
WHAT'S NEW IN BCS70

Update 2018



BCS70

1970 British
Cohort Study

UPDATE ON THE 2016-18 SURVEY

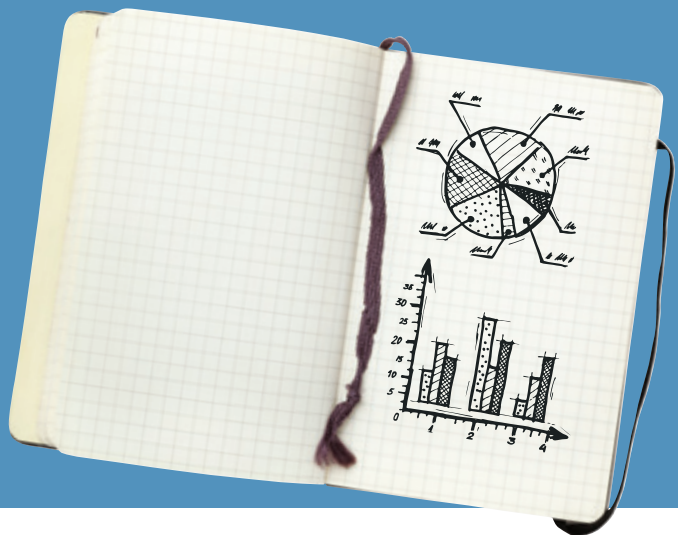
The 2016-18 Survey continued all the way through last year and is now scheduled to finish in the summer.

We are delighted that around 7,000 of you have been interviewed so far and most were also happy for a nurse to take a series of health measurements. This data will allow us to gain a better understanding of some of the most significant health issues affecting society today.

When we write to you next year we will tell you about some of the early findings from the survey.

If you have not heard from us and you would like to take part in the 2016-18 Survey, or if you have recently moved house, please let us know so that we can get in touch with you.

We are enormously grateful for the time that you continue to give to BCS70 – your involvement is absolutely vital to the ongoing success of the study.



CHILDHOOD BACKGROUND AND WEIGHT IN MIDDLE AGE

BCS70 is helping to improve our understanding of the factors influencing people's chances of being overweight and obese in middle age. Researchers from the UCL Institute of Education looked at whether there is a link between your circumstances during your childhood and teenage years, and your weight when you reached your forties.

WHAT WE ASKED YOU

Throughout your childhood we collected information about your father's occupation. Every time we have seen you we have either measured or asked you about your height and weight. This information is used to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI), which is a measure of whether individuals are a healthy weight for their height.





YOUR FATHER'S OCCUPATION AND YOUR BMI

Researchers compared your father's occupation when you were ten and your BMI at 42, and found children from less privileged homes reached middle age at greater risk of being overweight or obese. The relationship was stronger for women than for men.

The average BMI at 42 for women whose fathers had unskilled jobs

when they were ten was 2.4 points higher than for those whose fathers had professional occupations. For a 5ft 4inch woman, this means a difference of 6.35 kg or 1 stone. For men, the social class gap was much smaller. The difference between men whose fathers had unskilled jobs and men whose fathers had professional jobs was 0.6 BMI points.

Father's occupation and your average BMI at age 42

PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATION	UNSKILLED OCCUPATION
 26.9 BMI	 27.5 BMI
 25.5 BMI	 27.9 BMI

To put these differences in context, a healthy BMI ranges from 18.5 to 24.9. The average BMI for both men and women was in the overweight range, even for those from relatively advantaged childhood backgrounds.

The information we've collected from BCS70 study members will help to raise awareness of overweight and obesity in middle age, and support changes in health policy.



THE LINK BETWEEN MOTHER'S AGE AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Researchers have long been interested in the link between the age of mothers when they give birth and the subsequent health and wellbeing of their children.

A recent study by researchers in the UK, Germany and Finland examined whether the relationship between a child's reading and writing skills and their mother's age when they were born is changing between generations.

WHAT WE ASKED YOU

During our first visit to you and your family, we recorded how old your mother was when she gave birth to you. When you were ten you completed reading and writing tests. This information was compared with data collected about children born in 1958 and 2000-01 who sat comparable tests at a similar age.

CHANGES IN SOCIETY

Among your generation and also those born in 1958, children of younger mothers tended to perform better on the tests compared to those whose mothers gave birth at an older age.

However, children born in 2000-01 whose mothers were in their late thirties when they gave birth, scored higher in the reading and writing tests than those whose mothers were younger.

This change is thought to be related to the differing circumstances of children born to older mothers nowadays. Children born to older mothers in 1958 and 1970 were often one of many siblings and their families tended to be poorer than average. By comparison, today families with older mothers tend to be smaller and are generally better off on average. These factors appear to have a positive link to children's development.

BCS70 IN THE NEWS

The BCS70 research on mother's age and children's cognitive development was reported by the media in the UK and internationally. The story appeared in The Telegraph and the Daily Mail, as well as featuring on international news websites.

CLIMBING THE HOUSING LADDER



Findings from BCS70 have shown that parents' home ownership is becoming an increasingly important factor in determining whether children go on to become home owners.

Researchers based at the University of Surrey and the London School of Economics compared how rates of home ownership have changed

across generations, and how this is related to parental home ownership.

WHAT WE ASKED YOU

When you were ten, we asked your parents questions about their occupation, income, and whether they owned their home. In 2012, when you were 42, we asked you if you were a home owner.

GENERATIONAL CHANGE

Home ownership in Britain grew during the post-war period, but property price rises from the 1980s onwards have made it increasingly difficult to get on the housing ladder. The researchers investigated the effect of this change by comparing your generation's chances of home ownership with those of the previous generation, born in 1958, and the extent to which this was related to whether your parents were home owners.

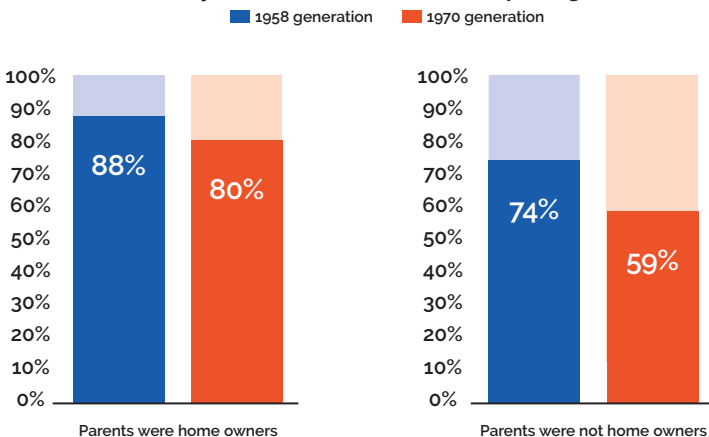
Among those born in 1958, 81 per cent owned their home at the age of 42. Almost nine in ten (88%) of those whose parents had been home owners when study members were children, were home owners themselves, compared to 74 per cent of those whose parents had not been home owners.

When your generation reached the age of 42, levels of home ownership had fallen to 73 per cent. The reduction in home ownership had a particularly big effect on those of you whose parents had not been home owners - 80 per cent of you whose parents were home owners were on the property ladder, compared to just 59 per cent of you whose parents did not own their home.

The researchers explained that their findings show that the link between parents' background and their children's future home ownership has been getting stronger.

"This suggests that children's life chances have become more strongly tied to those of their parents, than in previous generations. More affluent parents may help their children financially, or it may be that children of home owners expect to own their own homes."

Study members' home ownership at age 42



KEEP IN TOUCH

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

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