

Born to run?

Retrospective analysis of training and racing outcomes of the 2014 and 2015 UK Thoroughbred foal crops

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Background

Two previous UK studies^{1,2} have estimated the proportions of Thoroughbred foals entering training as 62% and 52% (at 2 years), respectively. Of these, the proportions that raced at least once were 81% and 61%. Up-to-date figures are needed to improve our understanding of the reasons for horses prematurely leaving the industry and to develop strategies to reduce early losses.

Objectives

Using data on the entire UK 2014-2015 live foal progeny we aimed to:

- Describe the proportion of horses that entered training and raced between birth and the end of 2018
- Provide descriptive statistics on racing performance on flat races of these horses

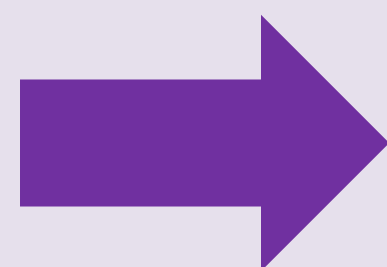


Materials and Methods

Mare pregnancy outcomes (2013-2014)

Sales and training data of live progeny (2014-2018)

Race performance data of live progeny (2016-2018)



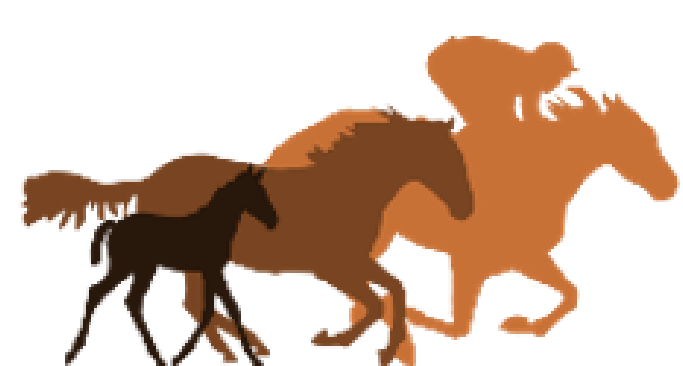
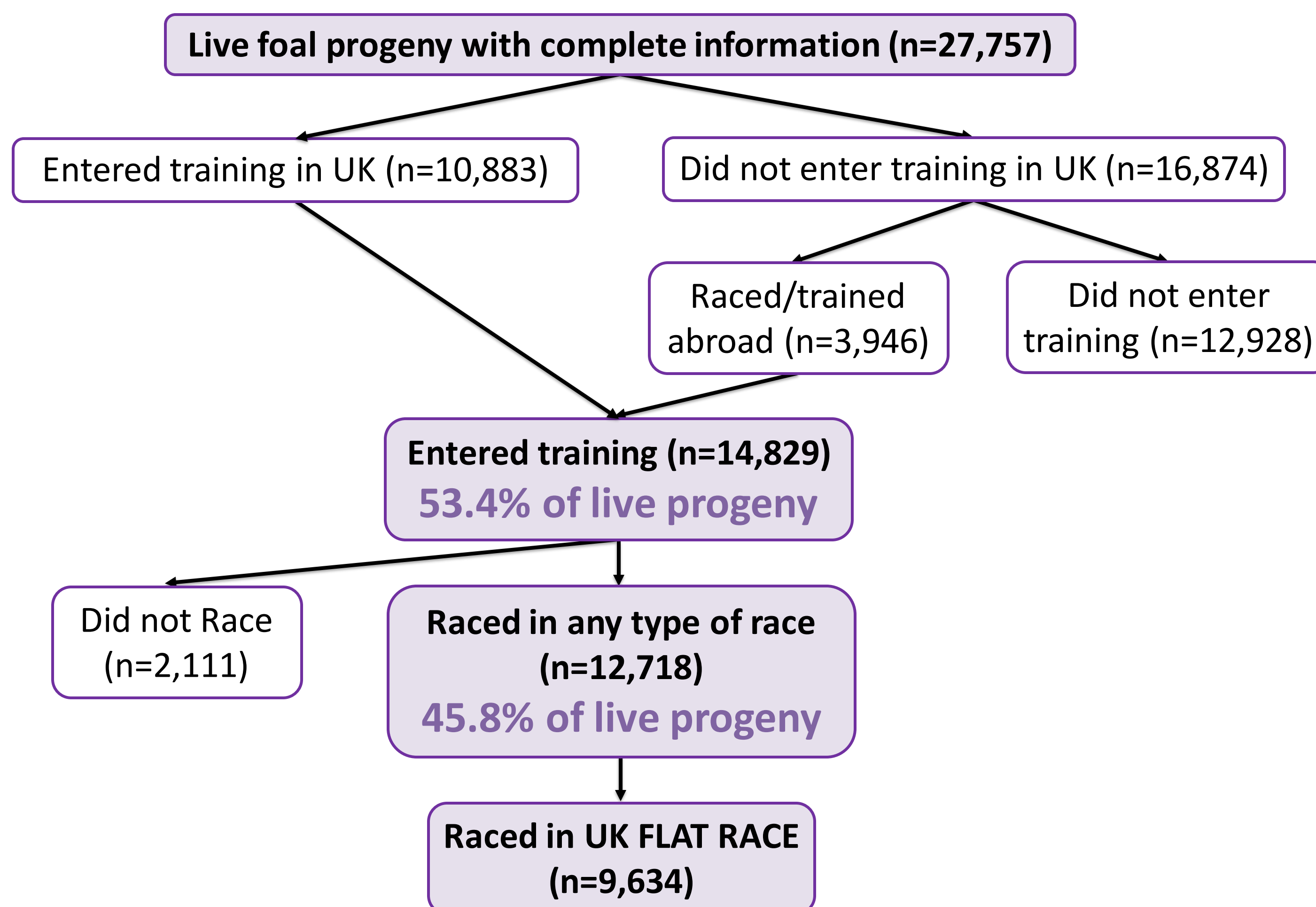
Merged into a single database to describe the **training and racing outcomes:**

- Percentage of horses entering training and racing
- Percentage of horses that ran, won, were placed and earned prize money

STUDY PERIOD: 2014-2018

Results

TRAINING AND RACING OUTCOMES (2014-2015 live foal progeny)



RACE PERFORMANCE IN UK FLAT RACES

Age at racing in UK flat races

Age at racing (years)	Foal crop (No. of horses)		Total (No. of horses and %)
2 (only)	672	712	1,384 (14%)
3 (only)	677	1,484	2,161 (22%)
4 (only)	178	-	178 (2%)
2 and 3	1,322	2,656	3,978 (41%)
3 and 4	629	-	629 (7%)
2 and 4	44	-	44 (1%)
2, 3 and 4	1,260	-	1,260 (13%)
All ages	4,782	4,852	9,634

Races, wins, places and prize money earned in UK flat races, by age

Age (years)	Number of horses that:			
	Raced	Won	Placed	Earned money
2	6,666	1,666 (25%)	3,827 (57%)	4,395 (66%)
3	8,028	3,271 (41%)	5,556 (69%)	6,446 (80%)
4	2,111	850 (40%)	1,422 (67%)	1,787 (85%)
All ages	9,634	4,687 (49%)	7,147 (74%)	7,876 (82%)

References

1. Jeffcot et al (1982). An assessment of wastage in thoroughbred racing from conception to 4 years of age. *Equine Vet J*: 14,185-198.
2. Wilsher et al. (2006) Factors associated with failure of thoroughbred horses to train and race. *Equine Vet J*: 38,113-118.

Conclusions

- Around half of live Thoroughbred foals entered training, a figure which has remained static for the past decades.
- Of the horses that entered training, 86% raced at least once, a higher proportion than those reported in previous UK studies.
- 82% of horses racing at least once in UK flat races earned prize money