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Coverage
United Kingdom
Theme
Health and Care

The Health of Children and Young People

Sexually transmitted infections among young people aged under 20 has doubled between 1991 and 2001, according to an analysis published today by the Office for National Statistics.

Other analyses of the health of children and young people (aged under 20) in the UK during the period 1990 to 2001 describe how health was affected by socio-economic status and health related behaviour.

The analyses are presented in articles on the National Statistics website. They cover demographic trends; provision and use of services; diet, nutrition, dental health and exercise; drug-use, smoking and drinking; infectious diseases; adolescent sexual health; asthma and allergic diseases; social inequalities; disability; congenital anomalies; mental health; and childhood cancer.

Some of the main findings for the United Kingdom are:

Infectious diseases

- Between 1991 and 2001, the number of new episodes of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among those aged under 20 doubled in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from 669,291 to 1,332,910.
- The rate of diagnosis for genital chlamydia infection in females aged under 20 has increased since the mid-1990s. In 2001, the highest rates of diagnosed chlamydia were among 16- to 19-year-olds (1,035 per 100,000 females).
- Two-thirds of children aged under 14 diagnosed with HIV acquired their infection from their mother at or around the time of birth. Most of the remainder acquired it through blood treatment for haemophilia.

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The analyses are available free on the National Statistics website:
www.statistics.gov.uk/children



- The incidence of meningococcal meningitis group C among children aged 12 months to 17 years of age fell by 80 per cent due to high uptake (85 per cent) of the immunisation vaccine.
- In 1988, the single measles vaccine was replaced with the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. In 1991, there was a 90 per cent uptake of the MMR vaccine among two-year olds. This declined to 84 per cent in 2001.

Mental health

- About one in ten children aged 5-15 living in Great Britain have a clinically recognisable mental disorder (11 per cent of boys and 8 per cent of girls).
- Children looked-after by local authority, young people who are homeless, and young offenders, are among the groups most at risk for psychiatric disorder.

Obesity

- Between 1995 to 2000 the proportion of overweight boys in England aged 2 to 19 years increased by 2 per cent. The increase for girls was by 3 per cent, so that by 2000, 20 per cent of boys and 27 per cent of girls were overweight.
- The proportion of school children spending less than one hour per week on physical education increased from 5 per cent in 1994 to 18 per cent in 1999.

Cancer

- Cancer is very rare in childhood, and incidence has not changed very much for the past 40 years.
- Survival has improved markedly since the 1960s, and by the mid-1990s, nearly 75 per cent of children with cancer survived at least 5 years after diagnosis.
- The number of adult survivors of childhood cancer has greatly increased, from around 1,400 in 1971 to almost 15,000 in 2000.

Inequalities

- In England and Wales, between 1990 and 2001 the proportion of live births where the father was in a manual occupation declined and increased for non-manual occupations. The proportion registered by the mother alone remained stable.
- There were marked differences in the prevalence of mental disorders among children by social class (as measured by the occupation of head of household). Children of families in Social Class V (unskilled occupations) were approximately three times more likely to have a mental health problem than those in Social Class I (professionals): 15 per cent compared with 5 per cent.
- In 2000, wide differences existed between ethnic groups in breast-feeding, with 95 per cent of black women breast-feeding initially compared with 67 per cent of white women.
- Children from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese ethnic groups were less likely than other backgrounds to report illness or injury experienced within the past 2 weeks.
- Girls of Afro-Caribbean and Pakistani ethnic origin were more likely to be obese than girls in the general population.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. A list of the 12 articles on the health of children and young people published today is attached.
2. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
3. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2004.

The Health of Children and Young People

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