



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Changing Families,
Changing Food.

Healthy Start

Principal Investigators

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Researchers

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Summary

From a date to be notified in late 2006, the longstanding UK Government Welfare Food Scheme for low-income pregnant women and children, which provides liquid and formula cow's milk, is to be replaced by an initiative called 'Healthy Start' which will:

- Include fresh fruit and vegetables as well as milk and infant formula milk;
- Support breastfeeding
- Encourage earlier and closer contact between health professionals such as midwives and health visitors and families from disadvantaged groups.

This research project will identify current practice in maternal and child nutrition and breastfeeding in a disadvantaged community. Outcomes will include assessment of dietary intakes, feeding and eating patterns in low-income pregnant women and their infants, and an evaluation of the introduction of 'Healthy Start' on these behaviours.

Royal Holloway
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Research questions

- Do pregnant women and new mothers in Sheffield eat an adequate diet?
- How do household income, ethnicity, maternal age and education level, dietary intake, cooking ability and shopping behaviour of mothers in Sheffield, influence the feeding of their infants?
- Will the introduction of the new 'Healthy Start' initiative affect the dietary intake of pregnant women and new mothers in Sheffield?
- Do health and social care practitioners in Sheffield have the expertise, confidence and capacity of to provide the dietary information recommended under the 'Healthy Start' initiative, to low-income pregnant women, new mothers and their infants?



Research design

The project will consist of a Service Evaluation before and after the introduction of the 'Healthy Start' initiative amongst recipient women and their children in Sheffield.

The following four instruments will be administered as appropriate to Caucasian and Pakistani pregnant and postpartum women, by the nutrition research team (NRT) based at the Jessop Wing:

- Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ)
- 24-hour dietary recall
- Subject Information Questionnaire (SIQ)
- Infant Feeding Questionnaire (IFQ)

The 'Changing Families, Changing Food' Programme

'*Changing Families, Changing Food*' is a major inter-disciplinary research programme, funded by The Leverhulme Trust. The Programme began in October 2005 and will run for just over three years.

It is organised into three research strands on: pregnancy and motherhood; childhood and family life; and family and community. Focusing on contemporary Britain, the Programme also includes some international comparisons and a 'time-line' to establish the quantitative and qualitative nature of social changes affecting families and food over the last century.

The Programme is coordinated by Peter Jackson (Director of Research for the Social Sciences at Sheffield University) and is based in ICoSS (the University's new social science facility). The Programme involves colleagues from Clinical Sciences, East Asian Studies, Geography, Nursing and Midwifery, the School for Health and Related Research and Sociological Studies at Sheffield in collaboration with colleagues in Health and Social Care at Royal Holloway, University of London.

The research takes food as the lens through which to observe recent changes in family life and examines how changes in family form have affected patterns of food consumption. The Programme's findings are expected to contribute to current debates about obesity and nutrition, media and consumption, food choice and deprivation.

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