Pregnancy smoking, child health and nutrition
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The aim of the research in this thesis was to assess, through cross-sectional school child health surveys, the health and nutrition of primary school children (5-11 years) in Merseyside, England, in relation to their mother’s history of pregnancy smoking. Childhood health outcomes assessed included obesity, overweight, short stature, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), asthma, and the fetal sex ratio. Pathophysiological mechanisms which may underlie these health associations with pregnancy smoking are considered. Trends in prevalence of childhood and parental asthma in Merseyside between 1991-2006 were estimated and compared with the concurrent pattern of pregnancy smoking. Factors related to parental compliance in completion of the school based questionnaires were evaluated.

The results of this study should help to create awareness among women who smoke of the detrimental effects of smoking in pregnancy on their child. Smoking prevalence among pregnant women in Liverpool is one of the highest in the UK, and greater efforts are required to highlight its adverse effects on children, in order to encourage women to take responsibility for the effects of their actions on the child.