Poverty and Family Adversity Trajectories and not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Status in Late Adolescence: Evidence from the UK Millennium Cohort Study.

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BACKGROUND

- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) face higher risk of social and economic disadvantage
- Yet evidence on cumulative early life adversity on NEET in the UK is limited.
- This study examined associations between trajectories of childhood poverty and family adversity and NEET status and described socioeconomic differences.

METHODS

- Longitudinal data from 8,368 UK Millennium Cohort Study participants were analysed.
- Group-based multi-trajectory modelling identified six exposure patterns from 9 months to 14 years: low poverty/adversity; persistent poverty; persistent poor parental mental health; persistent parental alcohol use; persistent domestic violence; and persistent poverty with poor parental mental health.
- NEET status at age 17 was analysed using logistic regression (adjusted ORs, 95% CIs) and population attributable fractions

RESULTS

- At age 17, 3.5% were NEET, with higher prevalence in disadvantaged groups. Persistent adversities increased NEET risk.
- Exposure to both persistent poverty and poor parental mental health was linked to fivefold higher odds of NEET (aOR 5.0; 95% CI 3.4–7.5).
- Overall, 52.9% (95% CI 41.1%–61.7%) of NEET cases were attributable to persistent poverty and family adversity.

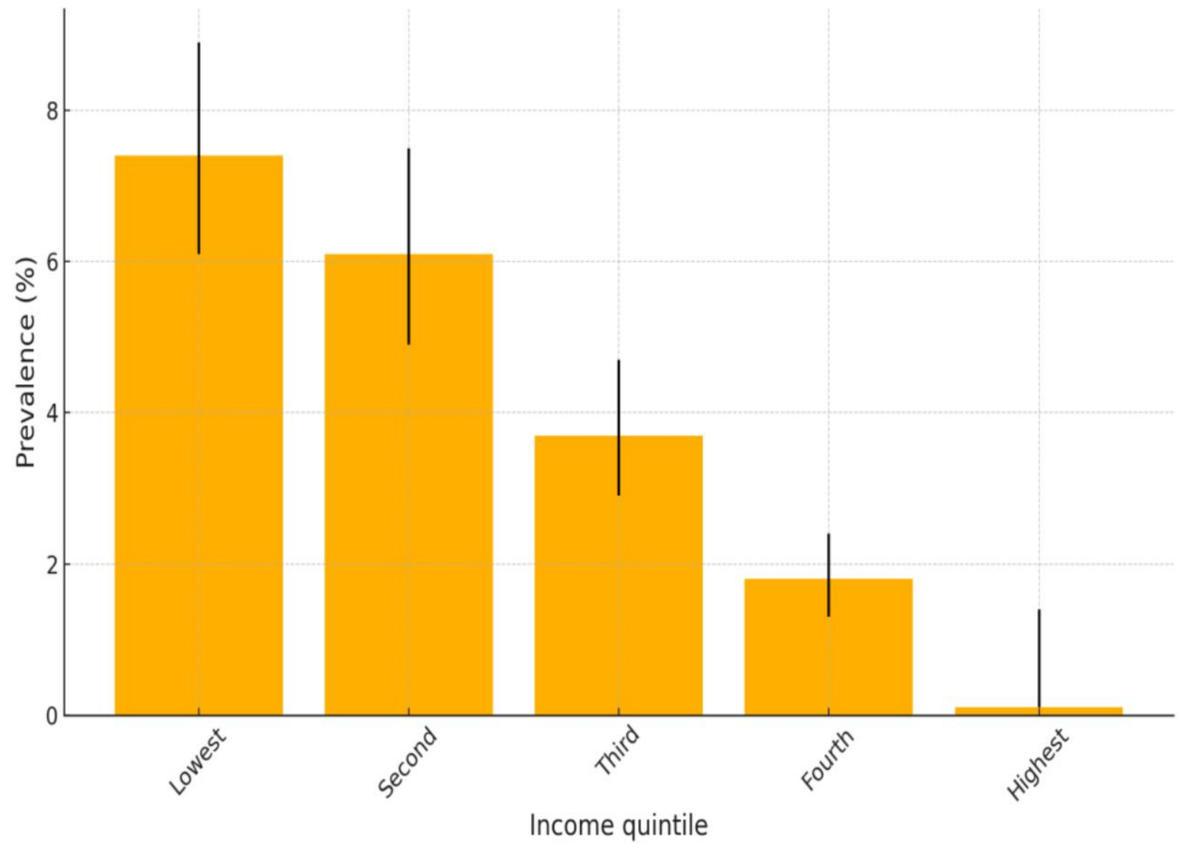


Fig 1: Prevalence (%) of being NEET in the UK at age 17 by income quintile

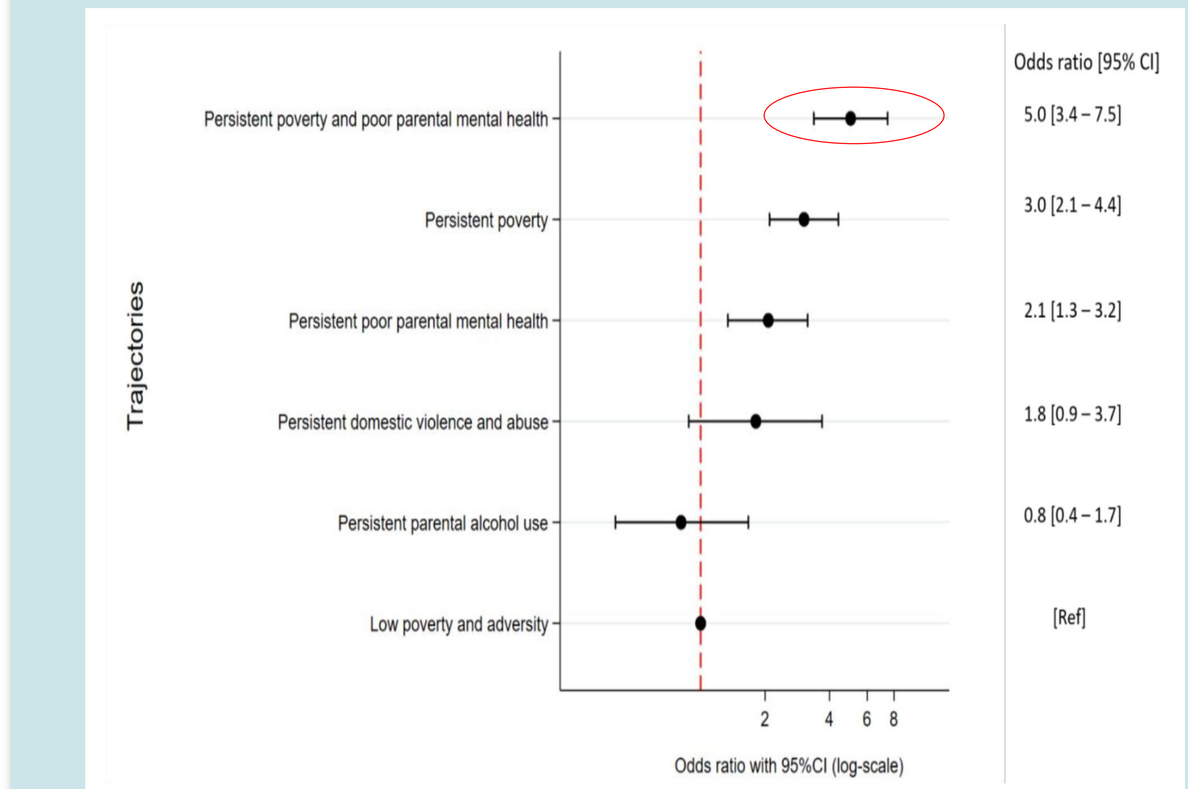
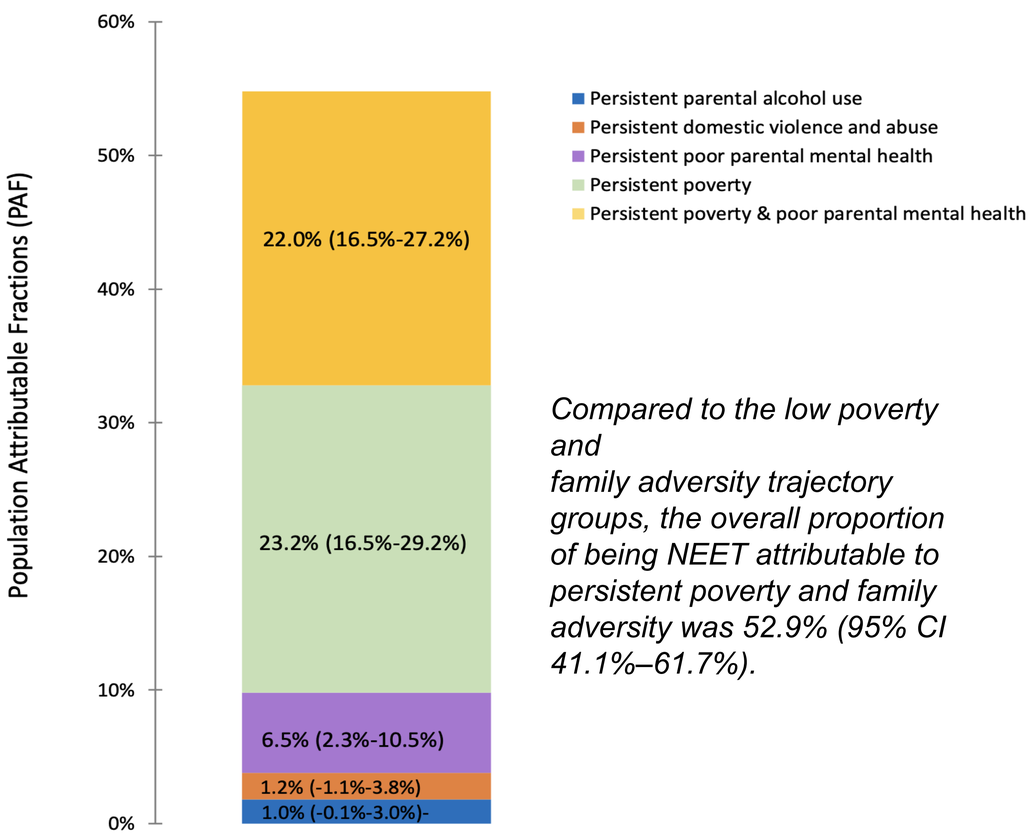


Fig 2: Family adversity and poverty trajectories and being NEET at age 17 years in the UK Millennium Cohort Study



Compared to the low poverty and family adversity trajectory groups, the overall proportion of being NEET attributable to persistent poverty and family adversity was 52.9% (95% CI 41.1%–61.7%).

Fig 3: Proportion of NEET that could be prevented if exposure to poverty and family adversity during childhood were reduced?

CONCLUSIONS

- Childhood adversities, especially poverty and poor parental mental health, strongly increase NEET risk.
- Early interventions addressing socioeconomic disadvantage and family functioning may reduce NEET and its long-term impacts.

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