

The Families, Children and Child Care (FCCC) study in relation to area characteristics: Recruitment and sample description

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Abstract

The aims of the paper are to (1) provide an overview of the recruitment procedures for the Families, Children and Child Care study (FCCC) (2) investigate whether non-participation was related to ward poverty level, and (3) examine the relationship between ward and individual level indicators of poverty in the recruited sample. In total 1862 mothers gave contact details for a later approach of which 217 were found not to meet eligibility criteria and 444 subsequently decided not to participate. The rate of participation was lower for mothers recruited in more deprived wards (as measured by the Child Poverty Index, CPI; Noble et al., 2000). Although the two recruitment sites, North London and Oxfordshire, differed with regard to levels of deprivation; the North London participants were in relatively deprived areas (below the national average) and the Oxfordshire participants were in less deprived areas (above the national average), the combined sample reflected the national distribution of deprivation. Mothers' self-reported socio-economic information was related to area level of poverty.

Acknowledgements

George Smith, at the Department of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Oxford, kindly linked the mothers' postcode information with ward-level indicators of deprivation. Fiona Roberts compiled census information.

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The aims of the paper are to (1) provide an overview of the recruitment procedures for the Families, Children and Child Care study (see research protocol on this website: Sylva, Stein & Leach, 2000) (2) investigate whether non-participation was related to ward poverty level, and (3) examine the relationship between ward and individual level indicators of poverty in the recruited sample.

1. Recruitment procedure

The data for the FCCC were collected on two fieldwork sites, in North London and Oxfordshire. The recruitment centred on ante-natal clinics held in two large hospitals, one in North London and one in Oxfordshire, both catering to demographically diverse populations. In addition, a number of community post-natal clinics were used for recruitment to reach more disadvantaged families, so that the distribution of socioeconomic class would reflect that of England as closely as possible. During the final phase, selective over-recruitment of disadvantaged mothers was carried out, whereby high socioeconomic class mothers were excluded in order to achieve a balanced overall sample. When mothers in clinics were asked whether they were interested in the study, a total of 1862 mothers gave their contact details to be approached for participating in the study, 991 in London and 871 in Oxford (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1. Study participation in North London and Oxfordshire

		Site		Total
		North London	Oxfordshire	
in 3m sample	did not participate	391	270	661 (35.5%)
	participated	600	601	1201 (64.5%)
Total		991	871	1862 (100.0%)

Out of the total 1862 mothers who gave their contact details, 1201 (64.5%) mothers joined the study, 217 (11.7%) were found not to be eligible for the study and 444 (23.8%) opted not to take part. The initial non-participation rate was thus 27.0% (444 of 1645 eligible subjects). There were more North London mothers who did not participate in the study than Oxfordshire mothers ($\chi^2_{[1]} = 10.12$; $p < .01$).

Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria applied to the child: birth weight 2500 grams or more, gestation of 37 weeks or more, no significant congenital abnormalities, being cared for in Special Baby Care Unit (SBCU) for no more than 48 hours, and being a singleton. The following eligibility criteria applied to the mother: aged 16 or more at child's birth, adequately fluent in English for interview, no intention to move away over the next 1-2 years, and no plans to have their child adopted or placed in the care of social services. Table 2 gives the reasons for non-participation.

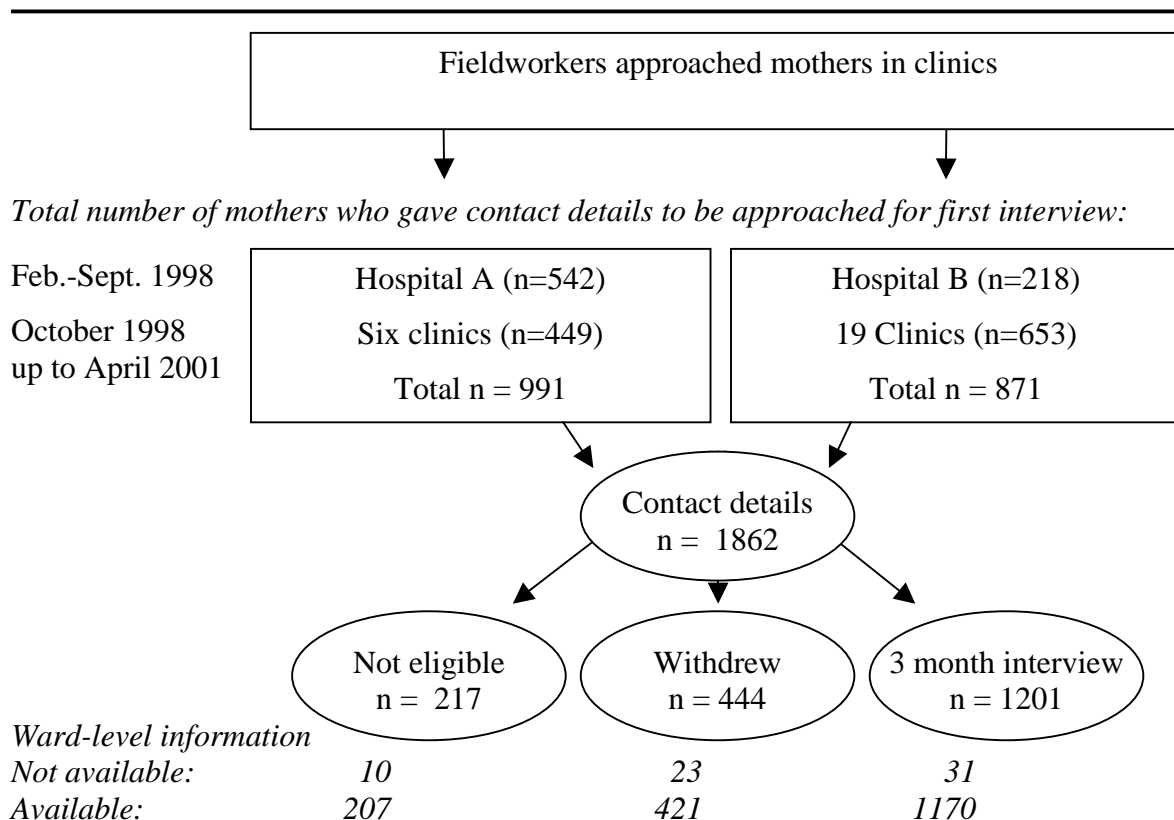


Figure 1: Flowchart of recruitment procedure and availability of ward-level information (based on post-codes)

Table 2. Reason for initial non-participation or exclusion from the study

		Reason for exclusion recorded		Total
		Did not join	Not eligible	
REASON	Refusal	251	0	251
	Uncontactable	156	0	156
	Cancelled, unavailable	13	0	13
	Moved, intention to move	0	48	48
	Insufficient English	0	20	20
	Partner refusal	24	0	24
	Baby underweight	0	28	28
	Baby too old	0	26	26
	Socioeconomic class ^a	0	69	69
	Other reason ^b	0	26	26
Total		444	217	661

^a During the final phase of the recruitment selective over-recruitment of disadvantaged mothers was carried out, whereby high socioeconomic class mothers were excluded in order to achieve a balanced overall sample. ^b The 'other reason' category consists of babies who were seriously ill, had been cared in special care units more than 48h, who were still-born or the mother was too young at child's birth.

Table 3. Mothers' and fathers' socioeconomic class distribution in the FCCC study compared to English mothers (2001 census)

	North London			Oxfordshire			All FCCC		England ^d
	FCCC		Census ^b	FCCC		Census ^c	N	%	%
	N	%	%	N	%	%			
<i>Socio-Economic Class^a of Mothers</i>									
Working	232	38.7	34.7	249	41.4	34.3	481	40.0	42.2
Intermediate	116	19.3	20.6	105	17.5	24.8	221	18.4	24.5
Managerial and professional	252	42.0	44.7	247	41.1	40.9	499	41.5	33.3
Total	600			601			1,201		
<i>Socio-Economic Class^a of Fathers</i>									
Working	162	30.9	32.9	165	29.5	34.4	327	30.1	41.5
Intermediate	90	17.1	18.3	76	13.6	17.9	166	15.3	19.3
Managerial and professional	273	52.0	48.8	319	57.0	47.7	592	54.6	39.2
Total	525			560			1,085		

Note: ^a = The Socio-Economic Classes (SEC; Elias, Halstead & Prandy, 1993; Rose & O'Reilly, 1998), was used: Working Class includes unskilled labour, semi-routine and routine occupations and long-term unemployed; Intermediate Class including clerical, service, small scale employers and own account workers; and Managerial and Professional Class including large employers and managers, professionals, associate professionals (ancillaries to professionals), small managers and higher supervisors. ^b = Census information was derived for four Northern London recruitment areas (Census information for 2001 in National Statistics, 2005). ^c = Census information is for Oxfordshire county. ^d = Census information for England (i.e., excluding information for Wales, Scotland and North Ireland).

Socioeconomic class in FCCC and in the population

Overall the recruitment procedure resulted in a sample which was relatively balanced with regard to mother's socioeconomic class when compared with National Census figures for the respective areas (see Table 3). In both North London and Oxfordshire the proportion of working class mothers was larger than the proportions at the area level. The proportion of intermediate class mothers was slightly below the area figure in North London and 7.3% off in Oxfordshire. The proportion of managerial class mothers was slightly below the area figures in both North London and Oxfordshire. Having included the 69 managerial class mothers would have skewed the distribution more. The distribution of the partners (1085 mothers reported living with a partner at the time of the interview) was more skewed toward the managerial class. However, this skew was probably due to the 116 single mothers, for whom no partner record, naturally, was available.

2. Area- and family-level predictors of participation

Deprivation Measures at the Ward level

Six separate indices of deprivation were available at the ward level (Noble et al., 2000): Housing, Income, Child Poverty, Employment, Health, and Education; and one Multiple Deprivation, an aggregate of the aforementioned. A *higher* score on each Index (either a z-score type of scale or one ranging between 0-100) indicates a higher level of deprivation. The indices are also expressed as ranks, in relation to all 8414 wards in the UK, and a decile, placing each ward into deciles according to their rank order. A *lower* rank or decile indicates more deprivation. Using their postcode, each participant and non-participant could be linked to the relevant deprivation values for their ward, those living in the same ward having the same scores. For the present study, focusing on the lives of infants the Child Poverty Index (CPI) was deemed the most relevant index. The CPI is an aggregate measure of the proportion of families with 0-16 year old children within each electoral ward, who claim means-tested financial benefits (i.e. income support, job seekers allowance, family credit and disability working allowance; Noble et al., 2000).

Demographic variables at the family level

The ward-level deprivation indicators for each individual were correlated with individual level indices of adversity. These were collected during mother interviews when the child was 3, 10 and 18 months old: mother's educational qualifications (1 = vocational qualifications at age 16 or below, to 6 = higher degree or above), mother's and partner's occupational status as measured by the Socioeconomic Class index (Elias, Halstead & Prandy; Rose & O'Reilly, 1998) by three ordinal categories (1 = working class occupations (e.g. factory work or low level job in service industries), 2 = intermediate occupations (e.g. secretary, data entry), 3 = managerial and professional (e.g. the professions, senior management jobs), adverse living conditions between 3-18 months, and average family income between 3-18 months. Adverse living condition was calculated as the average adversity score when the child was 3, 10 and 18 months. The six-point adversity scale was based on five dichotomous indicators (0=no, 1=yes): living in rented accommodation, having shared bathroom or kitchen, having a garden, more than four stair to flat, having car or access to car, and crowdedness (1.5 or more persons

per room), a higher value indicating more adverse living conditions at the individual level. Family income was the average of the sum of the mother's and their partner's income across the three time points at 3, 10 and 18 months.

In order to link study participants and non-participants to ward-level deprivation (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, IMD; Noble, Penhale, Smith, Wright, Dibben, Owen, Lloyd, 2000), postcode information for 1591 mothers who provided contact details was used (54 or 3.4% had missing information, or a non-valid postcode). Of the 1201 mothers who participated in the study when their child was 3 months old, no postcode was available for 31 of them. Hence, the analysis of area level deprivation was conducted for 1170 families.

In order to investigate the extent to which ward-level poverty predicted non-participation, a logistic hierarchical regression model was specified in MLWin (Rasbash, Steele, Browne & Prosser, 2004). Non-participation was used as dependent variable (0 = participated, 1 = did not participate). Two models were specified. In the first model two fixed effects at the ward-level were included: number of approached mothers per Ward and the Child Poverty Index (Table 4, left). In the second model the Index of Multiple Deprivation was included (Table 4, right). In order to investigate between-ward variance, a random effect was estimated for the intercept.

Table 4. Ward-level predictors of participation

	b	s.e.	e^b	p		b	s.e.	e^b	p
Constant	1.169	0.062			Constant	1.145	0.061		
<i>Fixed effects</i>					<i>Fixed effects</i>				
N mothers in ward	-0.010	0.004	0.99	**	N mothers in ward	-0.009	0.004	0.99	*
CPI (deciles)	0.111	0.024	1.12	***	IMD (deciles)	0.103	0.023	1.11	***
<i>Random effect</i>					<i>Random effect</i>				
Ward	0.000	0.000			Ward	0.000	0.000		

Note: CPI = Child Poverty Index, IMD = Index of Multiple Deprivation, a higher decile indicates less poverty. e^b is the exponential of the beta-weight, interpreted as an Odds-Ratio.

As we can see in Table 4, mothers who lived in wards where more mothers had been approached, were less likely to participate in the study ($p < .01$ and $p < .05$). Mothers who lived in more advantaged wards as indicated by the CPI were more likely to participate in the study ($p < .001$)². The effect of the IMD was very similar to that of the CPI. There was no reliable between-ward variance.

² A number of other models were specified, including more predictors: ward-average maternal educational level, ward-average maternal socioeconomic class, ward-average family income and ward-average adverse living conditions. On their own each of these variables predicted study-participation in the expected direction. Due to collinearity between these variables, and between these variables and the ward-level indices of disadvantage, the separate effects of each demographic variable were not visible when all were entered into a regression model. However, the ward-level demographic predictors were based on information from the participating mothers, and hence biased towards participants.

3. In what kinds of area do the study-participants live?

In order to investigate the kinds of areas in which the study participants lived, a series of descriptive and correlational analyses was conducted. Table 5 gives descriptive information on the average ward-level indices of deprivation for the 1170 families for whom complete postcodes were available.

Table 5. Average scores for the Indices of Deprivation for FCCC participants (N=1170)

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Housing deprivation	1170	-2.20	2.41	.89	.84
Income deprivation	1170	3.74	55.97	20.94	12.17
Child Poverty	1170	1.57	74.06	29.50	17.34
Employment deprivation	1170	1.51	30.72	9.94	6.18
Health deprivation	1170	-2.29	1.68	-.28	.82
Education deprivation	1170	-2.46	2.18	.18	.93
Index of multiple deprivation	1170	1.88	71.11	23.58	15.86

Note: A higher value indicates a higher level of deprivation.

In Table 6 the average deprivation indices for the 259 wards in which the participants lived are presented. The ward-level information is not weighted by the number of participants per ward.

Table 6. Average scores for the Indices of deprivation for the wards from which FCCC participants were recruited (N=259)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std
Housing deprivation	259	-2.20	2.41	.64	1.00
Income deprivation	259	3.74	55.97	17.84	12.23
Child poverty index	259	1.57	74.06	24.69	18.02
Employment deprivation	259	1.51	30.72	9.07	6.85
Health deprivation	259	-2.29	1.68	-.46	.90
Education deprivation	259	-2.46	2.18	-.17	.84
Index of Multiple deprivation	259	1.88	71.11	19.91	16.02

Note: A higher value indicates a higher level of deprivation .

Next, the levels of deprivation at each site were compared for each participant (Table 7) and for each relevant ward (Table 8). The North London mothers lived in more deprived wards than the Oxfordshire mothers, with regard to the income index, child poverty index, employment index, and the multiple deprivation index. All variances and mean-levels were significant at the $p < .001$ level, except those for the education index (variances were tested with the Levene's F-test and mean-level differences with independent groups t-tests). Comparing the wards in which the participants lived, all mean-level differences were significantly different at the $p < .001$ level.

Table 7. Average deprivation scores for FCCC participants (N=1170) by site

Site		N	Min	Max	Mean	Std
North London	Housing deprivation	570	-1.29	2.41	1.48	.47
	Income deprivation	570	6.22	55.97	27.89	11.51
	Child Poverty	570	3.83	74.06	38.56	16.43
	Employment deprivation	570	2.37	30.72	14.35	5.51
	Health deprivation	570	-1.97	1.68	.20	.63
	Education deprivation	570	-1.53	2.18	.26	.96
	Index of multiple deprivation	570	1.88	71.11	32.39	15.06
Oxfordshire	Housing deprivation	600	-2.20	2.02	.32	.71
	Income deprivation	600	3.74	36.28	14.34	8.58
	Child Poverty	600	1.57	49.82	20.90	13.34
	Employment deprivation	600	1.51	12.89	5.75	3.09
	Health deprivation	600	-2.29	.73	-.72	.72
	Education deprivation	600	-2.46	2.04	.11	.90
	Index of multiple deprivation	600	3.25	46.05	15.22	11.45

Table 8. Average deprivation scores for the wards from which FCCC participants were recruited, by site (N=259)

Site		N	Min	Max	Mean	Std
North London	Housing deprivation	120	-1.29	2.41	1.43	.67
	Income deprivation	120	6.22	55.97	26.64	12.07
	Child poverty	120	3.83	74.06	37.22	17.60
	employment deprivation	120	2.37	30.72	14.45	6.48
	Health deprivation	120	-1.97	1.68	.20	.70
	Education deprivation	120	-1.53	2.18	.09	.88
	Multiple deprivation index	120	1.88	71.11	31.23	16.26
Oxfordshire	Housing deprivation	139	-2.20	2.02	-.04	.68
	Income deprivation	139	3.74	36.28	10.24	5.34
	Child poverty	139	1.57	49.82	13.88	9.28
	Employment deprivation	139	1.51	12.89	4.43	2.15
	Health deprivation	139	-2.29	.73	-1.04	.59
	Education deprivation	139	-2.46	2.04	-.40	.74
	Multiple deprivation index	139	3.25	46.05	10.15	6.68

Next, the relationship between numbers recruited was examined in relation to the deprivation scores of their ward. There were between 1 and 42 mothers recruited per ward ($M = 4.52$; $SD = 5.42$). The overall number recruited was higher when deprivation was higher according to all the indices except Employment (see Table 9)(significant correlations ranged from .17 to .35). However, when the two sites were considered separately it was found that there were no such relationships between number of recruited persons per ward and each deprivation index for the North London sample, while these relationships were quite strong in the Oxfordshire sample. Hence, more mothers were recruited in Oxfordshire in the more deprived wards.

Table 9. Correlations between numbers of persons recruited per ward and ward's deprivation indices, by site

	All wards (n = 259)	p	North London (n = 120)	p	Oxford- shire (n = 139)	p
housing deprivation	0.21	***	0.07	ns	0.43	***
income deprivation	0.21	***	0.09	ns	0.63	***
child poverty deprivation	0.22	***	0.06	ns	0.62	***
Employment deprivation	0.10	ns	-0.01	ns	0.50	***
health deprivation	0.17	**	-0.01	ns	0.44	***
education deprivation	0.35	***	0.16	ns	0.56	***
multiple deprivation deprivation	0.19	**	0.06	ns	0.62	***

Note: * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

In Table 10 the Child Poverty Index and the Index of Multiple Deprivation of wards from which FCCC participants were recruited are compared with national averages.

Table 10. Comparison of wards from which FCCC families were recruited with National averages

	Child Poverty Index (CPI)				Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)			
	National	FCCC			National	FCCC		
		All	North London	Oxford- shire		All	North London	Oxford- shire
Mean	26.74	29.50	38.56	20.90	21.70	23.58	32.39	15.22
Median	22.45	26.62	38.67	17.51	16.93	19.77	32.38	11.04
Std	17.02	17.34	16.43	13.34	15.39	15.86	15.06	11.45
Skewness	0.87	0.40	-0.08	0.82	1.27	0.69	0.20	1.49
Kurtosis	0.09	-0.95	-0.95	-0.43	1.24	-0.62	-0.84	1.37
Minimum	0.54	1.57	3.83	1.57	1.16	1.88	1.88	3.25
Maximum	88.71	74.06	74.06	49.82	83.77	71.11	71.11	46.05
25%-ile	13.14	14.68	24.03	10.08	10.18	9.84	19.77	7.06
50%-ile	22.45	26.62	38.67	17.51	16.93	19.77	32.38	11.04
75%-ile	37.43	45.04	51.10	30.16	29.14	36.56	44.31	20.31

The average scores for the whole FCCC sample were slightly above (i.e., more deprived) national values, but these were not significantly different from the national average as indicated by one-group t-tests ($p = .068$ for the CPI, and $p = .075$ for the IMD, respectively). Looking at each site separately North London scores were above ($ps < .001$) and the Oxfordshire-values below ($ps < .001$) the national values.

Next, the distribution of the CPI deciles for the FCCC participants were examined. The lowest decile indicates that the ward was ranked among the 10% most deprived, and the

highest decile, ranked among the 10% least deprived wards in England. In Figure 3a the Child Poverty Index (CPI) deciles for the 259 wards from which the participants were recruited are presented for North London, Oxfordshire and the whole sample, indicating *how many wards* of a certain poverty level the mothers were recruited from. In Figure 3b, the individual level CPI deciles are presented, indicating *how many participants* living in a ward of a certain poverty level participated in the study. Replicating the findings described above, mothers were recruited from more deprived wards in North London and from less deprived wards in Oxfordshire. The graph for the total sample shows that more mothers were recruited from both highly deprived and less deprived wards, but not from averagely deprived wards.

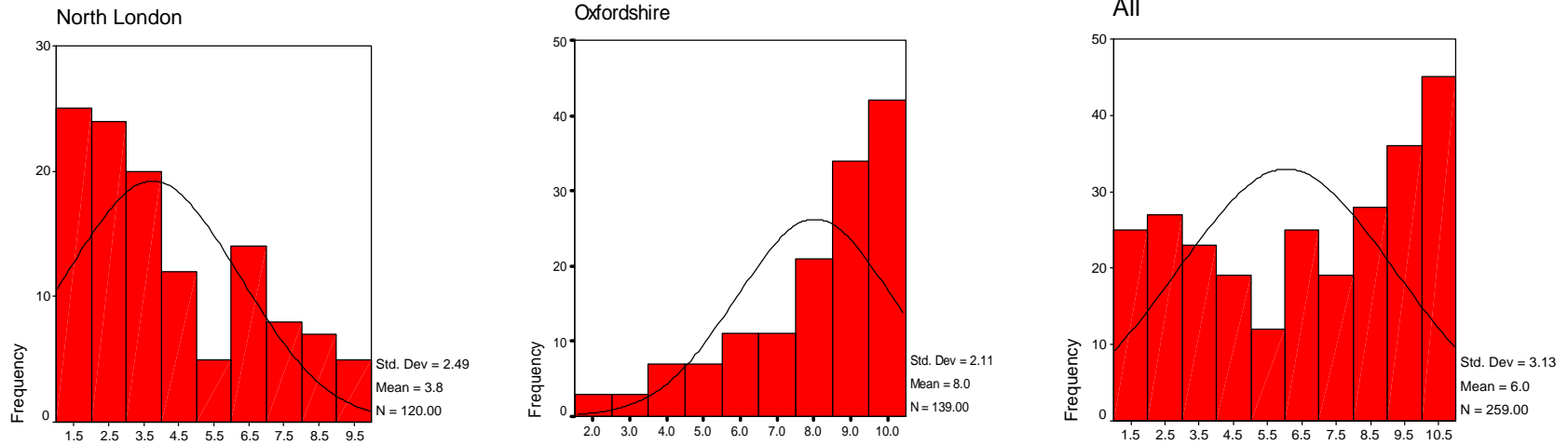


Figure 3a. Ward level deciles of the Child Poverty Index (lower decile indicates higher level of deprivation) for the wards mothers lived in, for North London, Oxfordshire and the full sample respectively.

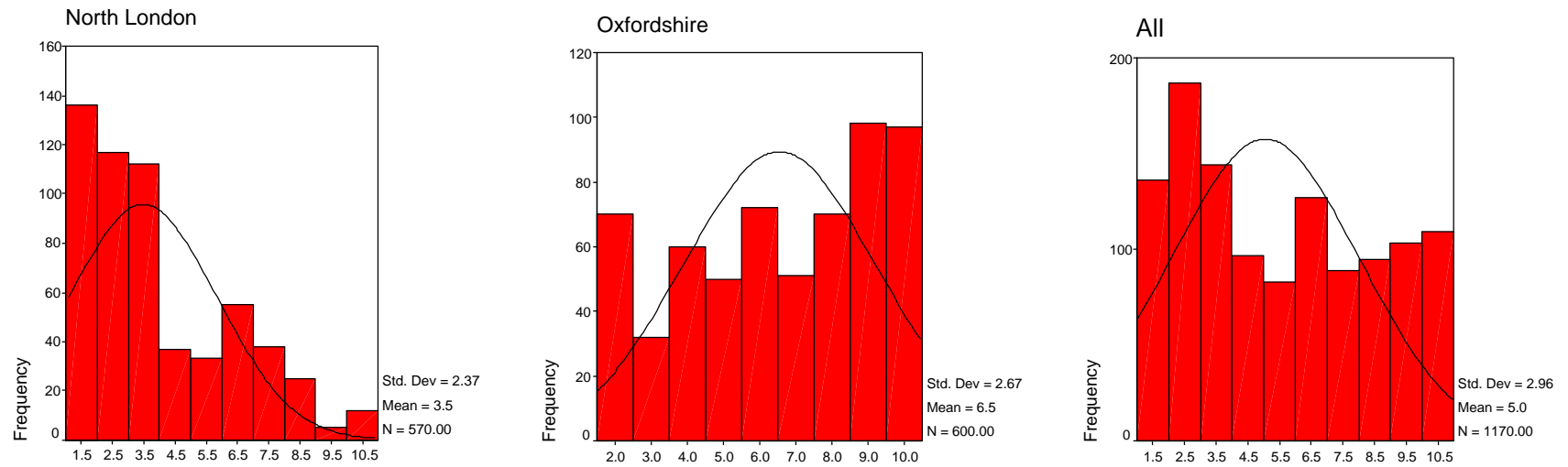


Figure 3b. Ward level deciles of the Child Poverty Index (lower values indicate higher level of deprivation) at the individual level, for North London, Oxfordshire and the combined sample respectively.

It was also observed that a larger group of mothers who lived in deprived areas were recruited from relatively fewer wards in Oxfordshire than in North London (Figure 3b). These comparisons do not, however, give any information on whether a mother who is recruited from a deprived ward is deprived. In order to examine the success or otherwise of the selective recruitment to balance the distribution of socio-economic groups in the sample, the time of the interview was correlated with the ward-deprivation indices (i.e., whether a late interview corresponded with recruitment from a deprived ward). All 3-month interviews were conducted between 20th May 1998 and 9th April 2001 (see Figure 4).

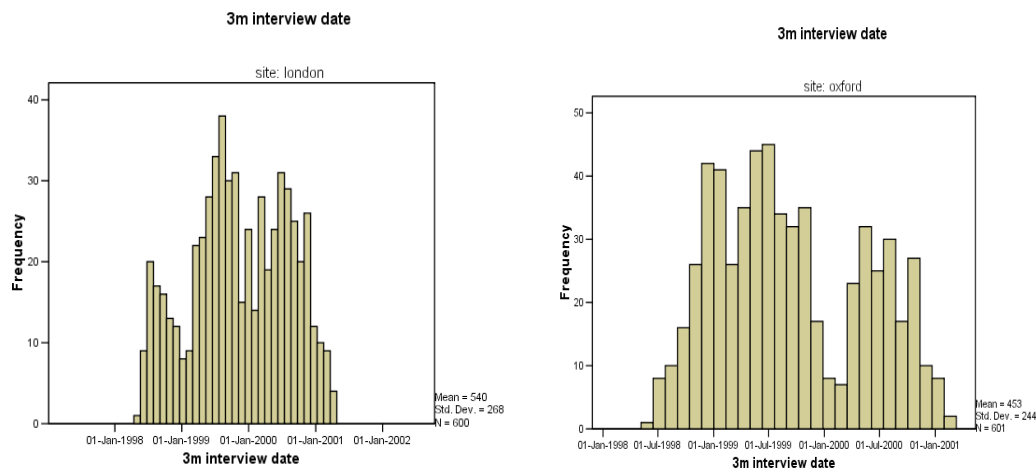


Figure 4. Distribution of interview dates in the North London and Oxfordshire samples respectively.

Spearman's rank order coefficients were used, due to non-normalities in the date and the income variables. As shown in Table 9 (first column), the interview date were positively associated with all the deprivation indices, indicating that mothers from more deprived areas were indeed recruited later in the sampling. When the relationships between the individual demographics and the indices of deprivation were examined (Table 11 Columns 2-6) (higher scores mean more deprivation), all correlations between the deprivation indices and mother's educational level, mothers' and partners' occupational status, and family income were found to be negative and the correlations between the deprivation indices and individual environmental adversity positive. With a few exceptions only, all the coefficients were significant at the $p < .001$ level. Overall the findings indicate that more disadvantaged mothers lived in more deprived areas.

Summary

The aims of this paper were to (1) provide an overview of the recruitment procedures for the Families, Children and Child Care study, (FCCC) (2) investigate whether non-participation was related to ward poverty level, and (3) examine the relationship between ward and individual level indicators of poverty in the recruited sample. To do so available demographic information at the individual and ward level were analyzed. In total 1862 mothers gave contact details for a later approach of which 217 were found not to meet eligibility criteria and 444 subsequently decided not to participate. The rate of participation was lower for mothers recruited in more deprived wards (as measured by the Child Poverty Index, CPI; Noble et al., 2000). Although the two recruitment sites, North London and Oxfordshire differed with regard to levels of deprivation; the North London participants were in relatively deprived areas (below the national average) and the Oxfordshire participants were in less deprived areas (above the national average), the combined sample reflected the national distribution of deprivation. Mothers' self-reported socio-economic information was related to area level of poverty. While the FCCC study is not necessarily nationally representative it does constitute a relatively balanced sample with regard to area level deprivation.

Table 11. Interview date, individual mother, partner and family indicators in relation to ward deprivation indices, for the total sample and for North London and Oxfordshire respectively (r_s).

	Interview date		Mother's education		Mother's occupation		Partner's occupation		Environmental adversity (3-18m)		Family income (3-18m)	
<i>Total sample</i>												
Housing deprivation	0.24	***	-0.02	ns	-0.09	**	-0.19	***	0.30	***	-0.20	***
Income deprivation	0.42	***	-0.16	***	-0.20	***	-0.32	***	0.33	***	-0.30	***
Child Poverty	0.39	***	-0.16	***	-0.19	***	-0.32	***	0.33	***	-0.31	***
Employment deprivation	0.35	***	-0.09	**	-0.13	***	-0.25	***	0.34	***	-0.24	***
Health deprivation	0.39	***	-0.14	***	-0.18	***	-0.30	***	0.32	***	-0.28	***
Education deprivation	0.52	***	-0.25	***	-0.26	***	-0.39	***	0.18	***	-0.36	***
Multiple deprivation	0.42	***	-0.15	***	-0.20	***	-0.31	***	0.32	***	-0.30	***
<i>North London</i>												
Housing deprivation	0.05	ns	-0.09	*	-0.13	**	-0.19	***	0.19	***	-0.25	***
Income deprivation	0.42	***	-0.28	***	-0.27	***	-0.41	***	0.23	***	-0.40	***
Child Poverty	0.33	***	-0.25	***	-0.24	***	-0.37	***	0.25	***	-0.38	***
Employment deprivation	0.31	***	-0.22	***	-0.22	***	-0.33	***	0.25	***	-0.34	***
Health deprivation	0.29	***	-0.23	***	-0.21	***	-0.32	***	0.23	***	-0.34	***
Education deprivation	0.61	***	-0.32	***	-0.33	***	-0.49	***	0.17	***	-0.42	***
Multiple deprivation	0.42	***	-0.27	***	-0.27	***	-0.40	***	0.23	***	-0.39	***
<i>Oxfordshire</i>												
Housing deprivation	0.35	***	-0.16	***	-0.22	***	-0.28	***	0.21	***	-0.30	***
Income deprivation	0.41	***	-0.21	***	-0.24	***	-0.31	***	0.24	***	-0.32	***
Child Poverty	0.38	***	-0.20	***	-0.22	***	-0.31	***	0.23	***	-0.30	***
Employment deprivation	0.39	***	-0.19	***	-0.22	***	-0.31	***	0.21	***	-0.30	***
Health deprivation	0.41	***	-0.20	***	-0.23	***	-0.33	***	0.23	***	-0.31	***
Education deprivation	0.41	***	-0.19	***	-0.20	***	-0.27	***	0.16	***	-0.28	***
Multiple deprivation	0.41	***	-0.21	***	-0.24	***	-0.30	***	0.21	***	-0.32	***

Note: all Ns are 1170, except the relationships between partner's occupational status and the deprivation indices where n = 1165;

* = p<.05; ** = p<.01; *** = p<.001.

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