "Further research is needed to explore whether screening and the treatment of children for poor sleeping patterns might have a positive impact upon their mental health in adulthood."

"Poor sleep in adulthood has been linked with hypertension, diabetes, depression and obesity... successful identification and treatment for children with sleeping difficulties could have large dividends across many aspects of health in the future."

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 1 in 5 people who had severe problems sleeping at age 5 went on to have depression at age 34, compared to just over 1 in 10 of those who had no trouble sleeping.





PLAYING SPORTS IN CHILDHOOD CAN MAKE ADULTS MORE ACTIVE

Researchers from University College London found that those of you who often took part in sport at age 10 were much more likely to be physically active in your early 40s.



GETTING CHILDREN INTO SPORTS FROM A YOUNG AGE INCREASES THE CHANCES OF THEM BEING ACTIVE LATER IN LIFE.

WHAT WE ASKED YOU

When you were 10, your parents or guardians told us what kinds of sports you enjoyed and whether you played outside in parks, playgrounds and streets.

When you were 42 years old, we asked you to let us know how often you took part in physical activities and played sports.

FORMING LIFELONG HABITS

More than half of you participated in sports regularly at age 10, and around 40 per cent of you played outside every day.

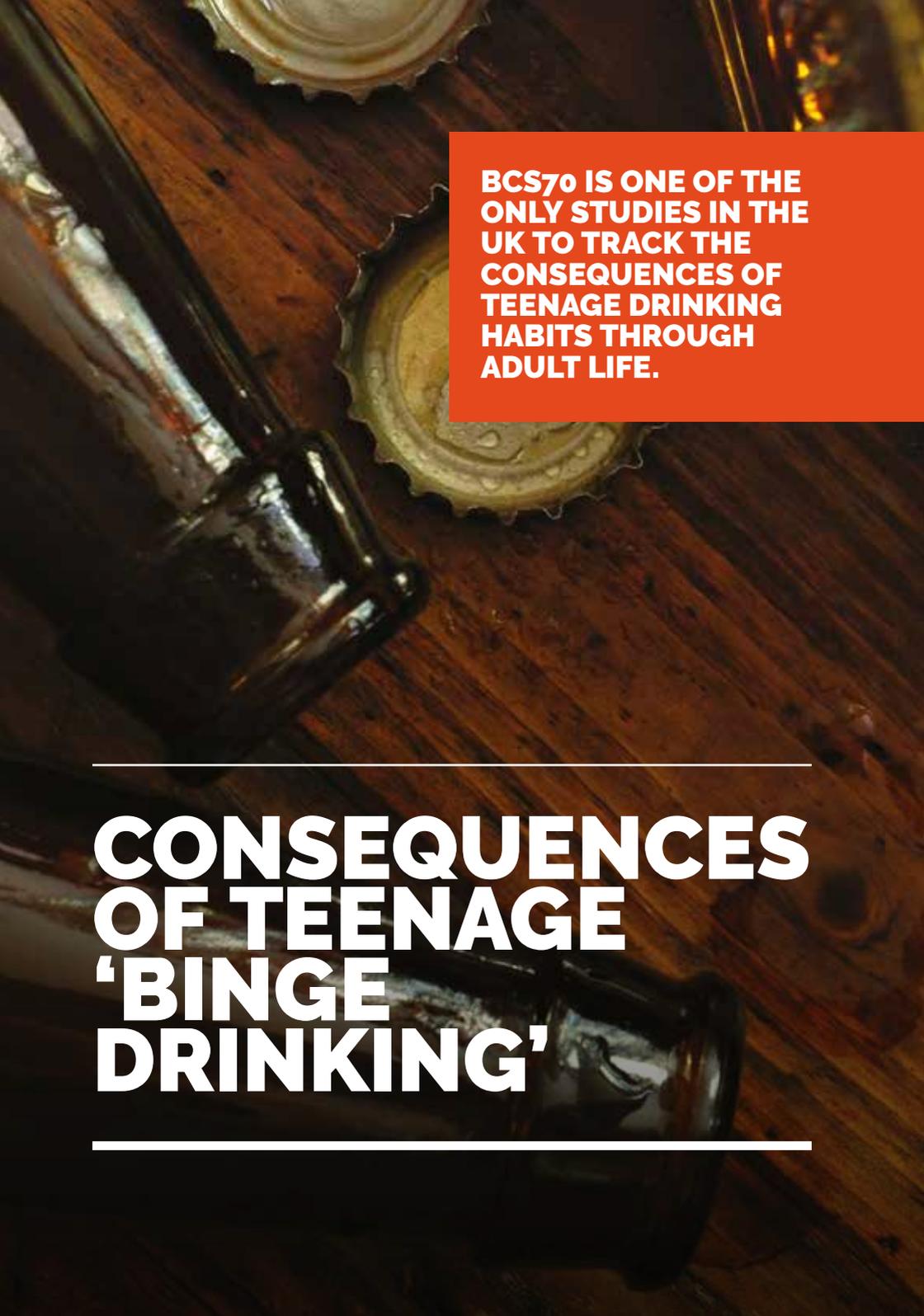
At age 42, around 2 in 5 of you said you took part in physical activity several times a week.

Playing sports was more strongly linked to adult exercise than outdoor play. While children who took part in sports were

significantly more likely to be active adults, there was no association between outdoor play in childhood and physical activity 32 years later.

“One possible explanation for the different effects of outdoor play and sports engagement is that, unlike participation in sport, outdoor play is a childhood behaviour; adults do not ‘play’ in the outdoor environment in the same way as do children,” the researchers said.

“Whereas sports enjoyed in childhood may form lasting preferences that persist into adulthood, preferences for active outdoor play formed during childhood may fade as a child ages.”



BCS70 IS ONE OF THE ONLY STUDIES IN THE UK TO TRACK THE CONSEQUENCES OF TEENAGE DRINKING HABITS THROUGH ADULT LIFE.

CONSEQUENCES OF TEENAGE 'BINGE DRINKING'

Findings from BCS70 have shown that binge drinking in adolescence may be contributing to social and health inequalities later in life.

Researchers from University College London found that members of your generation who drank heavily as teenagers were not only more likely to continue drinking excessively into adulthood, but also experienced a range of other problems.

WHAT WE ASKED YOU

When we visited you at age 16, you told us about your drinking habits. Binge drinking was considered to be consuming four or more drinks in a row on two or more occasions in the past fortnight. Frequent drinkers were those who reported drinking alcohol at least twice a week over the past year.

Boys drank more than girls during adolescence. Teenagers who drank regularly were more likely to binge drink than those who only drank on occasion.

We asked you about your alcohol consumption again at age 30, as well as other aspects of your lives including your educational achievements, current earnings, and whether you had ever been excluded from school or convicted of a crime.

BINGE DRINKING AND ADULT OUTCOMES

Teenage binge drinkers of both sexes were more likely to be dependent on alcohol by age 30 than their peers who drank at more moderate levels in adolescence. They were also more likely to have been convicted of a crime, been excluded from school or to have left education without any qualifications.

Teenage binge drinkers were less likely to be in a professional or managerial job at age 30, although adolescent drinking habits were not directly connected to adult earnings.

Interestingly, drinking frequently in adolescence did not result in the same negative adult consequences as binge drinking.

"Public health efforts have focused on reducing overall alcohol intake among adolescents and young adults...our finding that adolescent binge drinking significantly increases the risk of adult adversity and social exclusion supports the consideration of policy interventions specifically targeted at binge drinking," the researchers said.

KEEP IN TOUCH

If you change your address or phone number, please let us know so that we can contact you in the future.

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