



EPINews

Department of Epidemiology and Public Health Newsletter

August 2014

WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to this edition of EPINews. This issue is packed full with news, events and research updates from within the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. There has been a flurry of activity since the last issue. Many new faces have joined the team on HRB Summer Studentships to work on an assortment of ongoing research projects while other colleagues have travelled across the island and further afield to present their research at various seminars and conferences. A number of our PhD students have submitted or successfully defended their theses – congratulations to Ms. Maria Boyce, Dr. Margaret Curtain, Dr. Sinead O'Neill and Dr. Claire Buckley. Furthermore, we are busy making the final preparations to timetables and course work for the next academic year and looking forward to the commencement of our new [E-MPH](#).

I would encourage you to circulate EPINews among your colleagues and direct any queries or comments to me at emily.kelleher@ucc.ie

Ms. Emily Kelleher

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Huge interest in the Online Masters in Public Health (E-MPH)

In an ever-changing professional environment, UCC recognises the need for a flexible learning environment. With this in mind, the [Department of Epidemiology and Public Health](#) is putting its [MPH programme](#) online for those who need a more flexible option. The [E-MPH](#) will commence on the 8th September and to date has received a huge number of queries both nationally and internationally. The course will provide individuals from a range of different professional backgrounds with academic and experiential development in the theory and practice of public health. Earlier in the year, the Department launched a 6-month online [PG Cert in Health Protection](#). Feedback so far has been excellent.

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Congratulations to Ms. Sarah-Jo Sinnott on her recent poster award

Ms. Sarah-Jo Sinnott, a 4th year PhD Scholar on the HRB Health Services Research Programme, won 1st prize in the Student Poster Section at the recent Drug Information Association conference in San Diego, a conference attended by approx. 7,000 people. The research that Sarah-Jo presented was entitled 'A cross-country comparison of patients' medication adherence following copayment changes; do results generalize across international borders'. The research focuses on the issue that health policy decisions, concerning copayments in Ireland (and other countries) may rely on North American evidence, given that this is where most of this literature originates. In a visiting scholarship to the Division of Pharmacoepidemiology at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Sarah-Jo compared how two similar copayment policies, one in the U.S and one in Ireland, compared in terms of impact on adherence to prescription medications in each population. The research found that while the countries do not differ in the long-term, the Irish patients have larger drops in adherence to anti-hypertensive and anti-hyperlipidaemic medicines than their American counterparts immediately after the policy is introduced.

HRB Summer Studentships

During summer 2014, the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health welcomed Ms. E Von Cheong, Ms. Laura McCarthy and Ms. Gillian Maher on Health Research Board (HRB) Summer Studentships. Each year, the HRB invite undergraduate students in a health or social care-related discipline to apply for the Studentships which aim to encourage an interest in research and to give the student an opportunity to become familiar with research techniques.

Ms. E Von Cheong, a third year medical student at UCC, completed her HRB Summer Studentship under the supervision of Professor Patricia Kearney. The aim of their research project was to investigate the association between adverse childhood experience and mental health outcomes in an adult Irish population between the ages of 50 to 69. The study was conducted using data from the Mitchelstown 2010-11 cohort which provides qualitative and quantitative data on a broad spectrum of health determinants and outcome measures. Ms. Cheong thoroughly enjoyed her time in the Department and has said of her experience *"this research project introduced me to the fascinations of Epidemiology and Psychiatry, and to the significance of epidemiological research as a scientific underpinning of the practice of Medicine. It is an experience that I am deeply thankful for and one that would have not been possible without the incredible mentors I had the privilege of meeting"*.

Ms. Laura McCarthy, a recent graduate of the Departments BSc in Public Health programme, is currently undertaking her Studentship with the e-learning team in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. Ms. McCarthy is involved in preparing lectures for the online learning platform using creative interaction for an engaging learning experience of students who will undertake the E-MPH programme.



Left to right: Susan Cantrell, Senior Vice President and Managing Director, DIA Americas, DIA. Barbara Lopez Kunz, CEO DIA. Sandra L. Kweder, Deputy Director, Office of New Drugs at U.S. FDA

Ms. Maher, a third year BSc in Public Health mature student, is undertaking her Studentship examining the association between diet quality and mental health and well-being in middle aged Irish men and women. Under the supervision of Dr. Janas Harrington, Gillian hopes this Studentship will enhance her *"current skills in academic writing and critical appraisal; develop knowledge and experience in statistical analysis, as well as provide first-hand experience of a dynamic research environment"*.

Medications Optimisation in Multimorbidity

A knowledge exchange meeting around medications optimization in multimorbidity will take place on September 18-19th in University College Cork. The meeting is funded by New Foundations and speakers include Dr. Martin Duerdan and Professor Stewart Mercer. Meeting details will be circulated over the coming weeks. For further information you can contact Dr. Carol Sinnott at csinnott@ucc.ie

Follow Us

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Back L-R: Mr. Daniel Flynn, Mr. Colin Healy, Mr. Derek Chambers, Dr. Margaret Kelleher, Prof Colin Bradley, Mr. Gerry Raleigh, Mr. Kieran Ryan, Front L-R: Dr. Celine Larkin, Ms. Gillian Karwig, Minister Kathleen Lynch, T.D., Prof Ella Arensman, Ms. Eileen Williamson

iFightDepression Seminar

The [National Suicide Research Foundation](#) recently held a successful Launch-Seminar, "iFightDepression: E-Self-Management of Depression in the Context of Current and Future Mental Health Programmes", in the Western Gateway Building, UCC, on the 25th of June. The Seminar involved the official launch of the iFightDepression programme, an internet-based self-management programme that aims to help individuals with mild to moderate depression to self-manage their symptoms and to promote recovery, with guidance from a trained GP or mental health professional. The iFightDepression programme was launched by Minister Kathleen Lynch, T.D., and presentations were made by leading professionals from primary care and mental health services, including Professor Colin Bradley (Department of General Practice, UCC) Mr. Daniel Flynn (Mental Health Services, HSE South) and Mr. Derek Chambers (Inspire Ireland). The Seminar represented one of the many local activities of the international EU-funded project Preventing Depression and Improving Awareness through Networking in the EU (PREDI-NU), which is co-coordinated by Professor Ella Arensman, NSRF, at an international level.

For further information on the iFightDepression programme or the PREDI-NU project, contact Gillian Karwig, Research Officer, at gillian.karwig@ucc.ie or visit www.prednu.eu

Obstetric intervention and health service use among women with pre-eclampsia

Ms. Ciara Fahy, a 1st year Graduate Entry to Medicine (GEM) student, obtained a Summer Undergraduate Research (SURE) Award from the College of Medicine and Health, UCC to gain research experience in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health under the supervision of [Dr. Sheena McHugh](#).

Ms. Fahy is working with data from the Screening for Pregnancy Endpoints study to examine the level of obstetric intervention and health service use among women with pre-eclampsia in Ireland. The project is in collaboration with [Professor Louise Kenny](#) of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Cork University Maternity Hospital and [Dr. Ali Khashan](#) and [Professor Patricia Kearney](#) of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health.

Conference Presentations

Since the last issue, colleagues in the Department have presented their research across various platforms and countries.

[Ms. Marsha Treacy](#) presented a poster entitled 'The Prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes and Related Complications in a Nationally Representative Sample of Adults Aged 50 Years and Over in Ireland' at the Faculty of Public Health Medicines Summer Scientific Meeting held in May.

In June, [Dr. AnneMarie O'Flynn](#), presented her research entitled "Isolated Nocturnal Hypertension and Target Organ Damage: A Systematic Review" and "Hypertension Prevalence, Awareness, Treatment and Control: The Impact of Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring" at the European Society of Hypertension meeting in Athens in June.

Dr. Michael Byrne, [Ms. Mary Cronin](#), [Mr. Martin Davoren](#) and Ms. Verdi Ahern had an oral presentation entitled 'The University as a Setting for Health Promotion Initiatives – a Case Study of the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Working Group of UCC Health Matters' at the 18th Annual Health Promotion conference at NUI Galway in June.

Dr. Darren Dahly and [Mr. Sean Millar](#) will present at the upcoming [20th IEA World Congress of Epidemiology Conference](#) entitled 'Global Epidemiology in a Changing Environment: The Circumpolar Perspective'. The meeting is taking place in Anchorage in Alaska on August 16-21st. Dr. Dahly will present his research concerning growth mixture models in epidemiology and the impact of an incorrectly specified random structure on model inferences while Mr. Millar will present his paper on 'The Prevalence and Determinants of Undiagnosed and Diagnosed Type 2 Diabetes in middle-Aged Irish Adults'. Sean also has a poster entitled 'Optimal Waist Circumference Measurement Site for Assessing Metabolic and type 2 Diabetes Risk in Middle-Aged Adults' which has been shortlisted out of over 300 entries as one to be judged for a student award.

Department Collaboration with Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind

Researchers at University College Cork, led by Dr. Louise Burgoyne and Prof Ivan Perry of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, are the first to capture the views of over 200 parents and guardians on assistance dogs for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The study, which was carried out in the primary care centre within the context of a specific accredited assistance dog centre in Ireland, reported that parents/guardians of children who have ASD and an assistance dog rate their child as significantly safe from environmental dangers ($p < 0.001$), perceive that the public act more respectfully and responsibly towards their child ($p < 0.001$) and feel more competent about managing their child ($p < 0.023$) compared with parents on the waiting list.

The research findings suggest that the presence of an assistance dog can also help facilitate "normal" family functioning such as being able to visit shopping centres. Click [here](#) to download the full article on BMJ Open.



Left to right: Ms. Deirdre Falvey and Mr. Pdraig Mallon of the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, Dr. Louise Burgoyne and Prof. Ivan Perry of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Ms. Rachel Neglia and her son Eoin, with dogs Kili and Hector

Save the Date - SPHeRE Network 1st Annual Conference!

The 1st Annual [SPHeRE Network](#) Conference entitled "Health Research, Policy and Practice – Creating links for effective collaboration" will be held on Friday 9th January 2015 in RCSI College Hall, 123 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. Confirmed speakers include Prof. Bernie Hannigan, University of Ulster, Prof. Steve Thomas, Trinity College Dublin and Prof Naomi Fullop, University of London.

What's food got to do with it: food experiences of asylum seekers living in Direct Provision

This [advocacy report](#) was based on a University College Cork MPH qualitative research thesis study that was undertaken by Ms. Keelin Barry to gain a greater understanding of the lived reality and food experience of asylum seekers living in Direct Provision centres in Cork City on behalf of Nasc - the Irish Immigrant Support Centre.

The main research findings are that the food provided in Direct Provision centres in Cork is of poor quality, high in fat, sugar and salt, monotonous, bland and often described as inedible and unsatisfactory. The food was discussed as not being representative of the cultural and multi-faith religious needs of asylum seekers, many of whom live in Direct Provision for over seven years as individuals or families.

The main recommendations of the report is that Direct Provision as a system is overhauled especially in how food is delivered; that self-catering options should be made available to asylum seekers living in Direct Provision centres and that the Direct Provision system be included the remit of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) as a matter of urgency.

Click [here](#) to read the full report.

Risk factors associated with suicide among men in Ireland: Comparison between men aged under 40 years of age and those who are older

Ms. Jacklyn McCarthy and colleagues from the [National Suicide Research Foundation](#) and the [Department of Epidemiology and Public Health](#) were recently awarded second prize at the School of Medicine and Health Research Day, 18th June, 2014 for their research on suicide among men in Ireland. Based on the Suicide Support and Information System, the research found that men were over represented among those who died by suicide in Ireland (80.8%, n=190), total n=307, September 2008-June 2012. In order for GPs to accurately assess suicide risk, it is necessary to ensure that risk assessments are a core element of GP practice. In light of the high levels of prescription drugs reported in toxicology, the provision for alternative treatments for men who have concerns regarding their emotional well-being is also necessary.

Congratulations to Dr. Sinead O'Neill on recently defending her PhD Research

[Dr. Sinead O'Neill](#) successfully defended her PhD research into Caesarean section and the likelihood of subsequent stillbirth, miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy recently, where she collaborated with researchers from the National Centre for Register-based Research (NCRR) in Aarhus, Denmark to conduct the largest study to date including over 832,000 women. Caesarean section is associated with a slightly increased rate of subsequent stillbirth and ectopic pregnancy, according to the study published in [PLOS Medicine](#).

Professor Kenny, Consultant Obstetrician and Director of the Irish Centre for Fetal and Neonatal Translational Research (INFANT) in Cork University Maternity Hospital said "*the findings of the current study are particularly important for expectant mothers as well as healthcare professionals as Caesarean section rates are increasing significantly worldwide. Whilst we showed that a precious Caesarean section is associated with a subsequent stillbirth and ectopic pregnancy, the overall risk of either is very low*". They add: "*Furthermore, the findings will better inform women of the benefits and risks associated with all modes of delivery... while the hazard rate is small, women 'electing' Caesarean without any medical necessity should consider all options thoroughly*".

Dr. O'Neill is the recipient of a four year scholarship on the prestigious Health Research Board Ireland [PhD Scholars Programme](#) and was funded by the National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre ([NPEC](#)) in UCC. Sinead was co-supervised by Professor Richard Greene of the NPEC, Professor Louise Kenny and Dr. Ali Khashan of [INFANT centre](#) and [Professor Patricia Kearney](#) of the [Department of Epidemiology and Public Health](#), UCC.



Left to right: Professor Richard Greene, Professor Louise Kenny, Dr. Sinead O'Neill, Professor Patricia Kearney, Dr. Ali Khashan

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

[Caesarean Section and Rate of Subsequent Stillbirth, Miscarriage, and Ectopic Pregnancy: A Danish Register-Based Cohort Study](#). O'Neill SM, Agerbo E, Kenny LC, Henriksen TB, Kearney PM, Greene RA, Mortensen PB, Khashan AS. *PLoS Med* 11(7): e1001670

['It sounds like a great idea but...': a qualitative study of GPs' attitudes towards the development of a national diabetes register](#). Mc Hugh SM, O'Mullane M, Perry IJ, et al. *BMJ Quality & Safety*. 2014

[Surgeon's experiences of receiving peer benchmarked feedback using patient-reported outcome measures: a qualitative study](#). Boyce MB, Browne JP, Greenhalgh J. (Accepted for publication in *Implementation Science on the 14/06/14*)

[Sexually transmitted infection incidence among adolescents in Ireland](#). Davoren MP, Hayes K, Horgan M, Shiely F. *J Fam Plann Reprod Health Car* 2014;10:1-7.

Lifestyle, Health and Childhood Obesity – the Cork Children's Lifestyle Study. Keane E, Harrington JM, Perry IJ. *Childlinks: The Journal of Barnardos*, 2014;1:12-16

[Job control and ambulatory blood pressure](#). Mc Carthy VJ, Perry IJ, Greiner BA. *Scand J Work Environ Health* 2014 May 14

[The experiences of professionals who use patient-reported outcome measures as quality improvement tools - a systematic review of qualitative research](#). Boyce M, Browne JP, Greenhalgh J. *BMJ Quality and Safety (in press)*.

[Are the special educational needs of children in their first year in primary school in Ireland being identified: a cross-sectional study](#). Curtin M, Baker D, Staines A, Perry IV. *BMC Pediatrics* 2014;14(1):

Visit the department website for a full list of [publications](#).

RESEARCH NEWS

The Food Choice at Work Study

There is a need to develop effective interventions to improve eating patterns in our population. Because workplaces act as ideal settings in which to promote healthy dietary behaviours researchers from the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health are currently evaluating the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of complex dietary interventions in the workplaces of four large manufacturing multi-nationals based in Cork, Ireland. The research team, led by [Ms. Fiona Geaney](#), will compare the relative effectiveness both alone and in combination of two methods that influence dietary behaviour: 1. nutrition education and 2.

dietary environmental modification to restrict fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt. This intervention (if shown to be effective) has the potential to improve dietary behaviours in the workplace, motivate the food industry to produce healthier food and influence public health nutrition policy. Data collection is almost complete and study findings will be available early next year. Click [here](#) to read more about the Food Choice at Work Study.



Photo of core team (Left to right): Lauri Gilgan, Clare Kelly, Fiona Geaney, Jessica Scotto Di Marrazzo and Sarah Fitzgerald.

MEET...

... Prof John Browne

[Professor John Browne](#) is a health services researcher with a professional background in health psychology and psychometrics. After completing his doctorate at Trinity College Dublin he worked at the Health Services Research Unit of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) for ten years, where he oversaw the development of the NHS Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) programme. He is currently exploring the value of PROMs as a tool for engineering quality improvement in a variety of clinical areas including breast cancer surgery and joint replacement. He is also the lead investigator on the '[SIREN](#)' study (Study of the Impact of Reconfiguration on Urgent and Emergency Care Networks) which aims to describe and evaluate the development and performance of different emergency and urgent care systems in Ireland. Professor Browne joined the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health in January 2009 and continues to hold an honorary position at LSHTM.

Did you know? John used to sing Irish traditional songs competitively and once reached the final of the All-Britain Fleadh. His singing voice is now used only as a punishment of last resort for his two small boys.



Prof John Browne

EVENTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

August 2014

[20th World Congress on Epidemiology, Global Epidemiology in a Changing Environment: The circumpolar perspective](#), 17-21st August, Alaska, US

[XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2014](#): Global Forum for Prevention. 24-27th August, Frankfurt, Germany

[26th Annual International Society for Environmental Epidemiology Conference - From Local to Global: Advancing Science for Policy in Environmental Health](#), 24-28th August, Washington, US

September 2014

[Nutrition Society Postgraduate Conference](#), 1-2nd September, Nottingham, UK

[5th International Course in Nutritional Epidemiology](#), 1-12th September, London, UK

[Statistics for Nutrition Research](#), 4th September, London, UK

[Recipe Analysis: Maximizing Accuracy](#), London, UK

[Building Healthy Global Food Systems: A New Imperative for Public Health](#), 8-9th September, Oxford, UK

[Obesity – A physiological perspective](#), 10-12th September, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

[Overcoming Obesity – Diagnose, Personalize, Treat](#), 10-13th September, Texas, US

[The UK Congress on Obesity 2014](#), 16-17th September, Birmingham, UK

[Childhood obesity beyond healthy eating and being more active](#), 19th September, Birmingham, UK

[Dietary Assessment Methods Training Workshop](#), 24th September, London, UK

Meeting the Challenges of Diabetes in Primary care: A hands on approach, 24th September, Cork, Ireland, For further information; Contact Katie Murphy on 086 0566077

[The 5th Conference on Recent Advances in the Prevention and Management of Childhood and Adolescent Obesity](#), 24-26th September, Manitoba, Canada

October 2014

Transitions and Youth Mental Health, 4th National One-Day Research Conference on Youth Mental Health, 10th October, Cork, Ireland.

[Cardiometabolic Health Congress](#), 22-25th October, Boston, US

[2nd Annual World Congress of Nutrition and Health](#), 24-26th October, Taiyuan, China

[SCOPE Summer School 2014](#), 27-28th October, London, UK

November 2014

[24th European Childhood Obesity Group Congress](#), 13-15th November, Salzburg, Austria

All-island Obesity Action forum Workshop, 11th November, Dublin, Ireland

[EUPHA: 7th European Public Health Conference](#), 19-22nd November, Glasgow, Scotland

December 2014

[3rd International Conference and Exhibition on Obesity and Weight Management](#), 1-3rd December, San Francisco, US

March 2015

[ICOHS 2015: International Conference on Occupational Health and Safety](#), 9-10th May, Miami, US

April 2015

[8th International DIP Symposium; Diabetes, Hypertension, Metabolic Syndrome & Pregnancy](#), 15-18th April, Berlin, Germany

May 2015

[Work, Stress & Health 2015; Sustainable Work, Sustainable Health, Sustainable Organizations](#), 6-9th May, Georgia, US

[31st International Congress on Occupational Health](#), May 31st – June 5th, Seoul, Korea

[European Congress of Epidemiology 2015 – Healthy Living](#), 25-27th June, Maastricht, the Netherlands

September 2015

[9th International Conference on Diet and Activity Methods](#), 1-3rd September, Brisbane, Australia

October 2015

[EUPHA: 8th European Public Health Conference](#), 14-17th October, Milan, Italy

Ongoing

[Stata courses](#)

[Stata training](#)

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