

**Infant mortality and infant  
feeding in London  
*c.* 1550-1720**

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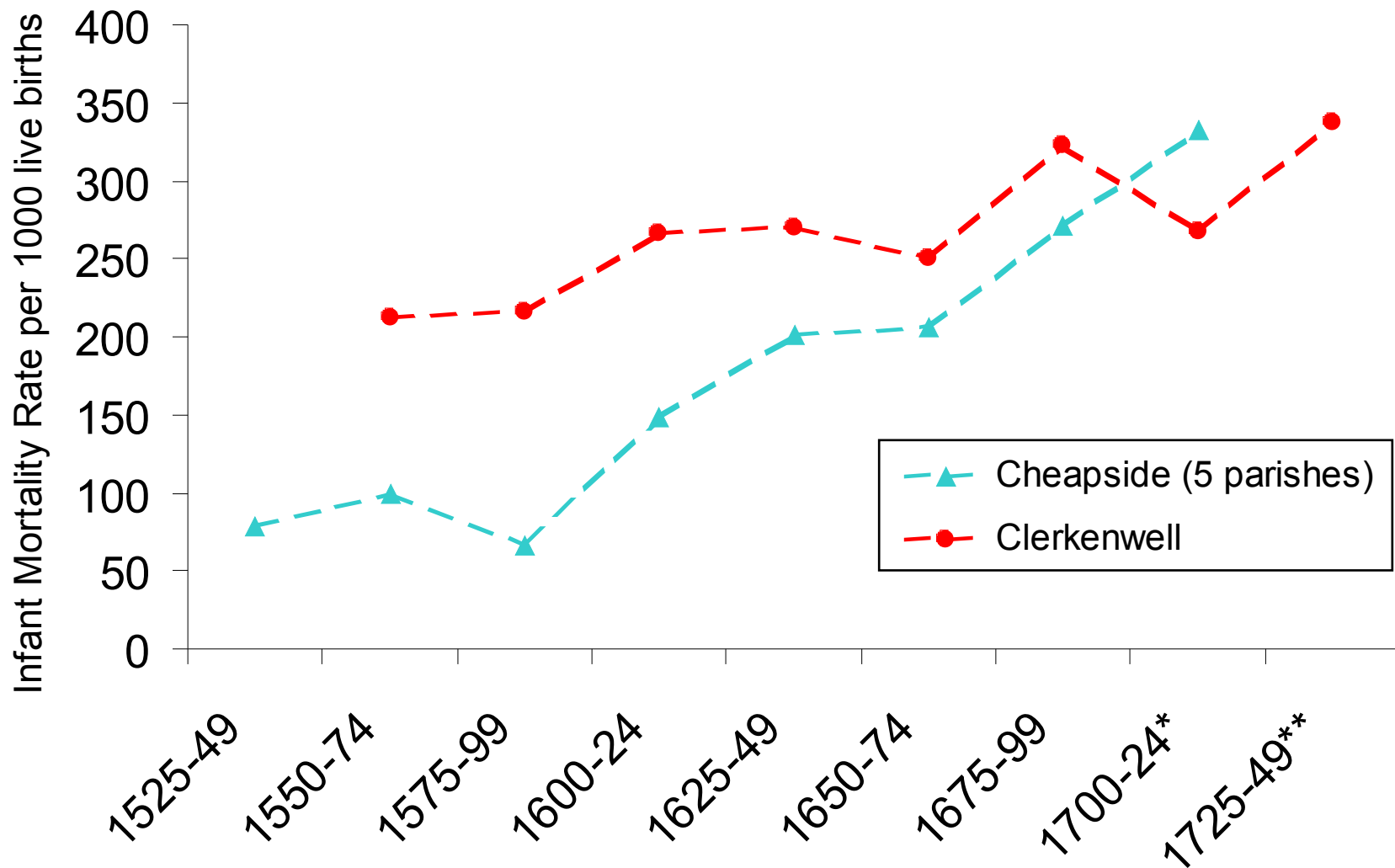
# Sample areas within London

- Cheapside
  - central City area
  - middle class merchants
- Clerkenwell
  - suburban
  - poorer tradesmen
  - growing rapidly from in-migration

# Infant mortality

- Infant mortality rates are very high in late 17<sup>th</sup> century Cheapside and in poorer, suburban Clerkenwell...
- But before 1625 and especially before 1600 infant mortality rates in Cheapside were apparently extremely low
- Is the apparently massive rise in infant mortality pre-1625 genuine?

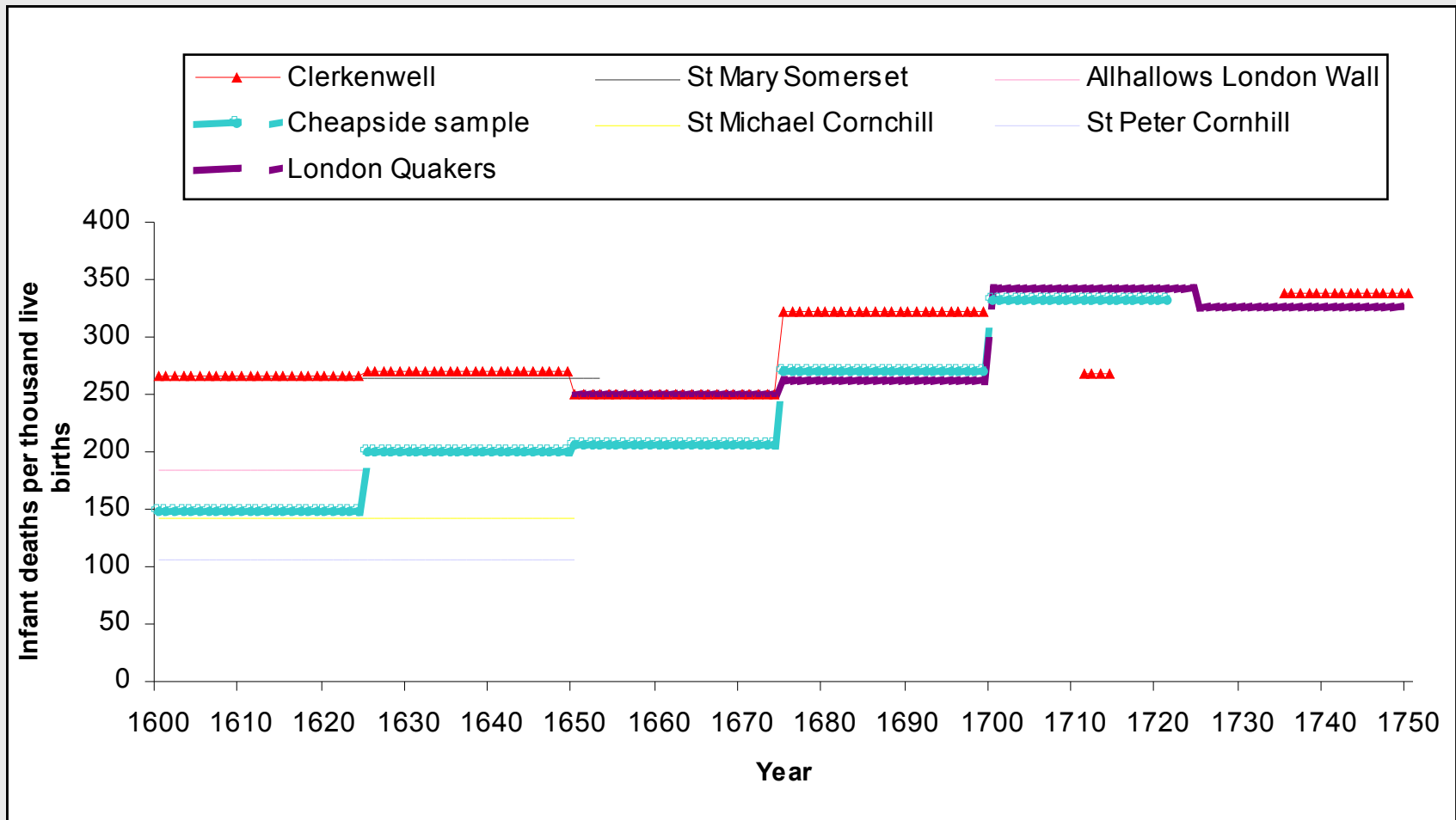
## Infant Mortality In Cheapside and Clerkenwell by period



# Infant mortality: Ns

	Cheapside sample parishes		Clerkenwell	
Period	Population at risk	Rate 1,000q <sub>0</sub>	Population at risk	Rate 1,000q <sub>0</sub>
1525-49	269	78		
1550-74	701	100	212	212
1575-99	804	66	966	216
1600-24	856	148	2404	266
1625-49	705	201	2903	270
1650-74	479	207	3353	250
1675-99	826	271	4797	322
1700-24 (1711-14 in C'well)	484	333	1017	268
1735-53			3088	338

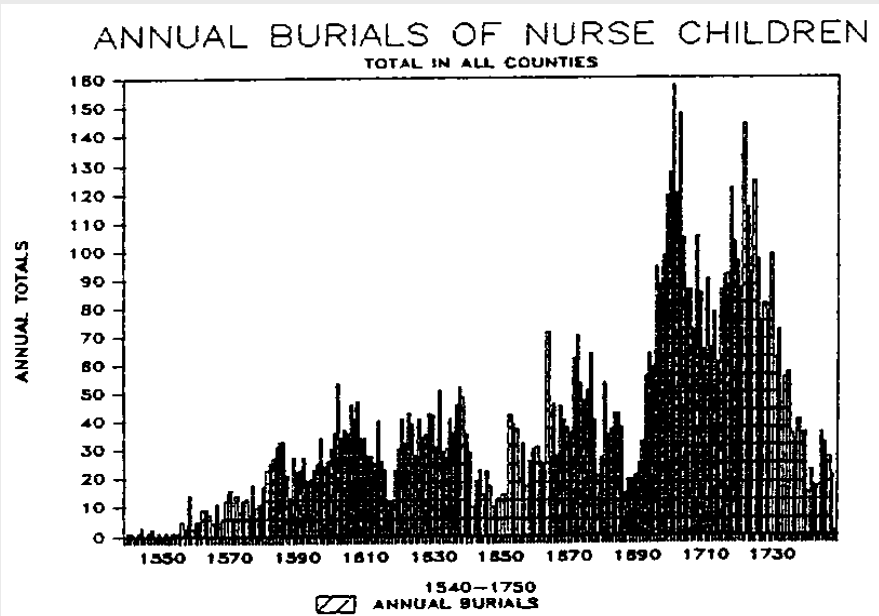
# Cheapside and Clerkenwell Infant mortality in the context of other London studies



Source: Cheapside and Clerkenwell family reconstitutions and: Finlay page 85 Table 5.1 (figures including plague deaths); Landers, page 140 table 4.5

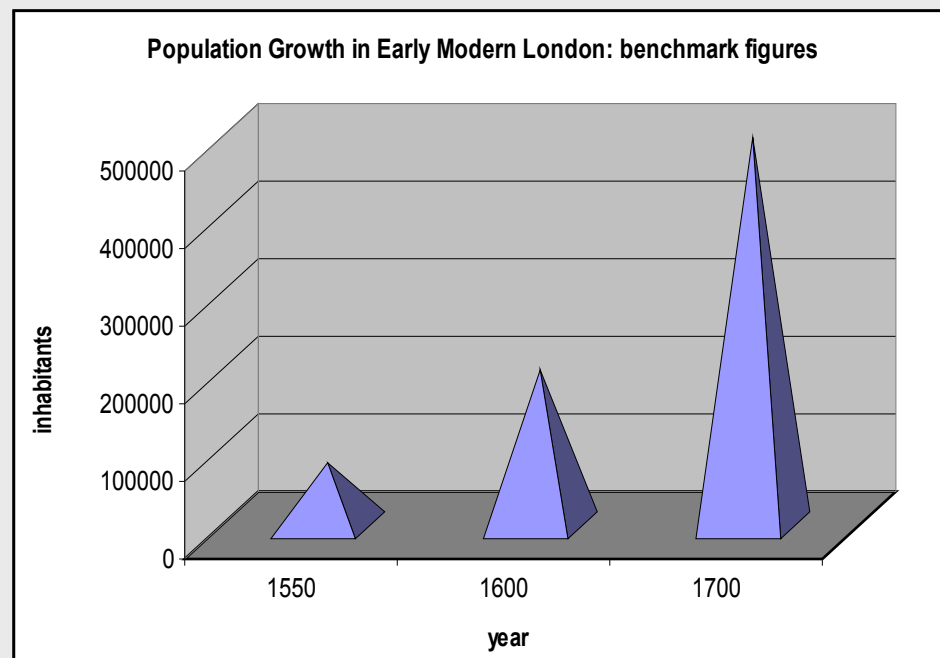
# Nurse children from London

- Finlay:
  - For the single period 1580-1650 richer City parishes display artificially low infant mortality because some children die while at nurse away from their home parish.
  - Short birth intervals in richer City parishes suggest wealthier mothers were not breastfeeding
- Clark:
  - *c* 8000 nurse children from private London households and Christ's Hospital identified in parish burial registers in the home counties, 1540-1750
  - parental occupations suggest predominantly middle class, prosperous shopkeepers rather than 'gentlemen'



**FIGURE 1:** The distribution in time of 8196 burials of nurse children.

Source: Clark, G. 'London's first evacuees: a population study of nurse children', *The Local Historian*, vol 19 no 3, August 1989, page 101



Source: Keene, D. 'Growth, Modernisation and Control: The Transformation of London's Landscape, c.1500-c.1760' in Clark, P and Gillespie, R, eds: *Two Capitals: London and Dublin 1500-1840*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p7-8

# Infant feeding among Cheapside mothers

- Mean birth intervals are considerably shorter at 23.5 months than Clerkenwell's 30.5 months
  - little variation 1550-1720 period (+/- 1 month)
  - infant mortality similar in both areas after 1650 so cannot explain the difference
  - many mothers not breastfeeding is most likely explanation
- Some children baptised shortly before 1695 are absent from a Census-like listing of all inhabitants in that year, but are not (yet) in the burial registers

# The Christopher family (St Martin Ironmonger)

## Children

present in 1695

Type	Sex	Forename	Date of baptism	Date of burial	Age at burial	Date of marriage	Age at marriage	Own family start	Age at family start	Status	Birth Interval
CBAP	M	William	07/04/1689	28/08/1689	0						
CBAP	F	Margaret	01/06/1690			1/08/1712	22				420
CBAP	F	Mary	29/07/1691	01/08/1691	0						423
CBAP	F	Anne	29/08/1692	16/10/1718	26						397
CBAP	M	Barmby	04/02/1694								524
CBAP	F	Frances	18/03/1695								407
CBAP	M	John	20/02/1697	25/08/1697	0						705
CBAP	M	Henry	02/03/1698	18/09/1700	2						375
CBAP	M	William	07/05/1699	23/03/1700	0						426
CBAP	M	Charles	06/10/1700								517

missing from 1695 assessment

# The Mills family (St Mary Colechurch)

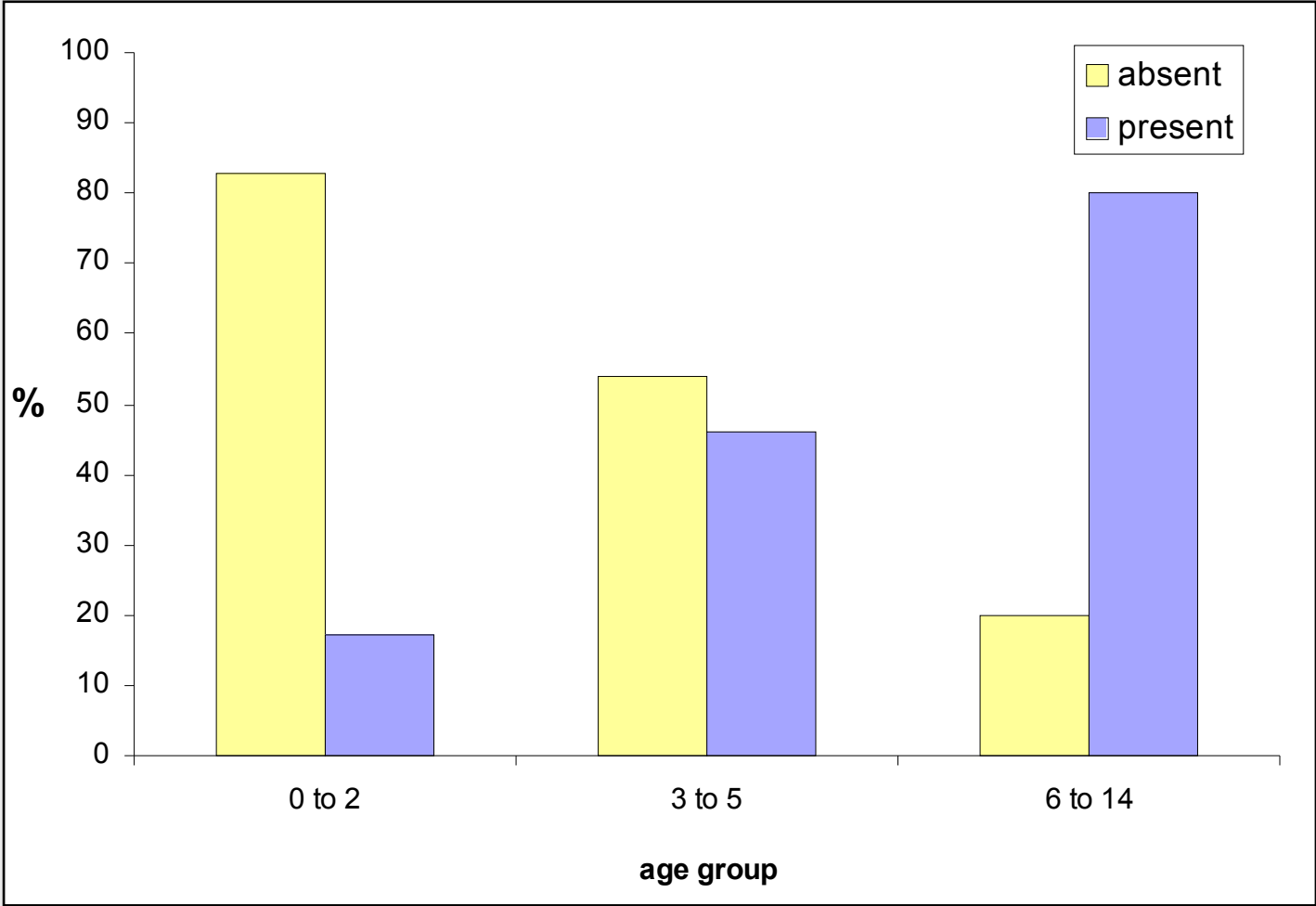
## Children

Type	Sex	Forename	Date of baptism	Date of burial	Age at burial	Date of marriage	Age at marriage	Own family start	Age at family start	Status	Birth Interval
CBAP	F	Elizabeth	01/09/1674								438
CBAP	M	John	14/01/1676								500
CBAP	M	Joseph	24/01/1678	27/03/1678	0						741
CBAP	F	Mary	26/03/1679	17/11/1680	1						426
CBAP	F	Dorothy	23/12/1680	23/08/1681	0						638
CBAP	F	Jane	19/07/1682								573
CBAP	M	William	15/11/1683	14/12/1683	0						484
CBAP	F	Mary	17/06/1687	24/07/1687	0						1310
CBAP	M	Henry	06/09/1688	04/04/1689	0						447
CBAP	M	James	13/09/1691	25/09/1691	0						1102
CBAP	F	Susannah	15/10/1694								1128

present in 1695 assessment

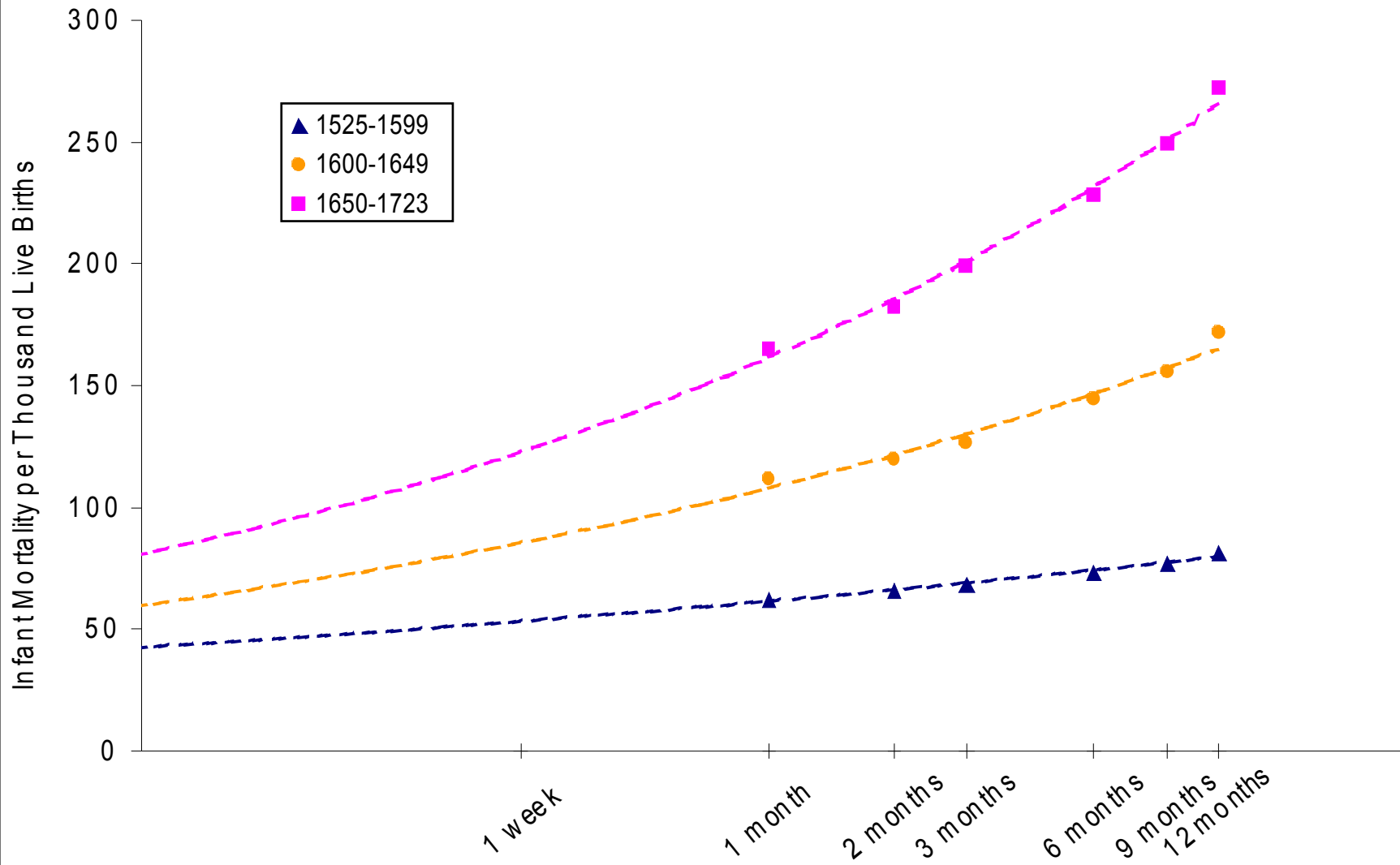
missing in 1695

# Children Baptised in the Cheapside Sample Parishes and present or absent in the 1695 Assessments, by age group

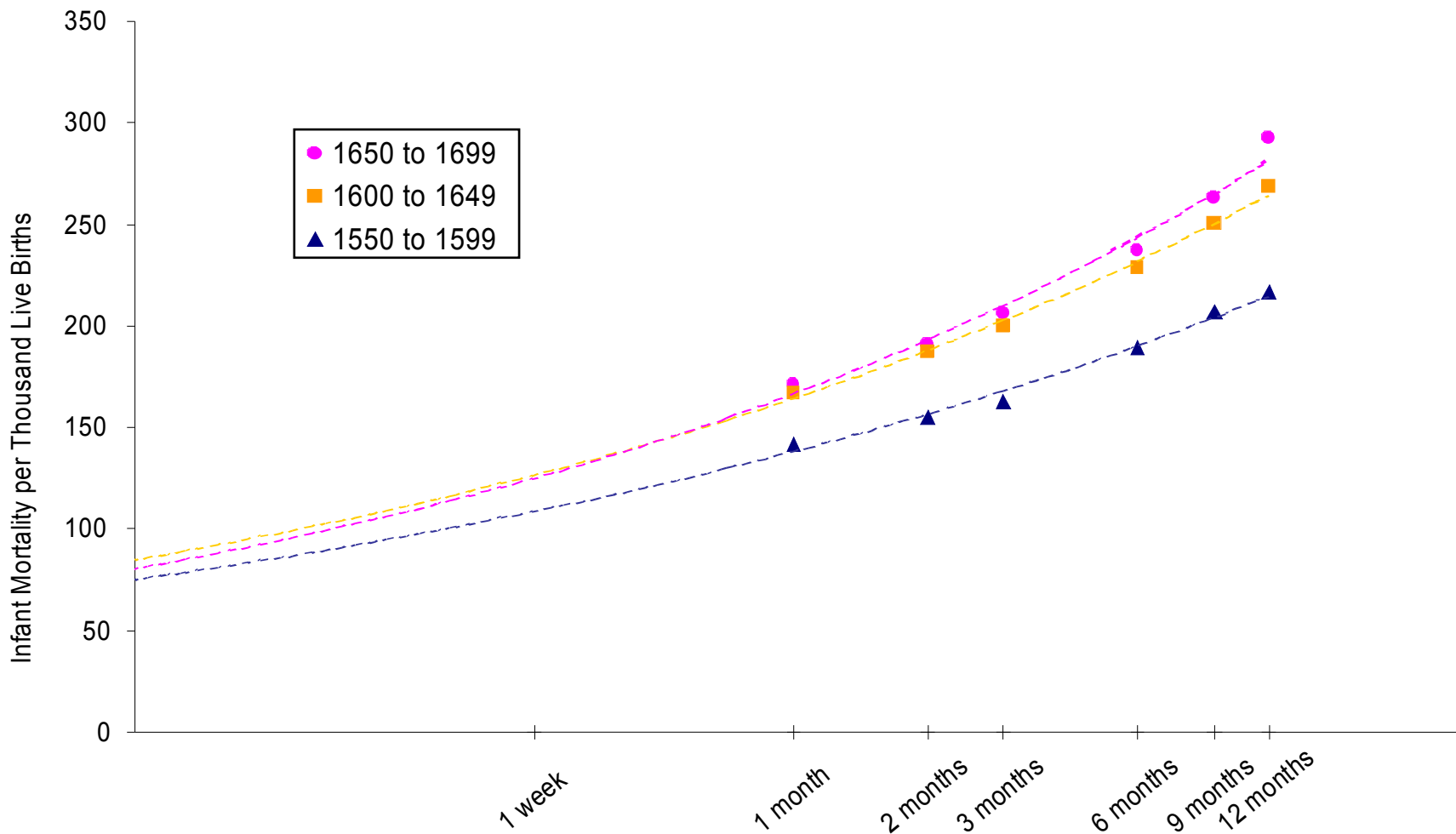


(N=57 children)

Cumulative infant mortality in Cheapside by period



Cumulative infant mortality in Clerkenwell by period



# Why did nursing location change?

- Longer distances to send children to get beyond the expanding suburbs or to find suitable nurses
  - mean distance from centre 11 miles in 1550; 43 miles by 1750 (Clark)
- Emulating the gentry
  - live-in nurses as status symbols?
- Better infant survival chances negated by more deaths later in childhood as London grew and its disease environment worsened?
  - may have led parents to conclude nursing in the country was of little benefit