



## Clustering of substance use and sexual risk behaviour in adolescence: analysis of two cohort studies

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID:	bmjopen-2011-000661
Article Type:	Research
Date Submitted by the Author:	23-Nov-2011
Complete List of Authors:	Jackson, Caroline; Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy SWEETING, HELEN; MRC SOCIAL & PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES UNIT Haw, Sally; University of Stirling
<b>Primary Subject Heading</b>:	Public health
Secondary Subject Heading:	Sexual health, Smoking and tobacco, Addiction, Public health, Epidemiology
Keywords:	EPIDEMIOLOGY, PUBLIC HEALTH, STATISTICS & RESEARCH METHODS

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1 **Clustering of substance use and sexual risk behaviour in adolescence: analysis of two cohort**  
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7 Short title: A cohort analysis of risk behaviour clustering during adolescence  
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11 Caroline A Jackson<sup>1\*</sup>, Helen Sweeting<sup>2</sup>, Sally Haw<sup>1,3</sup>  
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14  
15 <sup>1</sup>Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy  
16 MRC Human Genetics Unit Building  
17 Western General Hospital  
18 Crewe Road South  
19 Edinburgh  
20 EH4 2XU  
21 Email: [caroline.jackson@scphrp.ac.uk](mailto:caroline.jackson@scphrp.ac.uk)  
22

23  
24 <sup>2</sup>MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit  
25 4 Lilybank Gardens  
26 Glasgow  
27 G12 8RZ  
28 Email: [helen@sphsu.mrc.ac.uk](mailto:helen@sphsu.mrc.ac.uk)  
29

30  
31 <sup>3</sup>Centre for Public Health & Population Health Research  
32 School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health  
33 University of Stirling  
34 Stirling  
35 Scotland, UK  
36 FK9 4LA  
37 Email: [s.j.haw@stir.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.haw@stir.ac.uk)  
38

39 \*Corresponding author

40  
41 Word count: 2996

42  
43 Abstract: 278

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45  
46 Key words: Adolescence; risk behaviour; sexual behaviour; alcohol; smoking; illicit drug use  
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**ABSTRACT**

**Objectives** We aimed to examine whether changes in health-risk behaviour rates alters the relationships between behaviours during adolescence, by comparing clustering of risk behaviours at different time points.

**Design** Comparison of two cohort studies, the Twenty-07: Health in the Community study (1987/1990 study) and the 11-16/16+ Study: Young People's Health (1999/2003 study).

**Setting** Central Clydeside Conurbation around Glasgow City.

**Participants** Young people who agreed to participate in the Twenty-07 and 11-16/16+ studies and who completed surveys on health behaviours.

**Primary and secondary outcomes measures** We analysed data on risk behaviours collected at age 15 (started smoking prior to age 14, monthly drinking, ever used illicit drugs and sexual intercourse prior to age 16) and at ages 18-19 (current smoking, excessive drinking, ever used illicit drugs and multiple sexual partners), by gender and social class.

**Results** Drinking, illicit drug use and risky sexual behaviour (but not smoking) increased between the earlier and later cohort, especially among females. We found strong associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour during early and late adolescence, with few differences between cohorts, or by gender or social class. Adjusted odds ratios for associations between each substance and sexual risk behaviour were around 2.00. The only significant between-cohort difference was a stronger association between female early adolescent smoking and early sexual initiation in the 1999/2003 cohort.

**Conclusions** We found that despite increasing health-risk behaviour rates during the 1990s, associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour remained strong, in the early 2000s, in both younger *and* older adolescents, irrespective of gender or social class. These data further support the need for improved policies, strategies and interventions to prevent multiple risk behaviour in young people.

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period of development, when 'risky' health behaviours may be adopted. These impact on current and future health and wellbeing,(1;2) and are increasingly difficult to modify later in life.(3) There is evidence that some health risk behaviours tend to cluster in adolescence (4-9). A particular focus has been on relationships between substance use and sexual behaviour. In addition to direct effects of certain substances on sexual decisions (10) this may reflect a predisposition towards risky behaviours in some individuals (11) since not only alcohol and illicit drugs, but also smoking, are strongly associated with adolescent sexual risk behaviour.(12)

There is some evidence that relationships between substance use and sexual behaviour vary by socio-demographic group and culture. Most studies have found stronger associations among females than males (4;6;10;13), although some report no gender differences.(7;14) However, we are unaware of studies which have examined whether associations vary according to either age or socioeconomic status (SES). The authors of one study which found *no* relationship between early initiation of sexual intercourse and substance use among deprived African-American adolescents suggest this unusual finding might indicate these behaviours have different cultural meanings among certain groups.(15) Another study found weaker associations between substance use and sexual initiation in the US than Europe. Its authors suggest the difference might have resulted from lower substance use rates in their US sample or international differences in acceptability of adolescent substance use or sexual behaviour.(7)

The present study, based on two adolescent cohorts, born 12 years apart in the same geographic area, the West of Scotland, examines associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour. Unlike some studies which have used composite substance use measures (4;7), we examine relationships between each of smoking, drinking and illicit drug use, and sexual risk behaviour. Most similar studies have been conducted in the USA, but results might vary according to cultural context.(7;9) Historical context is another potentially important influence on health-risk behaviour clustering, but absent from previous studies. Our cohorts were adolescents in the late 1980s and late 1990s/early new millennium respectively. This was a period of considerable social change, including massive increases in young people's involvement

1 in the night-time economy.(16) Significant increases in some adolescent health-risk behaviours over this  
2 period have been documented (17;18) and are evident in comparisons of our cohorts. Rates of drinking,  
3 illicit drug use and risky sexual behaviour were greater in the later cohort, with increases generally larger  
4 among females than males but few differences according to SES.(19;20) It is possible that as the  
5 prevalence (and so normative nature) of behaviours changes, so might their clustering. The one study to  
6 examine between-country differences suggested higher substance use rates may have resulted in stronger  
7 associations with sexual risk behaviour.(7) However, if clustering reflects a predisposition towards risky  
8 behaviours in some individuals (11), then we might expect clustering to be less evident in periods when  
9 such behaviours are more prevalent.

10 In our study we conducted analyses on health-risk behaviours in both early (age 15) and late adolescence  
11 (age 18-19), since it is possible that associations between substance use and risky sexual behaviour change  
12 with age. We examined the associations at two different time points, to see if they differed by period. We  
13 also examined differences according to gender, which previous studies have shown to impact on  
14 associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour, and SES, which has tended not to be  
15 addressed in previous studies.

## 16 METHODS

### 17 Study population

18 We used data collected at ages 15 and 18-19 from two West of Scotland studies: the *Twenty-07 Study:*  
19 *Health in the Community'* (henceforth referred to as the 1987/1990 study/cohort)(21) and the *'11-16/16+*  
20 *Study: Young People's Health'* (henceforth the 1999/2003 study/cohort) (22). Ethical approval was received  
21 from the NHS for the 1987/1990 study and from Glasgow University for the 1999/2003 study.

22 The 1987/1990 study began in 1987, and was located in the Central Clydeside Conurbation around  
23 Glasgow. At baseline, 1009 15-year olds (65% issued sample) were recruited, with no significant gender or  
24 social class differences compared with the source population (23); 908 (90%) participated at follow-up in  
25

1990. At both stages, respondents were interviewed in their homes by trained interviewers using paper questionnaires.

The 1999/2003 study cohort, also located in the Central Clydeside Conurbation was recruited in 1994 during their final primary school year, aged 11 (93% response). Full details of the sampling strategy are available.<sup>(24)</sup> The cohort was followed up during secondary schooling, aged 15 in 1999 (N=2196, 85% of the baseline sample) using self-completion questionnaires, and post-school, at ages 18-19 in 2002-4 (henceforth 2003) when 1258 respondents (49% of baseline) were interviewed using computer-assisted interviews in survey centres or participants' homes. Fieldwork for this stage took longer than that of the 1987/1990 study, resulting in a sample which was slightly older with a broader age distribution.

### Definitions

**Smoking:** In both studies, interviewers asked respondents aged 18-19 whether they were current, ex or never smokers, allowing derivation of a dichotomous late adolescence 'current smoker' variable. Current and ex-smokers were also asked the age when they first tried smoking; all reporting 13 years or less were defined as 'started smoking below age 14'.

**Drinking:** In both studies, respondents were asked at age 18-19 about alcohol intake using a past week drinking grid (Web Appendix). From this, a dichotomous variable was derived representing drinking over weekly recommended alcohol limits (hereafter called 'excessive drinking':  $\geq 22$  units in the past week for males,  $\geq 15$  for females) (25). At age 15, respondents were asked about drinking frequency. Those drinking 'at least once a month' (1978/1990 study) and 'about once a month' (1999/2003 study) or more were defined as 'monthly drinkers at age 15'.

**Illicit drug use:** At age 15 and again at 18-19, respondents in both studies were provided with lists of illicit drugs (Web Appendix) and asked if they had experience of any.

**Multiple partners and early sexual initiation:** In both studies, at age 18-19, all reporting opposite sex experience were asked about number of sexual partners ever, used to derive a dichotomous '3+ sexual partners' variable. They were also asked age at first sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex,

1 allowing derivation of a variable representing 'early sexual initiation' (age <16 years vs ≥16 or hasn't  
2 happened).  
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6 Social class was derived from head of household occupation. This information was collected at baseline, in  
7 the 1987/1990 study via parental interview, and in the 1999/2003 study via parental self-completion  
8 questionnaire (supplemented, where necessary, by information provided by respondents during interviews  
9 with research nurses which we have shown to be reliable).(26) Social class was dichotomised into non-  
10 manual and manual groupings.  
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### 13 **Analysis**

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15 Analyses for each cohort were restricted to those participating in both data collection waves. Attrition in  
16 the 1987/1990 study was slightly greater among manual class respondents. At each wave of the 1999/2003  
17 study attrition was greater among respondents from manual class backgrounds, with lower teacher-rated  
18 ability and educational involvement and from reconstituted/lone-parent households. Attrition-based  
19 weights were constructed for both studies.(22;27) Because these were based on those present at all  
20 waves, their effect is to reduce the size of the 1999/2003 study age 18-19 dataset to 1006 respondents.  
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22 We further restricted analyses to those with no missing behavioural or social class data (no respondent had  
23 missing gender or age data) (Table 1).  
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27 We used Poisson regression to compare mean numbers of behaviours between cohorts separately for early  
28 and late adolescence, and for males and females (adjusted for social class), and manual and non-manual  
29 groups (adjusted for gender). Analyses relating to late adolescence also adjusted for age at interview,  
30 previously shown to be important.(20) This was not done for early adolescent behaviours because these  
31 data were not all obtained at the age 18-19 interview (footnote to Table 1). We included terms to identify  
32 any interactions by cohort and gender/social class.  
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36 We used logistic regression to calculate odds ratios (ORs) and associated confidence intervals (CIs) for the  
37 relationships between each substance and having had three or more sexual partners in late adolescence.  
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41 We adjusted for: social class and age; and then social class, age and other substance use. We did this  
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1 separately for the 1987/1990 and 1999/2003 studies and within that by gender (all models adjusting for  
2 age and social class) and by social class (adjusting for age and gender). Additional analyses included terms  
3 to identify interactions by cohort and, within each cohort, by gender or social class. We used similar  
4 models (without age adjustment) to examine relationships between early adolescent substance use and  
5 early sexual initiation.  
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## 12 RESULTS

### 13 Time-trends in multiple risk behaviour frequencies

14 As previously reported (19;20), rates of drinking, illicit drug use and sexual risk behaviour were considerably  
15 higher in the later cohort (Table 1). As would therefore be expected, the proportion reporting no late  
16 adolescent risk behaviours decreased from 42.6% in the 1987/1990 cohort to 24.1% in the 1999/2003  
17 cohort, whilst that reporting multiple late adolescent risk behaviours increased markedly, with 4.7% of the  
18 earlier and 12.2% of the later cohort reporting all four (Web Table 1). Similarly, 57.2% of the 1987/1990  
19 cohort, but 26.7% of the 1999/2003 cohort, reported no early adolescent substance use or sexual initiation,  
20 while all four early adolescent risk behaviours were reported by 1.7% of the earlier and 9.6% of the later  
21 cohort.  
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36 These changes were more pronounced in females. Thus, increases in mean numbers of late adolescent risk  
37 behaviours were greater among females (0.75 versus 1.56; age and social class adjusted  $p < 0.001$ ), than  
38 males (1.50 versus 1.93; adjusted  $p = 0.048$ ); the cohort-by-gender interaction was highly significant  
39 (adjusted  $p < 0.001$ ) (Web Table 1). Mean numbers of early adolescent risk behaviours increased  
40 significantly among both females and males (0.51 versus 1.56 and 0.84 versus 1.55, respectively; both  
41 adjusted  $p < 0.001$ ), but again the increase was greater among females (cohort-by-gender interaction  
42 adjusted  $p < 0.001$ ). Contrasting with these gender differences, increases in both late and early adolescent  
43 risk behaviours were very similar in those from non-manual compared with manual social class  
44 backgrounds (Web Table 1).  
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### 55 Relationships between substance use and sexual risk behaviour



1 Associations between late adolescent substance use and multiple sexual partners and between early  
2 adolescent substance use and early sexual initiation were strong. This was true for both cohorts, for both  
3 males and females, and for both social class groups.  
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9 In the 1987/1990 cohort, associations unadjusted for other substance use, between late adolescent  
10 substance use and multiple sexual partners, were slightly lower in respect of current smoking (male OR  
11 3.43, 95% CI 2.21 to 5.32 ; female OR 2.61, 95% CI 1.34 to 5.06) than either excessive drinking (male OR  
12 4.79, 95% CI 3.00 to 7.64; female OR 3.54, 95% CI 1.57 to 7.98) or having used illicit drugs (male OR 4.38,  
13 95% CI 2.85 to 6.73, female OR 3.76, 95% CI 1.92 to 7.37) (Table 2). In the 1999/2003 cohort, the  
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After adjustment for other substance use, associations between use of each substance and multiple sexual  
partners in late adolescence attenuated by around one-third, resulting in ORs of around 2.00-3.00 (Figure  
1a). Associations were generally similar for males and females and similar for both studies. However, the  
relationship between illicit drug use and multiple sexual partners in the 1999/2003 cohort continued to be  
stronger among females than males (p for interaction = 0.002).

Similar results were obtained in models of associations between early adolescent substance use and early  
sexual initiation (Table 3; Figure 1b). In models unadjusted for other substance use, relationships between  
each substance and early sexual initiation weakened slightly over time among males, but strengthened  
among females. This trend was particularly marked for the relationship between having started smoking  
below age 14 and early sexual initiation (female OR 1.46, 95% CI 0.67 to 3.18 in 1987/1990; OR 6.40, 95% CI  
3.94 to 10.39 in 1999/2003, p for cohort interaction=0.002). As in late adolescence, in the 1999/2003  
cohort there was a significant gender difference (p=0.005) in the association between illicit drug use and  
sexual behaviour, which was stronger among females. After adjusting for other substance use, associations  
between each substance and early sexual initiation were attenuated by up to one half, with the greatest

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attenuation occurring among females in the later cohort, giving ORs of around 2.00 (Figure 1b). As in the unadjusted analyses, the relationship between early smoking and early sexual initiation among females was stronger in the later than the earlier cohort ( $p$  for cohort interaction=0.022), and the relationship between early illicit drug use and early sexual initiation in the later cohort was stronger among females than males ( $p$  for gender interaction=0.023).

Associations between substance use and risky sexual behaviour in both late and early adolescence were similar for participants from both social class groups in both cohorts. This was true for associations unadjusted for other substance use (Web Table 2; Web Table 3) and for those adjusted for other substance use (Figure 2). The one exception was that the relationship between early illicit drug use and early sexual initiation was weaker in manual compared with non-manual social class groups in the later cohort (drugs-by-class interaction  $p$ =0.016; Figure 2b).

## DISCUSSION

Our comparison of two cohorts revealed a large increase in the proportion of young people reporting early and late adolescent multiple risk behaviours between 1987/1990 and 1999/2003. Increases were particularly marked among females, but broadly similar in both social class groups. We found strong associations, both between early substance use and early sexual initiation, and between late adolescent substance use and having had multiple sexual partners. These relationships were broadly similar for males and females and between social class groups. Despite much higher rates of drinking, drug use and risky sexual behaviour (but not smoking) in the later cohort, relationships between use of each substance and risky sexual behaviour showed little or no change over time.

Increasing proportions reporting multiple health-risk behaviours are to be expected, given higher rates of all individual risk behaviours, except smoking, in the later cohort.(19;20) However, they are particularly concerning given suggestions that certain behavioural combinations might operate synergistically to increase health risks. Thus smoking plus drinking dramatically increases risk of certain cancers,(28) while sexual behaviour plus drinking or illicit drug use may result in less informed decisions, more unprotected sex, risk of violence or subsequent regret.(4;10;14;29)

1 Most,(4;6;10;13) but not all (7;14) previous studies have found stronger associations between adolescent  
2 substance use and sexual behaviour among females. This may be because sexual experience in  
3 adolescence is more normative for males and so less tied to other risk behaviours (13) or it may reflect  
4 different attitudes towards sexual behaviour among male compared with female adolescents.(29) We  
5 found no gender differences in relationships between early or late adolescent substance use and risky  
6 sexual behaviour in our earlier cohort. However, the association between illicit drug use and sexual risk  
7 behaviour in both early and late adolescence was stronger among females than males in our later cohort.  
8 Had we found stronger relationships in our earlier cohort that disappeared or weakened over time, we  
9 might have attributed this to the gender convergence in adolescent sexual risk behaviour (30) or changing  
10 attitudes towards female sexuality.(31) The findings we did obtain are hard to explain.

11 Our study has a number of strengths. We compared two cohorts of young people from the same  
12 geographic area and life-stage, surveyed using (near) identical questions, 13 years apart. To our  
13 knowledge, this is the first study to examine time-trends in associations between substance use and sexual  
14 behaviour. We also examined these associations in both early *and* late adolescence and by gender and  
15 social class, the latter of which has not, to our knowledge, been previously investigated. However, there  
16 are some limitations. The follow-up rate in the 1999/2003 study was quite low, with greater non-response  
17 among certain groups. Although accounted for via weighted analyses, we may not have fully compensated  
18 for differential loss to follow-up of adolescents with more 'risky' patterns of behaviour. The questions  
19 included for each cohort were equivalent for all behaviours except alcohol intake, which included a more  
20 detailed drinking grid in the 1999/2003 study, possibly encouraging increased reporting. Parental  
21 occupational data, used to derive social class, were also collected in different ways, but there is little reason  
22 to think the methods would impact in such a way as to produce bias. Finally, interviewer-administered  
23 questionnaires (from which all behavioural data were obtained apart from those relating to early  
24 adolescent drinking and drug use in the 1999/2003 study) have been shown to lead to under-reporting of  
25 behaviours compared with self-administered instruments (32), so possibly impacting on the strength of the  
26 observed associations.

## Conclusions

Despite increases in adolescent multiple risk behaviour during the 1990s, the strength of associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour remained largely similar. These findings have several public health implications. National and local governmental policy and strategies should reflect the strong relationships between adolescent risk behaviours and support broader and more integrated approaches to prevention and treatment.(33-35) For example, sexual health clinics could routinely opportunistically offer advice and counselling for alcohol and illicit drug use.(36) Clustering of adolescent health-risk behaviours partly reflects shared underlying determinants.(11;33) Thus a holistic preventive approach, addressing broad determinants of risk behaviours, from individual through to societal influences, is needed. Strong associations between early adolescent substance use and sexual initiation mean preventive measures should be implemented at younger ages, possibly during primary school. Such a holistic approach would require effective cross-sector government collaboration, especially between education and health departments. Finally, given that substance use and sexual risk behaviour appear to be strongly associated across social class groups, preventive approaches to risk behaviour should include both universal and targeted approaches, described by Marmot as proportionate universalism,(37) to ensure equitable improvement in adolescent health and wellbeing.

### Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the analysis plan and questions addressed in the paper and to the interpretation of the results. CJ drafted the paper and is guarantor. HS contributed to the design of *11-16/16+* and its data collection, cleaned data from both studies and conducted the analyses. HS and SH critically revised the paper and all authors gave approval for the final version to be published.

### Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements are due to Michaela Benzeval, Kate Hunt and Sally Macintyre for comments on an earlier draft, and to the young people, nurse interviewers, schools, and all those from the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit involved in the studies described here.

### Competing interests

The authors have no competing interests

### Funding

CJ and SH are co-funded by the Scottish Chief Scientist Office and MRC at the Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy (SCPHRP). HS is funded by the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) as part of the Gender and Health Programme (WBS U.1300.00.004) at the Social and Public Health Sciences Unit. The *'Twenty-07'* and *'11-16/16+'* studies were funded by the MRC. The analyses in the current study were part-funded by a grant from the SCPHRP. The funders played no role in: the design of the analysis and interpretation of the data; the writing of the report; or the decision to submit the paper for publication.

**Table 1 Demographic characteristics, substance use and risky sexual behaviour in late and early adolescence in both cohorts**

Analyses of later adolescent substance use and multiple sexual partners					Analyses of earlier adolescent substance use and early sexual initiation				
Mean age (SD)	1987/1990 cohort		1999/2003 cohort		Mean age (SD)	1987/1990 cohort		1999/2003 cohort	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>					<b>Gender</b>				
Male	418	47.1	454	49.9	Male	416	47.0	473	50.7
Female	469	52.9	456	50.1	Female	468	53.0	460	49.3
<b>Social class</b>					<b>Social class</b>				
Non-manual	378	42.6	410	45.1	Non-manual	375	42.4	408	43.8
Manual	509	57.4	499	54.9	Manual	509	57.6	525	56.2
<b>Current smoker*</b>					<b>Started smoking at age &lt;14*</b>				
Yes	298	33.6	308	33.9	Yes	193	21.9	195	20.9
No	589	66.4	602	66.1	No	691	78.1	738	79.1
<b>Excessive drinking*†</b>					<b>Monthly drinking at age 15‡</b>				
Yes	181	20.4	295	32.4	Yes	175	19.8	600	64.3
No	706	79.6	615	67.6	No	709	80.2	333	35.7
<b>Ever used illicit drugs*</b>					<b>Ever illicit drugs at age 15‡</b>				
Yes	288	32.5	532	58.5	Yes	85	9.6	391	41.9
No	599	67.5	378	41.5	No	799	90.4	542	58.1
<b>3+ sexual partners*</b>					<b>Sex at age &lt;16*</b>				
Yes	212	23.9	453	49.8	Yes	139	15.7	265	28.4
No	675	76.1	456	50.2	No	745	84.3	668	71.6

\* Information obtained at age 18-19 interview.

† Defined as ≥ 22 units in the past week for males, ≥ 15 units for females.

‡ Information obtained at age 15 interview (1978/1990 study) or self-completion questionnaire (1999/2003 study).

**Table 2 Rates of multiple (3+) sexual partners in late adolescence according to substance use and associated odds ratios (unadjusted for other substance use) in each cohort, by gender**

	1987/1990 cohort					1999/2003 cohort					<i>p-value of interaction by cohort</i>
	<3 sexual partners		3+ sexual partners		OR (95% CI)*	<3 sexual partners		3+ sexual partners		OR (95% CI)*	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%		
<b>MALES</b>											
<b>Current smoking</b>											
No	192	78.0	87	50.6	1.00	161	77.8	134	54.5	1.00	
Yes	54	22.0	85	49.4	3.43 (2.21 to 5.32)	46	22.2	112	45.5	2.61 (1.71 to 3.97)	0.371
<b>Excessive drinking†</b>											
No	198	80.5	88	51.2	1.00	158	76.0	122	49.6	1.00	
Yes	48	19.5	84	48.8	4.79 (3.00 to 7.64)	50	24.0	124	50.4	3.42 (2.25 to 5.20)	0.414
<b>Ever used illicit drugs</b>											
No	174	70.7	61	35.5	1.00	95	45.9	59	24.0	1.00	
Yes	72	29.3	111	64.5	4.38 (2.85 to 6.73)	112	54.1	187	76.0	2.71 (1.80 to 4.09)	0.124
<b>FEMALES</b>											
<b>Current smoking</b>											
No	292	68.1	18	45.0	1.00	202	81.5	104	50.0	1.00	
Yes	137	31.9	22	55.0	2.61 (1.34 to 5.06)	46	18.5	104	50.0	4.29 (2.79 to 6.58)	0.203
<b>Excessive drinking†</b>											
No	391	90.9	30	75.0	1.00	208	83.9	127	61.1	1.00	
Yes	39	9.1	10	25.0	3.54 (1.57 to 7.98)	40	16.1	81	38.9	3.55 (2.27 to 5.56)	0.953
<b>Ever used illicit drugs</b>											
No	344	80.0	20	51.3	1.00	171	69.0	52	25.1	1.00	
Yes	86	20.0	19	48.7	3.76 (1.92 to 7.37)	77	31.0	155	74.9	6.72 (4.41 to 10.26)	0.144

p-values of interactions by gender: within 1987/1990 cohort - current smoking by gender p=0.465, excessive drinking by gender p=0.742, ever illicit drugs by gender p=0.795; within 1999/2003 cohort - current smoking by gender p=0.145, excessive drinking by gender p=0.841, ever illicit drugs by gender p=0.003.

\*Adjusted for social class and age.

†Defined as  $\geq 22$  units in the past week for males,  $\geq 15$  units for females.

OR = odds ratios; CI = confidence interval.

**Table 3 Rates of early sexual initiation according to early adolescent use and associated odds ratios (unadjusted for other substance use) in each cohort, by gender**

	1987/1990 cohort					1999/2003 cohort					p-value of interaction with cohort
	No early sexual initiation		Early sexual initiation		OR (95% CI)*	No early sexual initiation		Early sexual initiation		OR (95% CI)*	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%		
<b>MALES</b>											
<b>Started smoking age &lt;14</b>											
No	261	83.9	61	58.7	1.00	288	87.3	92	64.3	1.00	
Yes	50	16.1	43	41.3	3.64 (2.20 to 6.02)	42	12.7	51	35.7	3.45 (2.14 to 5.58)	0.879
<b>Monthly drinking age 15</b>											
No	252	80.8	62	59.6	1.00	148	44.8	32	22.4	1.00	
Yes	60	19.2	42	40.4	3.00 (1.84 to 4.92)	182	55.2	111	77.6	2.74 (1.74 to 4.32)	0.780
<b>Ever used illicit drugs age 15</b>											
No	287	92.3	76	73.1	1.00	210	63.8	60	42.0	1.00	
Yes	24	7.7	28	26.9	4.11 (2.24 to 7.54)	119	36.2	83	58.0	2.42 (1.61 to 3.65)	0.159
<b>FEMALES</b>											
<b>Started smoking age &lt;14</b>											
No	343	79.0	25	71.4	1.00	295	87.3	63	51.6	1.00	
Yes	91	21.0	10	28.6	1.46 (0.67 to 3.18)	43	12.7	59	48.4	6.40 (3.94 to 10.39)	0.002
<b>Monthly drinking age 15</b>											
No	370	85.3	25	71.4	1.00	138	40.9	15	12.3	1.00	
Yes	64	14.7	10	28.6	2.32 (1.04 to 5.14)	199	59.1	107	87.7	4.93 (2.75 to 8.84)	0.133
<b>Ever used illicit drugs age 15</b>											
No	407	94.0	29	82.9	1.00	237	70.1	34	27.9	1.00	
Yes	26	6.0	6	17.1	3.09 (1.16-8.21)	101	29.9	88	72.1	6.17 (3.87 to 9.83)	0.218

p-values of interactions by gender: within 1987/1990 cohort – started smoking age <14 by gender p=0.047, monthly drinking age 15 by gender p=0.710, ever illicit drugs age 15 by gender p=0.564; within 1999/2003 cohort – started smoking age <14 by gender p=0.134, monthly drinking age 15 by gender p=0.118, ever illicit drugs age 15 by gender p=0.005.

\*Adjusted for social class.

OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.



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2  
3 **Figure 1** Associations, by gender and cohort, between (a) late adolescent substance use and having  
4 had three or more sexual partners and (b) early adolescent substance use and early sexual initiation.

5  
6  
7 \*Adjusted for age and class

8  
9 † p-value of gender by illicit drug use interaction in 2003 = 0.002

10  
11 ‡ Adjusted for class

12  
13 §p-value of cohort interaction for smoking prior to age 14 among females = 0.022

14  
15 ¶p-value of gender by illicit drug use interaction in 2003 = 0.023

16  
17 OR = odds ratios; CI = confidence intervals

18  
19  
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21  
22 **Figure 2** Associations, by social class and cohort, between (a) late adolescent substance use and  
23 having had three or more sexual partners and (b) early adolescent substance use and early sexual  
24 initiation.

25  
26  
27 \*Adjusted for age and gender

28  
29 †Adjusted for gender

30  
31 ‡p-value of class by illicit drug use interaction in 2003 = 0.016

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33 OR = odds ratios; CI = confidence intervals

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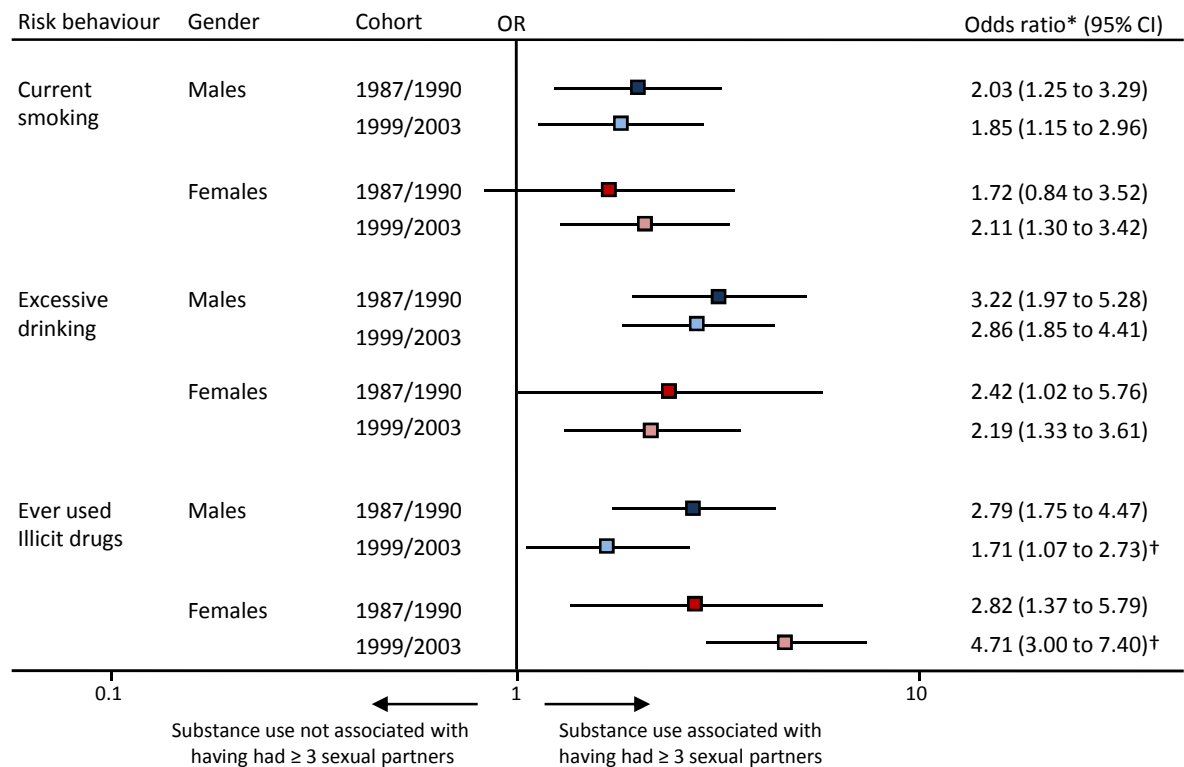
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Figure 1

(a)



(b)

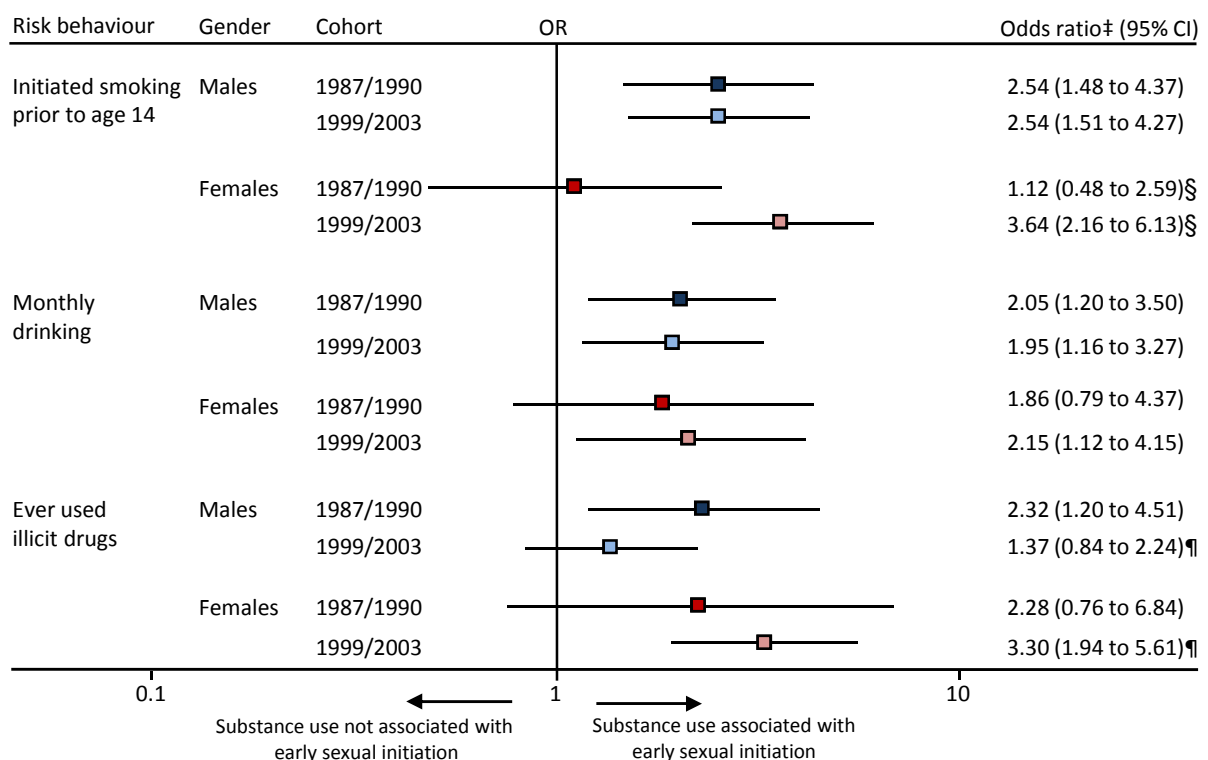
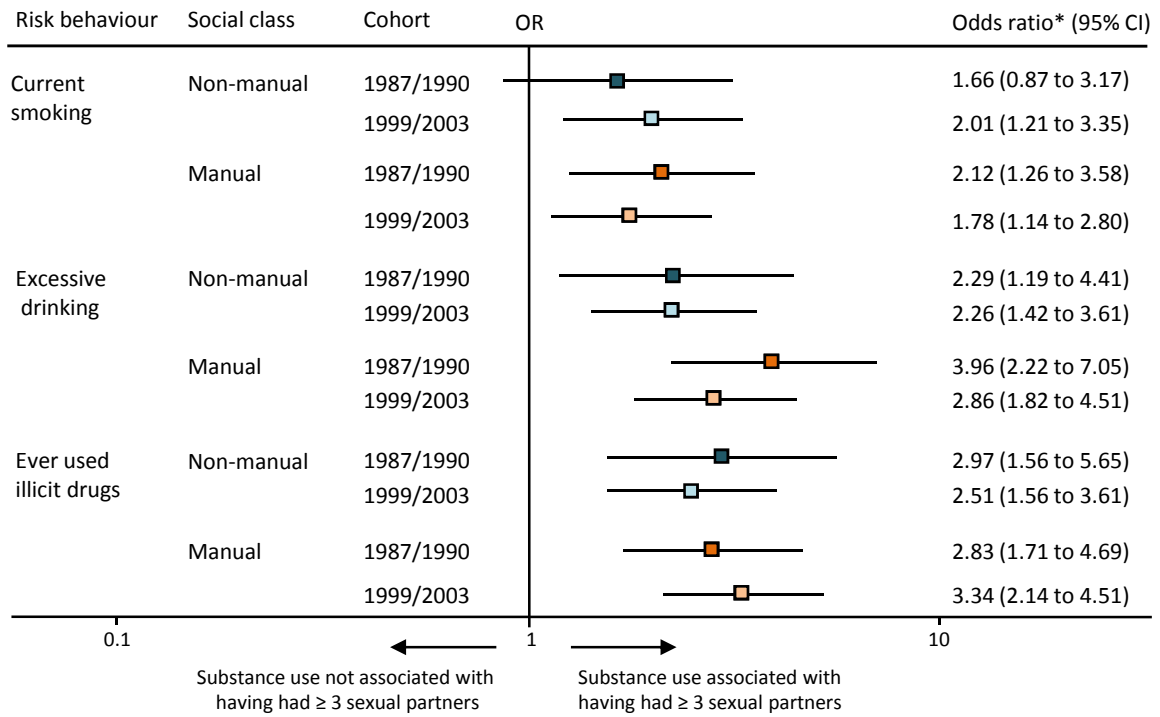
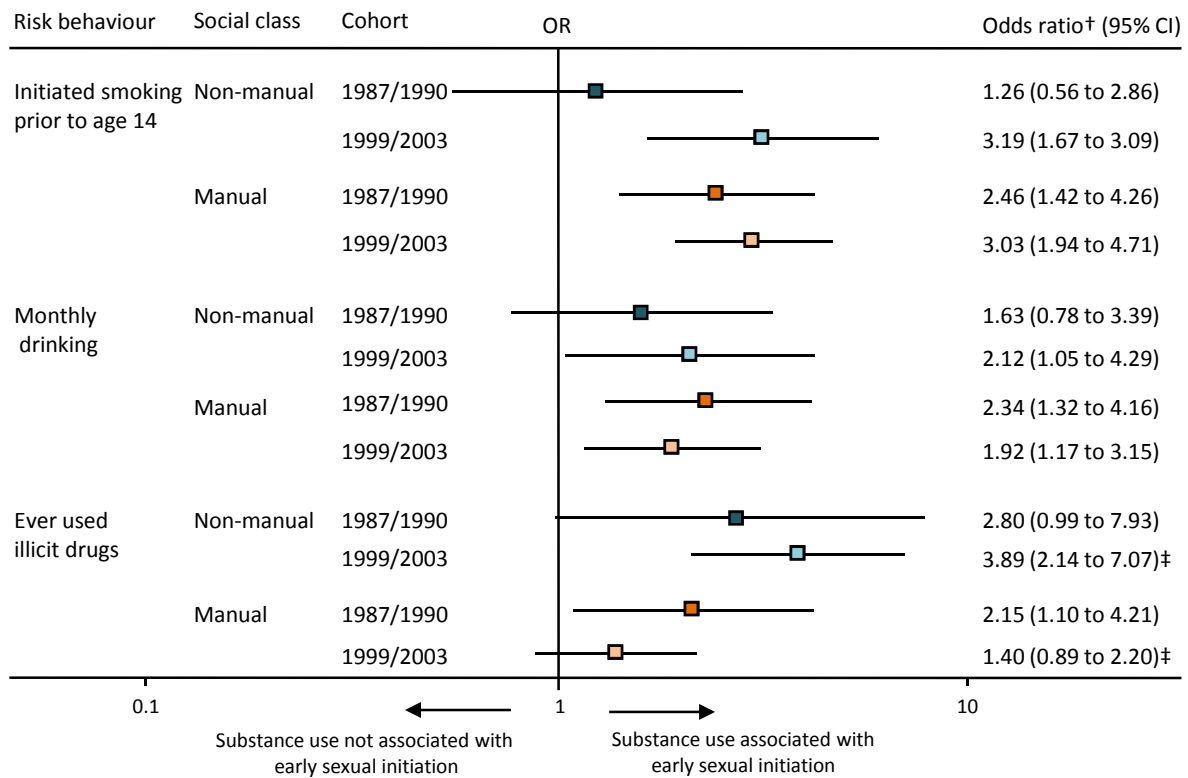


Figure 2

(a)



(b)



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3 **Web Appendix Description of the past-week drinking grids and lists of illicit drugs provided to**  
4 **respondents**  
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10 **Drinking grids**  
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12 At age 18-19, both studies included past-week drinking grids to measure alcohol use. In the  
13 1987/1990 study this asked about: pints, glasses, bottles and measures of beer, lager, shandy, stout  
14 and cider; wine; fortified wine; spirits; and other drinks. The grid in the 1999/2003 study was more  
15 detailed and asked about: pints, small, large and very large cans and bottles and small and large  
16 glasses of shandy; normal or strong beer, lager or stout; normal or strong cider; babycham; wine or  
17 champagne; cocktails, mixers, breezers or alcopops; spirits or liqueurs; (flavoured) schnapps;  
18 buckfast, eldorado or sanatogen; sherry, martini, taboo or port; MD20/20; and other drinks.  
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31 **Illicit drugs lists**  
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33 At age 15 ('early adolescence'), respondents in both studies were provided with the following list of  
34 illicit drugs: cannabis; LSD; barbiturates; glues, solvents, dry-cleaning fluids; fuels or gas;  
35 amphetamines; opium; morphine; heroin; cocaine; crack; PCP; magic mushrooms. The 1987/1990  
36 study age 15 list also included barbiturates; opium; morphine; and PCP. The 1999/2003 study age 15  
37 list also included temazepam and ecstasy.  
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47 At age 18-19 ('late adolescence'), respondents in both cohorts were provided with the following list,  
48 comprising: cannabis; LSD; temazepam; tranquillisers; glues, sprays, gas, dry cleaning fluid;  
49 amphetamine; amyl or butile nitrite; heroin; methadone; temgesic; cocaine; crack; ecstasy; magic  
50 mushrooms; morphine or opium. The list given to the 1987/1990 cohort also included other  
51 barbiturates and PCP.  
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Web Table 1 Proportion reporting none, one, two, three or four behaviours and mean number of behaviours in early and late adolescence within each cohort, with β (adjusted as appropriate) for the increase in means between 1987/1990 and 1999/2003, overall and among males vs females and those from non-manual vs manual backgrounds

Late adolescence substance and 3+ sexual partners										Early adolescent substance use and early sexual initiation							
Cohort	None (%)	One (%)	Two (%)	Three (%)	Four (%)	Mean N behaviours	β (p-value)	p-value cohort by gender/ social class interaction		None (%)	One (%)	Two (%)	Three (%)	Four (%)	Mean N behaviours	β (p-value)	p-value cohort by gender/ social class interaction
	1999/2003	24.1	20.5	24.2	19.0	12.2	1.75	(< 0.001)		26.7	26.0	22.0	15.7	9.6	1.55	(<0.001)	
<b>By gender</b>																	
<b>Males</b>	1987/1990	32.5	20.6	19.4	19.1	8.4	1.50	0.12‡		51.3	24.9	13.4	7.4	2.9	0.84	0.59§	
	1999/2003	17.4	21.2	25.2	22.7	13.5	1.93	(0.048)		26.3	26.1	23.7	15.0	8.9	1.55	(<0.001)	
<b>Females</b>	1987/1990	51.7	27.9	15.3	3.8	1.5	0.75	0.65‡	<0.001	62.3	27.2	7.2	2.6	0.6	0.51	1.08§	<0.001
	1999/2003	30.7	19.7	23.2	15.4	11.0	1.56	(< 0.001)		27.2	25.9	20.3	16.3	10.2	1.56	(< 0.001)	
<b>By social class</b>																	
<b>Non-manual</b>	1987/1990	46.4	22.2	16.4	10.0	5.0	1.05	0.27¶		58.9	26.5	10.1	2.9	1.6	0.61	0.75**	
	1999/2003	29.0	22.4	22.0	17.6	9.0	1.56	(< 0.001)		32.8	27.1	21.3	12.2	6.6	1.33	(<0.001)	
<b>Manual</b>	1987/1990	39.9	26.1	17.9	11.8	4.3	1.14	0.40¶	0.155	55.8	26.0	10.2	6.3	1.8	0.71	0.85**	0.281
	1999/2003	20.0	19.0	26.2	20.0	14.8	1.90	(< 0.001)		21.9	25.1	22.9	18.3	11.8	1.73	(<0.001)	

\* Adjusted for age, gender and class.  
 †Adjusted for gender and class.  
 ‡Adjusted for age and class.  
 §Adjusted for class.  
 ¶Adjusted for age and gender.  
 \*\*Adjusted for gender.



**Web Table 2 Rates of multiple (3+) sexual partners in late adolescence according to substance use and associated odds ratios (unadjusted for other substance use) for each cohort, by social class**

	1987/1990 cohort					1999/2003 cohort					<i>p-value of interaction with cohort</i>
	<3 sexual partners		3+ sexual partners		OR (95% CI)*	<3 sexual partners		3+ sexual partners		OR (95% CI)*	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%		
<b>NON-MANUAL</b>											
<b>Current smoking</b>											
No	229	74.6	35	48.6	1.00	199	84.0	105	60.3	1.00	0.813
Yes	78	25.4	37	51.4	3.18 (1.80-5.63)	38	16.0	69	39.7	3.34 (2.10-5.31)	
<b>Excessive drinking†</b>											
No	252	82.4	37	51.4	1.00	186	78.5	91	52.3	1.00	0.472
Yes	54	17.6	35	48.6	3.93 (2.16-7.12)	51	21.5	83	47.7	3.30 (2.13-5.11)	
<b>Ever used illicit drugs</b>											
No	230	75.2	26	36.6	1.00	139	58.6	47	27.0	1.00	0.405
Yes	76	24.8	45	63.4	4.60 (2.59-8.19)	98	41.4	127	73.0	3.84 (2.49-5.93)	
<b>MANUAL</b>											
<b>Current smoking</b>											
No	255	69.1	70	50.0	1.00	165	75.0	133	47.7	1.00	0.191
Yes	114	30.9	70	50.0	3.13 (1.94-5.05)	55	25.0	146	52.3	3.37 (2.28-5.00)	
<b>Excessive drinking†</b>											
No	337	91.3	81	57.9	1.00	181	82.3	158	56.6	1.00	0.247
Yes	32	8.7	59	42.1	5.08 (2.93-8.79)	39	17.7	121	43.4	3.66 (2.38-5.63)	
<b>Ever used illicit drugs</b>											
No	287	78.0	55	39.3	1.00	128	58.2	63	22.6	1.00	0.727
Yes	81	22.0	85	60.7	3.99 (2.50-6.35)	92	41.8	216	77.4	4.73 (3.18-7.04)	

p-values of interactions by social class: within 1987/1990 cohort - current smoking by class p=0.674, excessive drinking by class p=0.349, ever illicit drugs by class p=0.749; within 1999/2003 cohort – current smoking by class p=0.983, excessive drinking by class p=0.672, ever illicit drugs by class p=0.379.

\*Adjusted for age and gender.

†Defined as  $\geq 22$  units in the past week for males,  $\geq 15$  units for females.

Web Table 3 Rates of early sexual initiation according to early adolescent substance use and associated odds ratios (unadjusted for other substance use) for each cohort, by social class

	1987/1990 cohort					1999/2003 cohort					<i>p-value of interaction with cohort</i>
	No early sexual initiation		Early sexual initiation		OR (95% CI)*	No early sexual initiation		Early sexual initiation		OR (95% CI)*	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%		
<b>NON-MANUAL</b>											
<b>Started smoking age &lt;14</b>											
No	272	82.2	31	68.9	1.00	295	92.5	58	65.2	1.00	
Yes	59	17.8	14	31.1	1.96 (0.96-3.98)	24	7.5	31	34.8	6.58 (3.61-12.01)	0.010
<b>Monthly drinking age 15</b>											
No	262	79.2	28	63.6	1.00	145	45.5	13	14.6	1.00	
Yes	69	20.8	16	36.4	2.13 (1.09-4.18)	174	54.5	76	85.4	4.83 (2.58-9.02)	0.080
<b>Ever used illicit drugs age 15</b>											
No	313	94.8	36	80.0	1.00	234	73.1	26	29.2	1.00	
Yes	17	5.2	9	20.0	3.92 (1.59-9.67)	86	26.9	63	70.8	6.87 (4.06-11.63)	0.429
<b>MANUAL</b>											
<b>Started smoking age &lt;14</b>											
No	333	80.2	55	58.5	1.00	288	82.5	97	55.1	1.00	
Yes	82	19.8	39	41.5	3.29 (1.96-5.50)	61	17.5	79	44.9	4.01 (2.66-6.05)	0.277
<b>Monthly drinking age 15</b>											
No	360	86.7	59	62.8	1.00	141	40.4	34	19.3	1.00	
Yes	55	13.3	35	37.2	3.32 (1.95-5.64)	208	59.6	142	80.7	2.92 (1.89-4.51)	0.723
<b>Ever used illicit drugs age 15</b>											
No	382	92.0	69	73.4	1.00	214	61.5	68	38.6	1.00	
Yes	33	8.0	25	26.6	3.73 (2.01-6.89)	134	38.5	108	61.4	2.62 (1.80-3.82)	0.369

p-values of interactions by social class: within 1987/1990 cohort – started smoking age <14 by class p=0.284, monthly drinking age 15 by class p=0.301, ever illicit drugs age 15 by class p=0.949; within 1999/2003 cohort – started smoking age <14 by class p=0.149, monthly drinking age 15 by class p=0.159, ever illicit drugs age 15 by class p=0.005.

\*Adjusted for gender.



## Clustering of substance use and sexual risk behaviour in adolescence: analysis of two cohort studies

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID:	bmjopen-2011-000661.R1
Article Type:	Research
Date Submitted by the Author:	10-Jan-2012
Complete List of Authors:	Jackson, Caroline; Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy, SWEETING, HELEN; MRC SOCIAL & PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES UNIT, Haw, Sally; University of Stirling,
<b>Primary Subject Heading</b>:	Public health
Secondary Subject Heading:	Sexual health, Smoking and tobacco, Addiction, Epidemiology
Keywords:	EPIDEMIOLOGY, PUBLIC HEALTH, STATISTICS & RESEARCH METHODS

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## Clustering of substance use and sexual risk behaviour in adolescence: analysis of two cohort

### studies

Short title: A cohort analysis of risk behaviour clustering during adolescence

Caroline A Jackson<sup>1\*</sup>, Helen Sweeting<sup>2</sup>, Sally Haw<sup>1,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy  
MRC Human Genetics Unit Building  
Western General Hospital  
Crewe Road South  
Edinburgh  
EH4 2XU  
Email: [caroline.jackson@scphrp.ac.uk](mailto:caroline.jackson@scphrp.ac.uk)

<sup>2</sup>MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit  
4 Lilybank Gardens  
Glasgow  
G12 8RZ  
Email: [helen@sphsu.mrc.ac.uk](mailto:helen@sphsu.mrc.ac.uk)

<sup>3</sup>Centre for Public Health & Population Health Research  
School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health  
University of Stirling  
Stirling  
Scotland, UK  
FK9 4LA  
Email: [s.j.haw@stir.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.haw@stir.ac.uk)

\*Corresponding author

Word count: 3147

Abstract: 297

Key words: Adolescence; risk behaviour; sexual behaviour; alcohol; smoking; illicit drug use

## ABSTRACT

**Objectives** We aimed to examine whether changes in health-risk behaviour rates alters the relationships between behaviours during adolescence, by comparing clustering of risk behaviours at different time points.

**Design** Comparison of two cohort studies, the Twenty-07 ~~S-~~Health in the Community study ('earlier cohort', surveyed in 1987 and /1990 study) and the 11-16/16+ Study: ~~Young People's Health~~ ('later cohort', surveyed 1999 and /2003 study).

**Setting** Central Clydeside Conurbation around Glasgow City.

**Participants** Young people who ~~agreed to~~ participated in the Twenty-07 and 11-16/16+ studies ~~and who completed surveys on health behaviours at time of recruitment and/or follow-up~~ pages 15 and 18-19.

**Primary and secondary outcomes measures** We analysed data on risk behaviours ~~collected at age 15 in both early adolescence~~ (started smoking prior to age 14, monthly drinking ~~and~~ ever used illicit drugs ~~at age 15~~ and sexual intercourse prior to age 16) and ~~at ages 18-19~~late adolescence (age 18-19 current smoking, excessive drinking, ever used illicit drugs and multiple sexual partners), by gender and social class.

**Results** Drinking, illicit drug use and risky sexual behaviour (but not smoking) increased between the earlier and later cohort, especially among females. We found strong associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour during early and late adolescence, with few differences between cohorts, or by gender or social class. Adjusted odds ratios for associations between each substance and sexual risk behaviour were around 2.00. The only significant between-cohort difference was a stronger association between female early adolescent smoking and early sexual initiation in the ~~1999/2003~~later cohort. ~~Also, in the later cohort the relationships between illicit drug use and each of both early sexual initiation and multiple sexual partners in late adolescence were significantly stronger among females than males in the later cohort.~~

**Conclusions** Despite changes in rates, relationships between adolescent risk behaviours remain strong, irrespective of gender and social class. This indicates a need for improved risk behaviour prevention in young people, perhaps through a holistic approach, that addresses the broad shared determinants of various risk behaviours.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period of development, when 'risky' health behaviours may be adopted. These impact on current and future health and wellbeing,(1;2) and are increasingly difficult to modify later in life.(3) There is evidence that some health risk behaviours tend to cluster in adolescence (4-9). A particular focus has been on relationships between substance use and sexual behaviour. In addition to direct effects of certain substances on sexual decisions (10) this may reflect a predisposition towards risky behaviours in some individuals (11) since not only alcohol and illicit drugs, but also smoking, are strongly associated with adolescent sexual risk behaviour.(12)

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There is some evidence that relationships between substance use and sexual behaviour vary by socio-demographic group and culture. Most studies have found stronger associations among females than males (4;6;10;13), although some report no gender differences.(7;14) However, we are unaware of studies which have examined whether associations vary according to either age or socioeconomic status (SES). The authors of one study which found no relationship between early initiation of sexual intercourse and substance use among deprived African-American adolescents suggest this unusual finding might indicate these behaviours have different cultural meanings among certain groups.(15) Another study found weaker associations between substance use and sexual initiation in the US than Europe. Its authors suggest the difference might have resulted from lower substance use rates in their US sample or international differences in acceptability of adolescent substance use or sexual behaviour.(7)

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The present study, based on two adolescent cohorts, born 12 years apart in the same geographic area, the West of Scotland, examines associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour. Unlike some studies which have used composite substance use measures (4;7), we examine relationships between each of smoking, drinking and illicit drug use, and sexual risk behaviour. Most similar studies have been conducted in the USA, but results might vary according to cultural context.(7;9) Historical context is another potentially important influence on health-risk behaviour clustering, but absent from previous studies. Our cohorts were adolescents in the late 1980s and late 1990s/early new millennium respectively. This was a period of considerable social change, including massive increases in young people's involvement

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6 in the night-time economy.<sup>(16)</sup> Significant increases in some adolescent health-risk behaviours over this  
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8 period have been documented <sup>(17;18)</sup> and are evident in comparisons of our cohorts. Rates of drinking,  
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10 illicit drug use and risky sexual behaviour were greater in the later cohort, with increases generally larger  
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12 among females than males but few differences according to SES.<sup>(19;20)</sup> It is possible that as the  
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14 prevalence (and so normative nature) of behaviours changes<sup>(21)</sup>, so might their clustering. The one study  
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16 to examine between-country differences suggested higher substance use rates may have resulted in  
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18 stronger associations with sexual risk behaviour.<sup>(7)</sup> However, if clustering reflects a predisposition towards  
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20 risky behaviours in some individuals <sup>(11)</sup>, then we might expect clustering to be less evident in periods  
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22 when such behaviours are more prevalent.

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24 In our study we conducted analyses on health-risk behaviours in both early [adolescence \(collected at age](#)  
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26 [15\)](#) and late adolescence ([collected at age 18-19](#)), since it is possible that associations between substance  
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28 use and risky sexual behaviour change with age. We examined the associations at two different time  
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30 points, to see if they differed by period. We also examined differences according to gender, which previous  
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32 studies have shown to impact on associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour, and SES,  
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34 which has tended not to be addressed in previous studies.

## 35 METHODS

### 36 Study population

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38 We used data collected at ages 15 and 18-19 from two West of Scotland studies: the *'Twenty-07 Study:*

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42 *Health in the Community'* (henceforth referred to as the ~~1987/'earliery'~~ <sup>1990</sup> study/cohort)<sup>(22)</sup> and the  
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44 *'11-16/16+ Study: Young People's Health'* (henceforth the ~~'later'~~ <sup>1999/2003</sup> study/cohort)<sup>(23)</sup>. Ethical  
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46 approval was received from the NHS for the ~~1987/1990~~ <sup>earliery</sup> study and from Glasgow University for the  
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48 ~~1999/2003~~ <sup>later</sup> study.

49  
50 The ~~1987/1990~~ <sup>earliery</sup> study began in 1987, and was located in the Central Clydeside Conurbation around  
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52 Glasgow. At baseline, 1009 15-year olds (65% issued sample) were recruited, with no significant gender or  
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54 social class differences compared with the source population <sup>(24)</sup>; 908 (90%) participated at follow-up in  
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1990. At both stages, respondents were interviewed in their homes by trained interviewers using paper questionnaires.

The ~~1999/2003~~ later study cohort, also located in the Central Clydeside Conurbation was recruited in 1994 during their final primary school year, aged 11 (93% response). Full details of the sampling strategy are available. <sup>(25)</sup> The cohort was followed up during secondary schooling, aged 15 in 1999 (N=2196, 85% of the baseline sample) using self-completion questionnaires, and post-school, at ages 18-19 in 2002-4 (henceforth 2003) when 1258 respondents (49% of baseline) were interviewed using computer-assisted interviews in survey centres or participants' homes. Fieldwork for this stage took longer than that of the ~~1987/1990~~ earlier study, resulting in a sample which was slightly older with a broader age distribution.

#### Definitions

Smoking: In both studies, interviewers asked respondents aged 18-19 whether they were current, ex or never smokers, allowing derivation of a dichotomous late adolescence 'current smoker' variable. Current and ex-smokers were also asked the age when they first tried smoking; all participants reporting 13 years or less were defined as 'started smoking below age 14'.

Drinking: In both studies, respondents were asked at age 18-19 about alcohol intake using a past week drinking grid (Web Appendix). From this, a dichotomous variable was derived representing drinking over weekly recommended alcohol limits (hereafter called 'excessive drinking':  $\geq 22$  units in the past week for males,  $\geq 15$  for females) <sup>(26)</sup>. At age 15, respondents were asked about drinking frequency. Those drinking 'at least once a month' (in the ~~1978/1990~~ earlier study) and 'about once a month' (in the ~~1999/2003~~ later study) or more were defined as 'monthly drinkers at age 15'.

Illicit drug use: At age 15 and again at 18-19, respondents in both studies were provided with lists of illicit drugs (Web Appendix) and asked if they had experience of any.

Multiple partners and early sexual initiation: In both studies, at age 18-19, all participants reporting opposite sex experience were asked about number of sexual partners ever, used to derive a dichotomous '3+ sexual partners' variable. They were also asked age at first sexual intercourse with someone of the

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6 opposite sex, allowing derivation of a variable representing 'early sexual initiation' (age <16 years vs ≥16 or  
7 hasn't happened).

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10 Social class was derived from head of household occupation. This information was collected at baseline, in  
11 the ~~1987/1990~~earlier study via parental interview, and in the ~~1999/2003~~later study via parental self-  
12 completion questionnaire (supplemented, where necessary, by information provided by respondents  
13 during interviews with research nurses which we have shown to be reliable).<sup>(27)</sup> Social class was  
14 dichotomised into non-manual and manual groupings.

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### 20 Analysis

21 Analyses for each cohort were restricted to those participating in both data collection waves. Attrition in  
22 the ~~earlier 1987/1990~~ study was slightly greater among manual class respondents. At each wave of the  
23 ~~1999/2003~~later study attrition was greater among respondents from manual class backgrounds, with lower  
24 teacher-rated ability and educational involvement and from reconstituted/lone-parent households.

25 Attrition-based weights were constructed for both studies.<sup>(23;28)</sup> Because these were based on those  
26 present at all waves, their effect is to reduce the size of the ~~1999/2003~~later study age 18-19 dataset to  
27 1006 respondents. We further restricted analyses to those with no missing behavioural or social class data  
28 (no respondent had missing gender or age data) (Table 1).

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29 We used Poisson regression to compare mean numbers of behaviours between cohorts separately for early  
30 and late adolescence, and for males and females (adjusted for social class), and manual and non-manual  
31 groups (adjusted for gender). In our analyses relating to late adolescence we also adjusted for age at  
32 interview, previously shown to be important.<sup>(20)</sup> This was not done for early adolescent behaviours  
33 because these data were not all obtained at the age 18-19 interview (footnote to Table 1). We included  
34 terms to identify any interactions by cohort and gender/social class.

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35 We used logistic regression to calculate odds ratios (ORs) and associated confidence intervals (CIs) for the  
36 relationships between each substance and having had three or more sexual partners in late adolescence.

37 We adjusted for: social class and age; and then social class, age and other substance use. We did this

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6 separately for the 1987/1990earlier and 1999/2003later studies and within that by gender (all models  
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8 adjusting for age and social class) and by social class (adjusting for age and gender). Additional analyses  
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10 included terms to identify interactions by cohort and, within each cohort, by gender or social class. We  
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12 used similar models (without age adjustment) to examine relationships between early adolescent  
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14 substance use and early sexual initiation.

## 15 RESULTS

### 16 Time-trends in multiple risk behaviour frequencies

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18 As previously reported (19;20), rates of drinking, illicit drug use and sexual risk behaviour were considerably  
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20 higher in the later cohort (Table 1). As would therefore be expected, the proportion reporting no late  
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22 adolescent risk behaviours decreased from 42.6% in the 1987/1990earlier cohort to 24.1% in the  
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24 1999/2003later cohort, whilst that reporting multiple late adolescent risk behaviours increased markedly,  
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26 with 4.7% of the earlier and 12.2% of the later cohort reporting all four (Web Table 1). Similarly, 57.2% of  
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28 the 1987/1990earlier cohort, but 26.7% of the 1999/2003later cohort, reported no early adolescent  
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30 substance use or sexual initiation, while all four early adolescent risk behaviours were reported by 1.7% of  
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32 the earlier and 9.6% of the later cohort.

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34 These changes were more pronounced in females. Thus, increases in mean numbers of late adolescent risk  
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36 behaviours were greater among females (0.75 versus 1.56; age and social class adjusted  $p<0.001$ ), than  
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38 males (1.50 versus 1.93; adjusted  $p=0.048$ ); the cohort-by-gender interaction was highly significant  
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40 (adjusted  $p<0.001$ ) (Web Table 1). Mean numbers of early adolescent risk behaviours increased  
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42 significantly among both females and males (0.51 versus 1.56 and 0.84 versus 1.55, respectively; both  
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44 adjusted  $p<0.001$ ), but again the increase was greater among females (cohort-by-gender interaction  
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46 adjusted  $p<0.001$ ). Contrasting with these gender differences, increases in mean numbers of both late and  
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48 early adolescent risk behaviours were very similar in those from non-manual compared with manual social  
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50 class backgrounds (Web Table 1).

### 51 Relationships between substance use and sexual risk behaviour

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6 Associations between late adolescent substance use and multiple sexual partners and between early  
7 adolescent substance use and early sexual initiation were strong. This was true for both cohorts, for both  
8 males and females, and for both social class groups.  
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12 In the ~~1987/1990~~ earlier cohort, associations unadjusted for other substance use, between late adolescent  
13 substance use and multiple sexual partners, were slightly lower in respect of current smoking (male OR  
14 3.43, 95% CI 2.21 to 5.32 ; female OR 2.61, 95% CI 1.34 to 5.06) than either excessive drinking (male OR  
15 4.79, 95% CI 3.00 to 7.64; female OR 3.54, 95% CI 1.57 to 7.98) or having used illicit drugs (male OR 4.38,  
16 95% CI 2.85 to 6.73, female OR 3.76, 95% CI 1.92 to 7.37) (Table 2). In the ~~1999/2003~~ later cohort, the  
17 equivalent associations were all weaker among males, but unchanged or stronger among females, although  
18 none of the interactions with cohort were significant. However, in this later cohort, the gender difference  
19 in the strength of association between illicit drug use and multiple sexual partners (male OR 2.71, 95% CI  
20 1.80 to 4.09; female OR 6.72, 95% CI 4.41 to 10.26) was significant (drugs-by-gender interaction  $p=0.003$ ).  
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24 After adjustment for other substance use, associations between use of each substance and multiple sexual  
25 partners in late adolescence attenuated by around one-third, resulting in ORs of around 2.00-3.00 (Figure  
26 1a). Associations were generally similar for males and females and similar for both studies. However, the  
27 relationship between illicit drug use and multiple sexual partners in the ~~1999/2003~~ later cohort continued to  
28 be stronger among females than males ( $p$  for interaction = 0.002).  
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31 Similar results were obtained in models of associations between early adolescent substance use and early  
32 sexual initiation (Table 3; Figure 1b). In models unadjusted for other substance use, relationships between  
33 each substance and early sexual initiation weakened slightly over time among males, but strengthened  
34 among females. This trend was particularly marked for the relationship between having started smoking  
35 below age 14 and early sexual initiation (female OR 1.46, 95% CI 0.67 to 3.18 in 1987/1990; OR 6.40, 95% CI  
36 3.94 to 10.39 in 1999/2003,  $p$  for cohort interaction=0.002). As in late adolescence, in the ~~1999/2003~~ later  
37 cohort there was a significant gender difference ( $p=0.005$ ) in the association between illicit drug use and  
38 sexual behaviour, which was stronger among females. After adjusting for other substance use, associations  
39 between each substance and early sexual initiation were attenuated by up to one half, with the greatest  
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6 attenuation occurring among females in the later cohort, giving ORs of around 2.00 (Figure 1b). As in the  
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8 unadjusted analyses, the relationship between early smoking and early sexual initiation among females was  
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10 stronger in the later than the earlier cohort ( $p$  for cohort interaction=0.022), and the relationship between  
11  
12 early illicit drug use and early sexual initiation in the later cohort was stronger among females than males  
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14 ( $p$  for gender interaction=0.023).

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16 Associations between substance use and risky sexual behaviour in both late and early adolescence were  
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18 similar for participants from both social class groups in both cohorts. This was true for associations  
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20 unadjusted for other substance use (Web Table 2; Web Table 3) and for those adjusted for other substance  
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22 use (Figure 2). The one exception was that the relationship between early illicit drug use and early sexual  
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24 initiation was weaker in manual compared with non-manual social class groups in the later cohort (drugs-  
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26 by-class interaction  $p$ =0.016; Figure 2b).

## 27 DISCUSSION

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29 Our comparison of two cohorts revealed a large increase in the proportion of young people reporting early  
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31 and late adolescent multiple risk behaviours between 1987/1990 and 1999/2003. Increases were  
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33 particularly marked among females, but broadly similar in both social class groups. We found strong  
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35 associations, both between early substance use and early sexual initiation, and between late adolescent  
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37 substance use and having had multiple sexual partners. These relationships were broadly similar for males  
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39 and females and between social class groups. Despite much higher rates of drinking, drug use and risky  
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41 sexual behaviour (but not smoking) in the later cohort, relationships between use of each substance and  
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43 risky sexual behaviour showed little or no change over time.

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45 Increasing proportions reporting multiple health-risk behaviours are to be expected, given higher rates of  
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47 all individual risk behaviours, except smoking, in the later cohort.<sup>(19;20)</sup> However, they are particularly  
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49 concerning given suggestions that certain behavioural combinations might operate synergistically to  
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51 increase health risks. Thus smoking plus drinking dramatically increases risk of certain cancers,<sup>(29)</sup> while  
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53 sexual behaviour plus drinking or illicit drug use may result in less informed decisions, more unprotected  
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55 sex, risk of violence or subsequent regret.<sup>(4;10;14;30)</sup>

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6 Most,<sup>(4;6;10;13)</sup> but not all <sup>(7;14)</sup> previous studies have found stronger associations between adolescent  
7 substance use and sexual behaviour among females. This may be because sexual experience in  
8 adolescence is more normative for males and so less tied to other risk behaviours <sup>(13)</sup> or it may reflect  
9 different attitudes towards sexual behaviour among male compared with female adolescents.<sup>(30)</sup> We  
10 found no gender differences in relationships between early or late adolescent substance use and risky  
11 sexual behaviour in our earlier cohort. However, the association between illicit drug use and sexual risk  
12 behaviour in both early and late adolescence was stronger among females than males in our later cohort.  
13 Had we found stronger relationships in our earlier cohort that disappeared or weakened over time, we  
14 might have attributed this to the gender convergence in adolescent sexual risk behaviour <sup>(31)</sup> or changing  
15 attitudes towards female sexuality.<sup>(32)</sup> The findings we did obtain are hard to explain.

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24 Our study has a number of strengths. We compared two cohorts of young people from the same  
25 geographic area and life-stage, surveyed using (near) identical questions, 13 years apart. To our  
26 knowledge, this is the first study to examine time-trends in associations between substance use and sexual  
27 behaviour. We also examined these associations in both early *and* late adolescence and by gender and  
28 social class, the latter of which has not, to our knowledge, been previously investigated. However, there  
29 are some limitations. The follow-up rate in the <sup>1999/2003</sup>later study was quite low, with greater non-  
30 response among certain groups. Although accounted for via weighted analyses, we may not have fully  
31 compensated for differential loss to follow-up of adolescents with more 'risky' patterns of behaviour. The  
32 questions included for each cohort were equivalent for all behaviours except alcohol intake, which included  
33 a more detailed drinking grid in the 1999/2003 study, possibly encouraging increased reporting. Parental  
34 occupational data, used to derive social class, were also collected in different ways, but there is little reason  
35 to think the methods would impact in such a way as to produce bias. Ideally, we would have used  
36 unprotected sex as a measure of sexual risk behaviour in ~~older~~late adolescence, but, unfortunately, the two  
37 studies did not include equivalent questions ~~data~~ on contraception or condom use at age 18-19. We  
38 therefore relied on number of sexual partners as an alternative proxy for 'risky' sexual behaviour. Finally,  
39 interviewer-administered questionnaires (from which all behavioural data were obtained apart from those  
40 relating to early adolescent drinking and drug use in the <sup>1999/2003</sup>later study) have been shown to lead to

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6 under-reporting of behaviours compared with self-administered instruments (33), so possibly impacting on  
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8 the strength of the observed associations.

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10 Consideration should also be given to the generalisability of our findings. It is possible that prevalence of  
11 adolescent risk behaviours, in particular illicit drug use, may be higher in Glasgow City than in some other  
12 areas of Scotland and the UK. However, the increase in risk behaviours **observed by ourselves** has also  
13 been reported in other studies **and there is no reason to believe that Glasgow would differ from other large**  
14 **urban areas in respect of** associations between **adolescent** sexual risk behaviour and substance use.  
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## 20 Conclusions

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23 Despite increases in adolescent multiple risk behaviour during the 1990s, the strength of associations  
24 between substance use and sexual risk behaviour remained largely similar. These findings have several  
25 public health implications. National and local governmental policy and strategies should reflect the strong  
26 relationships between adolescent risk behaviours and support broader and more integrated approaches to  
27 prevention and treatment.(34-36) For example, sexual health clinics could routinely opportunistically offer  
28 advice and counselling for alcohol and illicit drug use.(37) Clustering of adolescent health-risk behaviours  
29 partly reflects shared underlying determinants.(11;34) Thus a holistic preventive approach, addressing  
30 broad determinants of risk behaviours, from individual through to societal influences, is needed. Strong  
31 associations between early adolescent substance use and sexual initiation mean preventive measures  
32 should be implemented at younger ages, possibly during primary school. Such a holistic approach would  
33 require effective cross-sector government collaboration, especially between education and health  
34 departments. Finally, given that substance use and sexual risk behaviour appear to be strongly associated  
35 across social class groups, preventive approaches to risk behaviour should include both universal and  
36 targeted approaches, described by Marmot as proportionate universalism,(38) to ensure equitable  
37 improvement in adolescent health and wellbeing.  
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### What is already known on this subject?

There is growing evidence that adolescent substance use and sexual risk behaviour are associated. However, less is known about how these associations differ by gender and socioeconomic status, or, given the increase in health-risk behaviour in the past two decades, whether these associations have changed over time.

### What this study adds?

We found that despite increasing health-risk behaviour rates during the 1990s, associations between substance use and sexual risk behaviour remained strong, in the early 2000s, in both ~~younger~~ early and older ~~late~~ adolescents, irrespective of gender or social class. These data further support the need for improved policies, strategies and interventions to prevent multiple risk behaviour in young people.

**Authors' contributions**

All authors contributed to the analysis plan and questions addressed in the paper and to the interpretation of the results. CJ drafted the paper and is guarantor. HS contributed to the design of 11-16/16+ and its data collection, cleaned data from both studies and conducted the analyses. HS and SH critically revised the paper and all authors gave approval for the final version to be published.

**Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgements are due to Michaela Benzeval, Kate Hunt and Sally Macintyre for comments on an earlier draft, and to the young people, nurse interviewers, schools, and all those from the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit involved in the studies described here.

**Competing interests**

The authors have no competing interests

**Funding**

CJ and SH are co-funded by the Scottish Chief Scientist Office and MRC at the Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy (SCPHRP). HS is funded by the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) as part of the Gender and Health Programme (WBS U.1300.00.004) at the Social and Public Health Sciences Unit. The 'Twenty-07' and '11-16/16+' studies were funded by the MRC. The analyses in the current study were part-funded by a grant from the SCPHRP. The funders played no role in: the design of the analysis and interpretation of the data; the writing of the report; or the decision to submit the paper for publication.



Table 1 Demographic characteristics, substance use and risky sexual behaviour in late and early adolescence in both cohorts

Analyses of later adolescent substance use and multiple sexual partners					Analyses of earlier adolescent substance use and early sexual initiation				
	1987/1990 ('earlier') cohort		1999/2003 ('later') cohort		Mean age (SD)	1987/1990 ('earlier') cohort		1999/2003 ('later') cohort	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%
<b>Mean age (SD)</b>	18 years 7 months (3.9 months)		19 years 3 months (6.4 months)			15 years 8 months (3.8 months)		15 years 5 months (3.7 months)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>					<b>Gender</b>				
Male	418	47.1	454	49.9	Male	416	47.0	473	50.7
Female	469	52.9	456	50.1	Female	468	53.0	460	49.3
<b>Social class</b>					<b>Social class</b>				
Non-manual	378	42.6	410	45.1	Non-manual	375	42.4	408	43.8
Manual	509	57.4	499	54.9	Manual	509	57.6	525	56.2
<b>Current smoker*</b>					<b>Started smoking at age &lt;14*</b>				
Yes	298	33.6	308	33.9	Yes	193	21.9	195	20.9
No	589	66.4	602	66.1	No	691	78.1	738	79.1
<b>Excessive drinking**†</b>					<b>Monthly drinking at age 15‡</b>				
Yes	181	20.4	295	32.4	Yes	175	19.8	600	64.3
No	706	79.6	615	67.6	No	709	80.2	333	35.7
<b>Ever used illicit drugs*</b>					<b>Ever illicit drugs at age 15‡</b>				
Yes	288	32.5	532	58.5	Yes	85	9.6	391	41.9
No	599	67.5	378	41.5	No	799	90.4	542	58.1
<b>3+ sexual partners*</b>					<b>Sex at age &lt;16*</b>				
Yes	212	23.9	453	49.8	Yes	139	15.7	265	28.4
No	675	76.1	456	50.2	No	745	84.3	668	71.6

\* Information obtained at age 18-19 interview.

† Defined as  $\geq 22$  units in the past week for males,  $\geq 15$  units for females.

‡ Information obtained at age 15 interview (earlier cohort) or self-completion questionnaire (later cohort).

Table 2 Rates of multiple (3+) sexual partners in late adolescence according to substance use and associated odds ratios (unadjusted for other substance use) in each cohort, by gender

	1987/1990 ('earlier') cohort					1999/2003 ('later') cohort					<i>p-value of interaction by cohort</i>
	<3 sexual partners		3+ sexual partners		OR (95% CI)*	<3 sexual partners		3+ sexual partners		OR (95% CI)*	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%		
<b>MALES</b>											
<b>Current smoking</b>											
No	192	78.0	87	50.6	1.00	161	77.8	134	54.5	1.00	0.371
Yes	54	22.0	85	49.4	3.43 (2.21 to 5.32)	46	22.2	112	45.5	2.61 (1.71 to 3.97)	
<b>Excessive drinking†</b>											
No	198	80.5	88	51.2	1.00	158	76.0	122	49.6	1.00	0.414
Yes	48	19.5	84	48.8	4.79 (3.00 to 7.64)	50	24.0	124	50.4	3.42 (2.25 to 5.20)	
<b>Ever used illicit drugs</b>											
No	174	70.7	61	35.5	1.00	95	45.9	59	24.0	1.00	0.124
Yes	72	29.3	111	64.5	4.38 (2.85 to 6.73)	112	54.1	187	76.0	2.71 (1.80 to 4.09)	
<b>FEMALES</b>											
<b>Current smoking</b>											
No	292	68.1	18	45.0	1.00	202	81.5	104	50.0	1.00	0.203
Yes	137	31.9	22	55.0	2.61 (1.34 to 5.06)	46	18.5	104	50.0	4.29 (2.79 to 6.58)	
<b>Excessive drinking†</b>											
No	391	90.9	30	75.0	1.00	208	83.9	127	61.1	1.00	0.953
Yes	39	9.1	10	25.0	3.54 (1.57 to 7.98)	40	16.1	81	38.9	3.55 (2.27 to 5.56)	
<b>Ever used illicit drugs</b>											
No	344	80.0	20	51.3	1.00	171	69.0	52	25.1	1.00	0.144
Yes	86	20.0	19	48.7	3.76 (1.92 to 7.37)	77	31.0	155	74.9	6.72 (4.41 to 10.26)	

p-values of interactions by gender: within earlier cohort - current smoking by gender p=0.465, excessive drinking by gender p=0.742, ever illicit drugs by gender p=0.795; within later cohort - current smoking by gender p=0.145, excessive drinking by gender p=0.841, ever illicit drugs by gender p=0.003.

\*Adjusted for social class and age.  
†Defined as ≥ 22 units in the past week for males, ≥ 15 units for females.  
OR = odds ratios; CI = confidence interval.

**Table 3 Rates of early sexual initiation according to early adolescent use and associated odds ratios (unadjusted for other substance use) in each cohort, by gender**

	1987/1990 ('earlier') cohort					1999/2003 ('later') cohort					p-value of interaction with cohort
	No early sexual initiation		Early sexual initiation		OR (95% CI)*	No early sexual initiation		Early sexual initiation		OR (95% CI)*	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%		
<b>MALES</b>											
<b>Started smoking age &lt;14</b>											
No	261	83.9	61	58.7	1.00	288	87.3	92	64.3	1.00	0.879
Yes	50	16.1	43	41.3	3.64 (2.20 to 6.02)	42	12.7	51	35.7	3.45 (2.14 to 5.58)	
<b>Monthly drinking age 15</b>											
No	252	80.8	62	59.6	1.00	148	44.8	32	22.4	1.00	0.780
Yes	60	19.2	42	40.4	3.00 (1.84 to 4.92)	182	55.2	111	77.6	2.74 (1.74 to 4.32)	
<b>Ever used illicit drugs age 15</b>											
No	287	92.3	76	73.1	1.00	210	63.8	60	42.0	1.00	0.159
Yes	24	7.7	28	26.9	4.11 (2.24 to 7.54)	119	36.2	83	58.0	2.42 (1.61 to 3.65)	
<b>FEMALES</b>											
<b>Started smoking age &lt;14</b>											
No	343	79.0	25	71.4	1.00	295	87.3	63	51.6	1.00	0.002
Yes	91	21.0	10	28.6	1.46 (0.67 to 3.18)	43	12.7	59	48.4	6.40 (3.94 to 10.39)	
<b>Monthly drinking age 15</b>											
No	370	85.3	25	71.4	1.00	138	40.9	15	12.3	1.00	0.133
Yes	64	14.7	10	28.6	2.32 (1.04 to 5.14)	199	59.1	107	87.7	4.93 (2.75 to 8.84)	
<b>Ever used illicit drugs age 15</b>											
No	407	94.0	29	82.9	1.00	237	70.1	34	27.9	1.00	0.218
Yes	26	6.0	6	17.1	3.09 (1.16 to 8.21)	101	29.9	88	72.1	6.17 (3.87 to 9.83)	

p-values of interactions by gender: within earlier cohort – started smoking age <14 by gender p=0.047, monthly drinking age 15 by gender p=0.710, ever illicit drugs age 15 by gender p=0.564; within later cohort – started smoking age <14 by gender p=0.134, monthly drinking age 15 by gender p=0.118, ever illicit drugs age 15 by gender p=0.005.

\*Adjusted for social class.

OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

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7 **Figure 1** Associations, by gender and cohort, between (a) late adolescent substance use and having  
8 had three or more sexual partners and (b) early adolescent substance use and early sexual initiation.

9  
10 “Earlier” cohort = 1987/1990 cohort; “Later” cohort = 1999/2003 cohort

11  
12 \*Adjusted for age and class

13  
14 † p-value of gender by illicit drug use interaction in 2003 = 0.002

15  
16 ‡ Adjusted for class

17  
18 §p-value of cohort interaction for smoking prior to age 14 among females = 0.022

19  
20 ¶p-value of gender by illicit drug use interaction in 2003 = 0.023

21  
22 OR = odds ratios; CI = confidence intervals

23  
24  
25 **Figure 2** Associations, by social class and cohort, between (a) late adolescent substance use and  
26 having had three or more sexual partners and (b) early adolescent substance use and early sexual  
27 initiation.

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29  
30 “Earlier” cohort = 1987/1990 cohort; “Later” cohort = 1999/2003 cohort

31  
32 \*Adjusted for age and gender

33  
34 †Adjusted for gender

35  
36 ‡p-value of class by illicit drug use interaction in 2003 = 0.016

37  
38 OR = odds ratios; CI = confidence intervals

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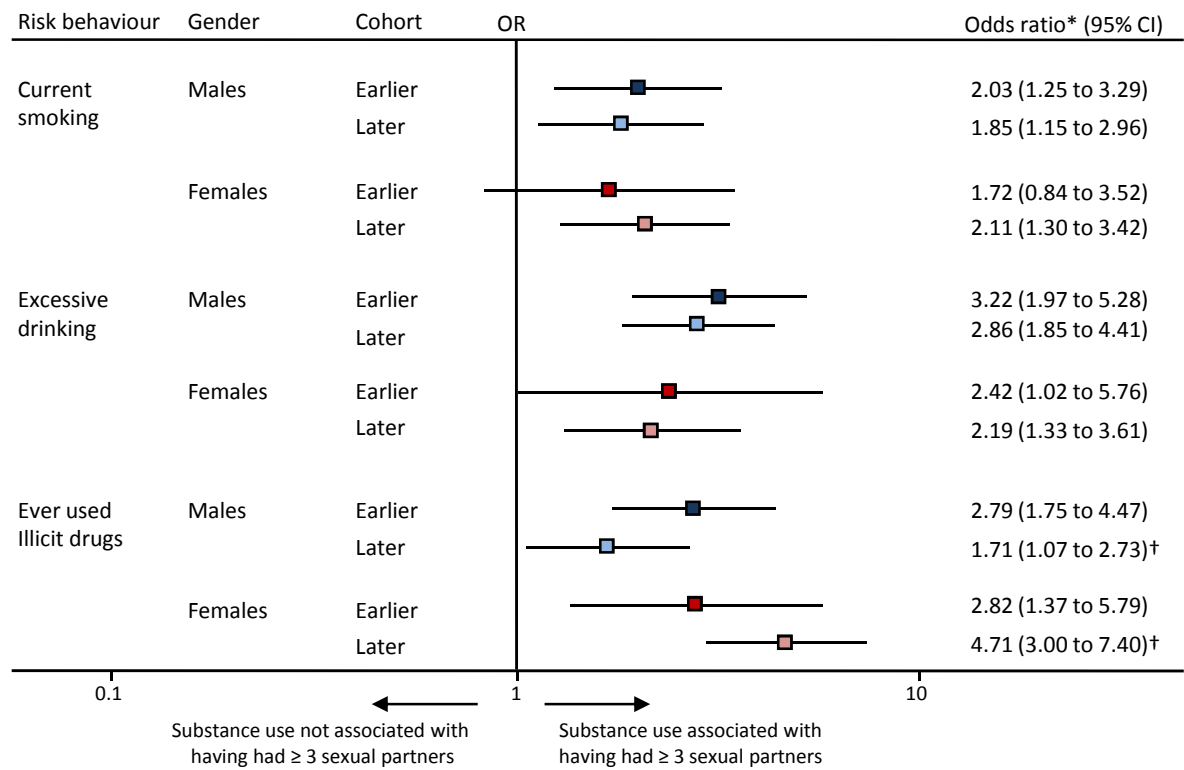
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Figure 1

(a)



(b)

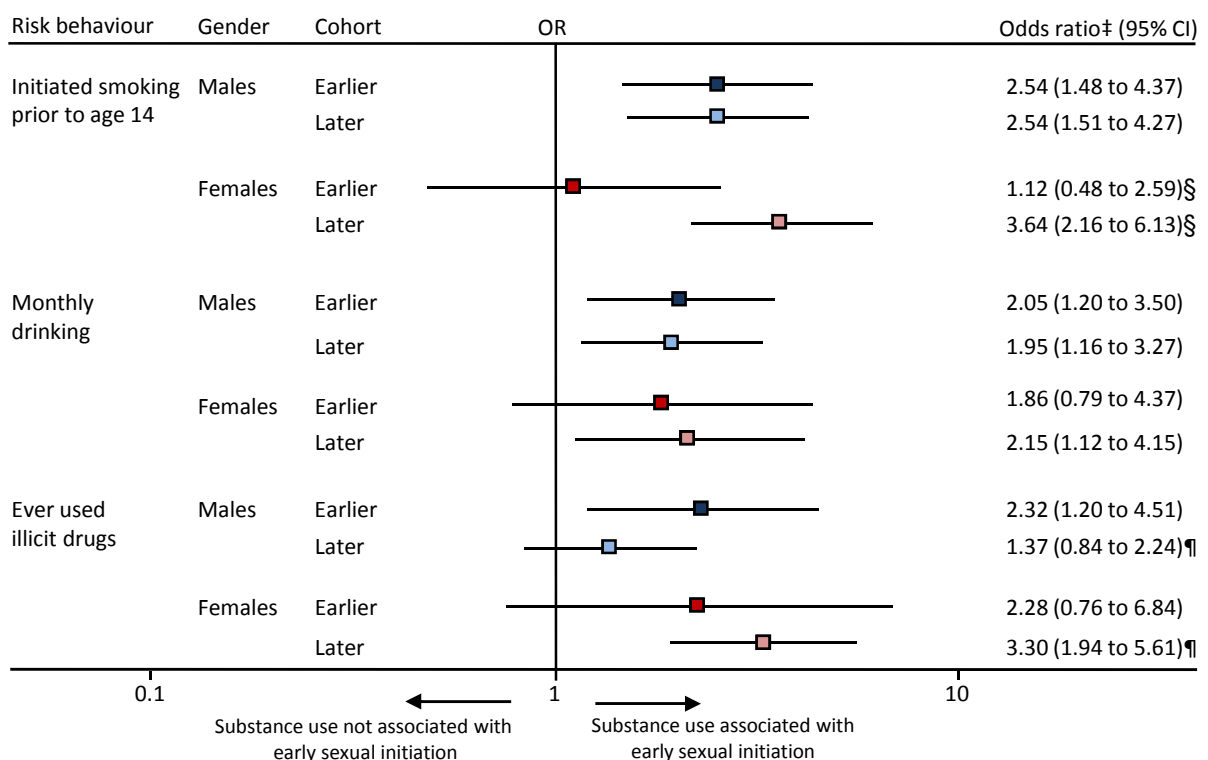
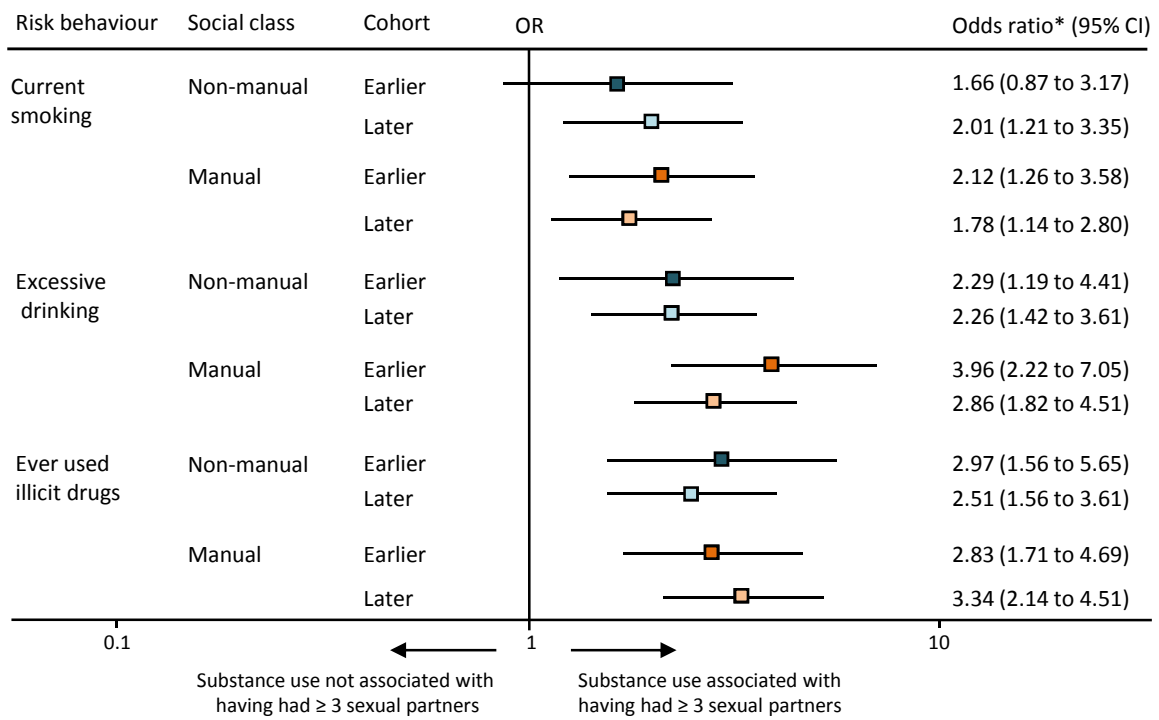


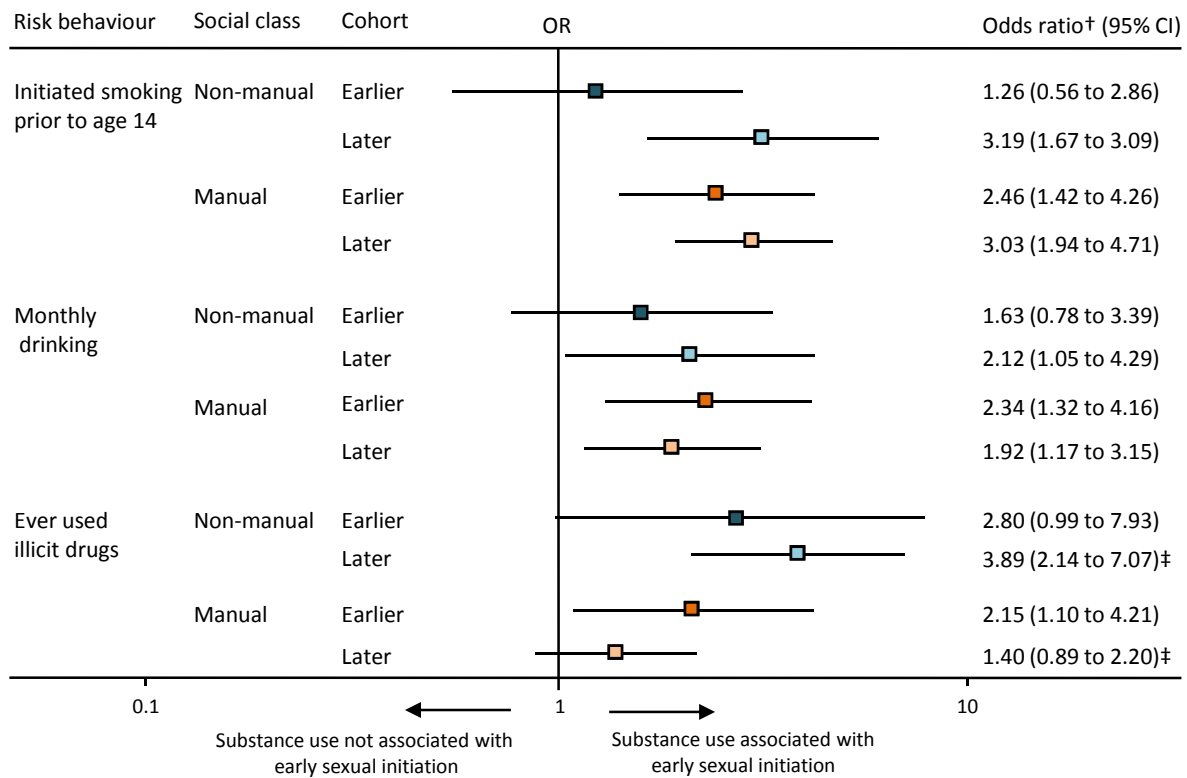


Figure 2

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3 **Web Appendix Description of the past-week drinking grids and lists of illicit drugs provided to**  
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5 **respondents**  
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10 **Drinking grids**  
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12 At age 18-19, both studies included past-week drinking grids to measure alcohol use. In the  
13 1987/1990 study this asked about: pints, glasses, bottles and measures of beer, lager, shandy, stout  
14 and cider; wine; fortified wine; spirits; and other drinks. The grid in the 1999/2003 study was more  
15 detailed and asked about: pints, small, large and very large cans and bottles and small and large  
16 glasses of shandy; normal or strong beer, lager or stout; normal or strong cider; babycham; wine or  
17 champagne; cocktails, mixers, breezers or alcopops; spirits or liqueurs; (flavoured) schnapps;  
18 buckfast, eldorado or sanatogen; sherry, martini, taboo or port; MD20/20; and other drinks.  
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31 **Illicit drugs lists**  
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33 At age 15 ('early adolescence'), respondents in both studies were provided with the following list of  
34 illicit drugs: cannabis; LSD; barbiturates; glues, solvents, dry-cleaning fluids; fuels or gas;  
35 amphetamines; opium; morphine; heroin; cocaine; crack; PCP; magic mushrooms. The 1987/1990  
36 study age 15 list also included barbiturates; opium; morphine; and PCP. The 1999/2003 study age 15  
37 list also included temazepam and ecstasy.  
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47 At age 18-19 ('late adolescence'), respondents in both cohorts were provided with the following list,  
48 comprising: cannabis; LSD; temazepam; tranquillisers; glues, sprays, gas, dry cleaning fluid;  
49 amphetamine; amyl or butile nitrite; heroin; methadone; temgesic; cocaine; crack; ecstasy; magic  
50 mushrooms; morphine or opium. The list given to the 1987/1990 cohort also included other  
51 barbiturates and PCP.  
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**Web Table 1 Proportion reporting none, one, two, three or four behaviours and mean number of behaviours in early and late adolescence within each cohort, with  $\beta$  (adjusted as appropriate) for the increase in means between 1987/1990 (the 'earlier' cohort) and 1999/2003 (the 'later' cohort), overall and among males vs females and those from non-manual vs manual backgrounds**

	Late adolescence substance and 3+ sexual partners									Early adolescent substance use and early sexual initiation							
	Cohort	None (%)	One (%)	Two (%)	Three (%)	Four (%)	Mean N behaviours	$\beta$ (p-value)	p-value cohort by gender/social class interaction	None (%)	One (%)	Two (%)	Three (%)	Four (%)	Mean N behaviours	$\beta$ (p-value)	p-value cohort by gender/social class interaction
<b>Overall</b>	1987/1990	42.6	24.4	17.2	11.0	4.7	1.10	0.34*	-	57.2	26.2	10.1	4.8	1.7	0.67	0.81†	-
	1999/2003	24.1	20.5	24.2	19.0	12.2	1.75	(< 0.001)		26.7	26.0	22.0	15.7	9.6	1.55	(< 0.001)	
<b>By gender</b>																	
<b>Males</b>	1987/1990	32.5	20.6	19.4	19.1	8.4	1.50	0.12‡		51.3	24.9	13.4	7.4	2.9	0.84	0.59§	
	1999/2003	17.4	21.2	25.2	22.7	13.5	1.93	(0.048)		26.3	26.1	23.7	15.0	8.9	1.55	(< 0.001)	
									<0.001								<0.001
<b>Females</b>	1987/1990	51.7	27.9	15.3	3.8	1.5	0.75	0.65‡		62.3	27.2	7.2	2.6	0.6	0.51	1.08§	
	1999/2003	30.7	19.7	23.2	15.4	11.0	1.56	(< 0.001)		27.2	25.9	20.3	16.3	10.2	1.56	(< 0.001)	
<b>By social class</b>																	
<b>Non-manual</b>	1987/1990	46.4	22.2	16.4	10.0	5.0	1.05	0.27¶		58.9	26.5	10.1	2.9	1.6	0.61	0.75**	
	1999/2003	29.0	22.4	22.0	17.6	9.0	1.56	(< 0.001)		32.8	27.1	21.3	12.2	6.6	1.33	(< 0.001)	
									0.155								0.281
<b>Manual</b>	1987/1990	39.9	26.1	17.9	11.8	4.3	1.14	0.40¶		55.8	26.0	10.2	6.3	1.8	0.71	0.85**	
	1999/2003	20.0	19.0	26.2	20.0	14.8	1.90	(< 0.001)		21.9	25.1	22.9	18.3	11.8	1.73	(< 0.001)	

\* Adjusted for age, gender and class.

† Adjusted for gender and class.

‡ Adjusted for age and class.

§ Adjusted for class.

¶ Adjusted for age and gender.

\*\* Adjusted for gender.

Web Table 2 Rates of multiple (3+) sexual partners in late adolescence according to substance use and associated odds ratios (unadjusted for other substance use) for each cohort, by social class

	1987/1990 ('earlier') cohort					1999/2003 ('later') cohort					<i>p-value of interaction with cohort</i>
	<3 sexual partners		3+ sexual partners		OR (95% CI)*	<3 sexual partners		3+ sexual partners		OR (95% CI)*	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%		
<b>NON-MANUAL</b>											
<b>Current smoking</b>											
No	229	74.6	35	48.6	1.00	199	84.0	105	60.3	1.00	0.813
Yes	78	25.4	37	51.4	3.18 (1.80-5.63)	38	16.0	69	39.7	3.34 (2.10-5.31)	
<b>Excessive drinking†</b>											
No	252	82.4	37	51.4	1.00	186	78.5	91	52.3	1.00	0.472
Yes	54	17.6	35	48.6	3.93 (2.16-7.12)	51	21.5	83	47.7	3.30 (2.13-5.11)	
<b>Ever used illicit drugs</b>											
No	230	75.2	26	36.6	1.00	139	58.6	47	27.0	1.00	0.405
Yes	76	24.8	45	63.4	4.60 (2.59-8.19)	98	41.4	127	73.0	3.84 (2.49-5.93)	
<b>MANUAL</b>											
<b>Current smoking</b>											
No	255	69.1	70	50.0	1.00	165	75.0	133	47.7	1.00	0.191
Yes	114	30.9	70	50.0	3.13 (1.94-5.05)	55	25.0	146	52.3	3.37 (2.28-5.00)	
<b>Excessive drinking†</b>											
No	337	91.3	81	57.9	1.00	181	82.3	158	56.6	1.00	0.247
Yes	32	8.7	59	42.1	5.08 (2.93-8.79)	39	17.7	121	43.4	3.66 (2.38-5.63)	
<b>Ever used illicit drugs</b>											
No	287	78.0	55	39.3	1.00	128	58.2	63	22.6	1.00	0.727
Yes	81	22.0	85	60.7	3.99 (2.50-6.35)	92	41.8	216	77.4	4.73 (3.18-7.04)	

p-values of interactions by social class: within 1987/1990 cohort - current smoking by class p=0.674, excessive drinking by class p=0.349, ever illicit drugs by class p=0.749; within 1999/2003 cohort - current smoking by class p=0.983, excessive drinking by class p=0.672, ever illicit drugs by class p=0.379.

\*Adjusted for age and gender.

†Defined as ≥ 22 units in the past week for males, ≥ 15 units for females.

**Web Table 3 Rates of early sexual initiation according to early adolescent substance use and associated odds ratios (unadjusted for other substance use) for each cohort, by social class**

	1987/1990 ('earlier') cohort					1999/2003 ('later') cohort					<i>p-value of interaction with cohort</i>
	No early sexual initiation		Early sexual initiation		OR (95% CI)*	No early sexual initiation		Early sexual initiation		OR (95% CI)*	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%		
<b>NON-MANUAL</b>											
<b>Started smoking age &lt;14</b>											
No	272	82.2	31	68.9	1.00	295	92.5	58	65.2	1.00	
Yes	59	17.8	14	31.1	1.96 (0.96-3.98)	24	7.5	31	34.8	6.58 (3.61-12.01)	0.010
<b>Monthly drinking age 15</b>											
No	262	79.2	28	63.6	1.00	145	45.5	13	14.6	1.00	
Yes	69	20.8	16	36.4	2.13 (1.09-4.18)	174	54.5	76	85.4	4.83 (2.58-9.02)	0.080
<b>Ever used illicit drugs age 15</b>											
No	313	94.8	36	80.0	1.00	234	73.1	26	29.2	1.00	
Yes	17	5.2	9	20.0	3.92 (1.59-9.67)	86	26.9	63	70.8	6.87 (4.06-11.63)	0.429
<b>MANUAL</b>											
<b>Started smoking age &lt;14</b>											
No	333	80.2	55	58.5	1.00	288	82.5	97	55.1	1.00	
Yes	82	19.8	39	41.5	3.29 (1.96-5.50)	61	17.5	79	44.9	4.01 (2.66-6.05)	0.277
<b>Monthly drinking age 15</b>											
No	360	86.7	59	62.8	1.00	141	40.4	34	19.3	1.00	
Yes	55	13.3	35	37.2	3.32 (1.95-5.64)	208	59.6	142	80.7	2.92 (1.89-4.51)	0.723
<b>Ever used illicit drugs age 15</b>											
No	382	92.0	69	73.4	1.00	214	61.5	68	38.6	1.00	
Yes	33	8.0	25	26.6	3.73 (2.01-6.89)	134	38.5	108	61.4	2.62 (1.80-3.82)	0.369

p-values of interactions by social class: within 1987/1990 cohort – started smoking age <14 by class p=0.284, monthly drinking age 15 by class p=0.301, ever illicit drugs age 15 by class p=0.949; within 1999/2003 cohort – started smoking age <14 by class p=0.149, monthly drinking age 15 by class p=0.159, ever illicit drugs age 15 by class p=0.005.

\*Adjusted for gender.