



# SPH News

## The School of Public Health

### Newsletter

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#### WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the May 2022 edition of SPH News from UCC's School of Public Health.

The mission of the School is to improve the health of the population through the discovery, dissemination, and translation of knowledge about the fundamental determinants of health, the prevention of disease, the protection and promotion of health and well-being, the development and application of effective interventions and healthcare technologies, and the optimal delivery of health services. The School's mission is well reflected in the range and diversity of material presented in the current edition of SPH News. We have features on an implementation science workshop planned for July of this year, an SFI funded project addressing "Travellers' Ethnicity, Culture and Microbiome", an EU funded project on the need to address harmful food marketing to protect children's health and human rights, details of a new report on Gambling in Ireland published in collaboration with the HRB, conference presentations on screening for atrial fibrillation and human papilloma virus (HPV) infection, together with media workshops and seminars on public mental health and details of three HRB funded summer student scholarships and four HRB funded PhD scholarships.



## WE WELCOME YOUR SUBMISSIONS

*SPH News is published quarterly by the School of Public Health, University College Cork. Please send comments or questions to Ana Contreras Navarro at [acontrerasnavarro@ucc.ie](mailto:acontrerasnavarro@ucc.ie).*

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## WELCOME continued from previous page

SPH News also has links to the School's core teaching programmes.

I am deeply grateful to all of our administrative and academic staff who work so hard to sustain and develop the School's teaching, research and community outreach work. Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition of SPH News, especially to our editor Dr Ana Contreras Navarro and to Ms Caroline Seacy who leads on media promotion on behalf of the School.

—Professor Ivan Perry

Head of School



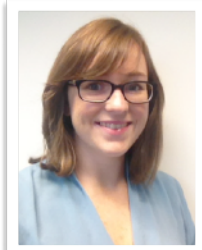
## Our Best Wishes to Ber Madden

We would like to wish Mrs Bernadette Madden well in her new post in Cork University Business School (CUBS). We will no doubt miss working with her very much.



## SCHOOL NEWS

### Health Implementation Research Hub (HIRH) will run an Implementation Science Workshop in July 2022



*Sheena McHugh*

The Irish Implementation Science Training Institute (ISTI) is currently running a training course in implementation science in the School of Public Health. This is a blended training course in Implementation Science, supported by Dr Sheena McHugh's HRB Research Leader Award (2020-2025). The ISTI is part of the newly formed Health Implementation Research Hub (HIRH). Dr Sheena McHugh is the training course director and Ms Tanya van de Water is coordinating the 4-month training course.

From 5-7 July, face-to-face training will take place in the Nano Nagle Place in Cork City. The workshop will be facilitated by HIRH researchers Dr Fiona Riordan and Dr Susan Calnan, and by national and international experts in implementation science, including Dr Byron Powell, Dr Rachel Shelton, Dr Cara Lewis, Dr Geoff Curran, Dr Jeremy Grimshaw, Mr Michael Sykes, Dr Jenny McSharry and Ms Callie Walsh-Bailey.

Over the 3-day workshop, the participants will engage in:

- Presentations from leading experts on cutting-edge topics, such as equity and implementation science, mechanisms of action, and implementation trial design and measurement.
- Small group work and project feedback from expert facilitators.
- Peer and facilitator networking.
- Opportunities for Q&A sessions with international experts.
- Mentorship opportunities.



HIRH is looking forward to welcoming all visiting facilitators and participants to the School of Public Health!

Find out more about the Health Implementation Research Hub [here](#) or follow their updates on Twitter @HIRH\_Ireland.

—Dr Fiona Riordan

### Lymphoedema study featured on Breakthrough Cancer Research website



From left to right: Dr Conleth Murphy, Bon Secours Hospital, Dr Deirdre O'Mahony, Bon Secours Hospital, Colette Cunningham, School of Public Health, University College Cork and Meadbh MacSweeney, The Lymph Clinic Cork.

The study aims to investigate the value of detecting subclinical lymphoedema to facilitate an early detection, early intervention philosophy, known as prospective surveillance. This means that treatment can be commenced earlier, making a difference to the quality of life to those with cancer-related lymphoedema.

## Engaged Health Research on Travellers' Ethnicity, Culture and Microbiome



Mary Cronin

Mary Cronin, a SPH college lecturer, is a Project Partner with Professor Fergus Shanahan (Project Lead) and colleagues in the APC Microbiome Ireland, on an SFI-funded project entitled '**Redefining STEM: Science of Traveller Ethnicity and Microbiome**', which was awarded €50,000 under the SFI 'Discover Programme'.

Commencing in 2021 and based on an ongoing partnership with the Traveller Visibility Group, a Traveller community development and advocacy organisation in Cork City, the project has two main aims. The first aim is to disseminate to the Traveller community, in an accessible manner, the exciting findings of a study recently published by APC researchers which identified that Travellers who continue to live in their traditional cultural manner have a very rare microbiome, described as 'non-industrialised'. This type of microbiome is considered to have health-protective features that are absent in the industrialised microbiome of the general Irish population and most populations worldwide. The discovery of the Travellers' unique microbiome raises the issue of how the culture of an ethnic minority helps retain a desirable microbiome, while raising public health concerns when an ethnic minority is pressured to change its traditional way of living.

An animated video has been co-created to share the findings and promote a scientific understanding among Travellers of the implications, in relation to Traveller ethnicity and culture. The video is available at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiK04YAEKTI&feature=youtu.be>; an illustrated brochure on the findings is also being developed.

The second aim of the project is to engage with Travellers in different areas of the country, through five co-created, participatory workshops, to identify key research questions which they wish to explore. Consideration will also be given to how to further knowledge and understanding of Travellers' rare microbiome, including how it is maintained and the possible role of particular aspects of Traveller culture, including living as an extended family and close proximity to animals, such as the keeping of horses.

Thirteen members of the interdisciplinary research team participated in Traveller Cultural Awareness Training on 12th of April, to enhance knowledge and understanding of Travellers' culture and to bring cultural awareness and sensitivity to the research process which will continue through this year. From the outset this project has engaged with Traveller organisations and members of the community to ensure inclusivity and that outcomes will have meaningful impact for community members, in line with Engaged Research best practice.



Traveller Visibility Group and APC researchers

## Addressing harmful food marketing to protect children's health and rights

Harmful food marketing is prevalent across all settings and detrimental to the health and rights of children and young people. Persistent exposure to unhealthy food and drink advertising in spaces where children gather, television, digital media, in-store displays and public transport, can lead to preferences for unhealthy food products, over the healthier choice available in the market.

The current industry food marketing practices are negatively affecting the nutritional quality of diets and increasing the risk of malnutrition in younger, vulnerable populations. A recent study from the European Commission reported that children aged 4-7 years see an average of 5 TV spots per day, advertising food and quick-service meals that contain high levels of fat, sugar and/or salt (HFSS). Young people aged 13-17 years old are exposed to 3 TV spots of HFSS food products *per hour*. The accumulative effect of exposure to HFSS food advertising across all communication channels, including digital media, represents a major risk factor in the development of childhood obesity.

In many European countries it has been estimated that 1 in 4 children are living with obesity. This condition is directly affecting their right to health, as it results in physical discomfort, low self-esteem, discrimination, reduced average life span, and earlier onset of chronic disease. Governments have been called on to act on creating healthier environments by adopting preventive nutrition policies, such as restricting unhealthy food marketing. Since 1978, 27 European Union (EU) member states have implemented 68 regulations on advertising food and drink products, including alcohol, to children and the general population. However, in most countries, implementation has been critically reviewed and described as ineffective for at least one of the following reasons:

- It does not protect all people below 18 years of age, in line with the definition of children established in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- It does not employ an international guideline to identify all relevant HFSS food, such as the WHO Regional Office for Europe Nutrient Profile Model.
- It does not cover all media channels (schools, playgrounds, websites, apps, television, radio) or all relevant marketing techniques (use of branded characters, sponsorship or product placement).
- It is not adequately monitored or periodically assessed by a designated monitoring body.

The above circumstances and implementation challenges on food marketing regulations were discussed in a workshop organised on 16th March by Dr Janas Harrington, Dr Ana Contreras Navarro and Professor Ivan Perry, from the School of Public Health, UCC, in collaboration with the Irish Department of Health, the Open University, UK, and the Directorate General of Health, Portugal. Representatives from 11 countries in the European region participated and shared their national situation regarding food marketing codes of practice.

This work is part of the EU Joint Action Best-ReMaP project, which will celebrate a Joint Symposium with international experts and stakeholders associated to four European health projects: STOP, CO-CREATE, PEN and Best-ReMaP. The Joint Symposium, entitled 'Future Directions for Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies to Prevent NCDs across Europe', will be held in Brussels from 14-16 July.



# New Report on Gambling in Ireland Published

The full report can be accessed here:

<https://www.hrb.ie/publications/publication/gambling-in-the-republic-of-ireland-results-from-the-2019-20-national-drug-and-alcohol-survey/returnPage/1/>

A recently published report, which used data from the 2019–20 Irish National Drug and Alcohol Survey, examined gambling trends among people aged 15-years and over in Ireland. The findings show that while fewer people are gambling than in 2014, problem gambling remains higher in deprived communities and among those with substance use disorders.

Information was collected from 5,762 people aged 15 years and older across Ireland. The report's authors are Dr Seán Millar, research support officer and post-doctoral researcher in the School of Public Health, and Dr Deirdre Mongan, Ms Anne Doyle, Dr Shelly Chakraborty and Mr Brian Galvin, of the Health Research Board (HRB).

Some key findings from the report include the following:

- Almost half (49%) of people aged 15+ stated that they gambled in the twelve-months prior to the survey.
- There has been a notable decrease in the number of people gambling since the previous survey, from 2,377,000 in 2014/15 to 1,900,000 in 2019/20. The sharpest decrease was seen among those buying lottery tickets or scratch cards, falling from 57% in 2014/15 to 42% in 2019/20.
- The survey shows that in Ireland, around 90,000 adults are low-risk gamblers, 35,000 are moderate-risk gamblers and 12,000 adults are problem gamblers.
- There was a marked correlation between problem gambling and substance use (drug use, alcohol use disorder and/or smoking), with 13% of those with an alcohol use disorder classified as an at-risk or problem gambler compared with 2% of low-risk drinkers.

Commenting on the findings, Dr Mongan, lead author of the report, said:

*'These data indicate that most people who gamble, do so safely. However, they also show that gambling problems affect the lives of 135,000 people in Ireland, in particular, young men and people experiencing socioeconomic deprivation. The correlation between problem gambling and harmful alcohol or drug use is of real concern as the presence of substance use disorders can lead to difficulties in treatment. The report highlights the need to understand both the social and psychological risk factors that lead to problem gambling in order to shape regulatory and public health responses.'*

An RTE news report of the study findings can be accessed here: <https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2022/0209/1278713-ireland-gambling/>.



## Dissemination of atrial fibrillation screening pilot study underway

Dissemination of the results of a pilot atrial fibrillation screening study conducted across Cork and Kerry are underway. This study is being jointly conducted with the School of Public Health, the Department of General Practice and Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, and the Health Services Executive in Ireland. The protocol for the study was published in the scientific journal BMJOpen in February. Aileen Callanan, PhD researcher, presented the results of an interim analysis of the project at the virtual Conference of the Association of University Practices of General Practice in Ireland (AUDGPI), held in March. The results were also presented by Aileen in poster format at the All-Ireland Conference on Integrated Care held in University College Dublin in March.

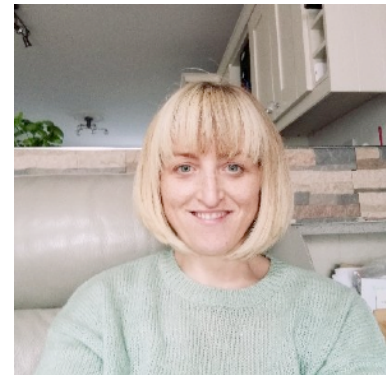


Aileen Callanan at the All-Ireland Conference on Integrated Care, March 2022

## Upcoming British Society Scientific Meeting featuring SPH research on HPV infection

Dr Mairéad O'Connor (Research Fellow) will be presenting at the upcoming British Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology (BSCCP) Annual Scientific Meeting in Belfast 4-6 May.

Mairéad will be giving an invited talk on communicating with women about human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in the context of cervical cancer screening based on her research with the CERVIVA research consortium ([www.cerviva.ie](http://www.cerviva.ie)).



Mairéad O'Connor

## Updates from the NSRF

### Second C-SSHRI Get Together

The Connecting Suicide and Self-Harm Researchers on the island of Ireland (C-SSHRI) collaboration held their second meeting on March 29th.

The get-together focused on self-care and included presentations from Professor Ella Arensman and Susan O'Mahony.

Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/4rzfnfp3>.

**SELF CARE**

**C-SSHRI** Connecting Suicide and Self-harm Researchers on the Island of Ireland

Join our next C-SSHRI get-together (via Zoom)  
Tuesday March 29th  
11am - 1pm

**Agenda**  
11.00 - Welcome & C-SSHRI updates  
11.15 - **Prof Ella Arensman** (NSRF & UCC): 'Self-care for Suicide and Self-Harm Researchers'  
11.45 - **Susan O' Mahony** (UCC): 'The Right to Disconnect'  
12.15 - Small group discussion (Zoom Breakout Rooms)  
12.50 - Wrap up & next steps

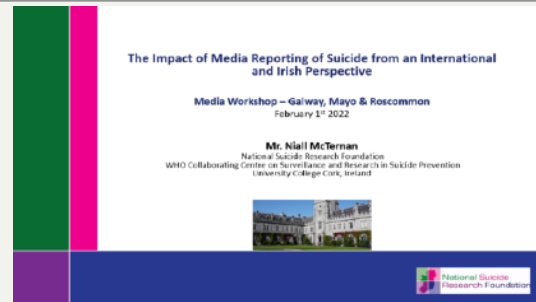
To join, please email [csshri@ucc.ie](mailto:csshri@ucc.ie)

[csshri@ucc.ie](mailto:csshri@ucc.ie) @C\_SSHRI

## Updates from the NSRF continued

### Media Workshop - Galway, Mayo, and Roscommon

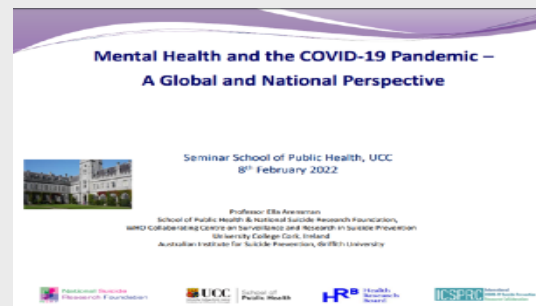
On 1st February, Niall McTernan presented at a HSE Community Healthcare West Workshop on 'Safe and Sensitive Reporting of Suicide and Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing'. The event was attended by local media and suicide prevention stakeholders.



### School of Public Health Webinar

On 8th February, Prof Ella Arensman presented on 'Mental Health and the Covid-19 Pandemic' at the first School of Public Health seminar of 2022.

Read Ella's slides here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8mk85s>.



### Self-Harm Assessment and Management for General Hospitals (SAMAGH) Training

On 24-25 February, the NSRF delivered training for Clinical Nurse Specialists and Psychiatry Registrars in the ASSERT Centre, UCC. Read more about the SAMAGH study here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8og3htv>.



EAAD-BEST Consortium held their meeting in Barcelona

### EAAD-BEST Consortium Meeting

On 24-25 March, the EAAD-BEST consortium held their second plenary meeting in Barcelona. A key outcome from this meeting was the preparation of a Ukrainian version of the iFightDepression programme, rolled out in April 2022.



## AWARDS

### Summer Student Scholarships

Dr Frances Shiely was recently successful in securing three HRB TMRN Summer Student Scholarships. These are 8-week scholarships of €2000. If anyone is interested in conducting this research with Dr Shiely, please email at [f.shiely@ucc.ie](mailto:f.shiely@ucc.ie).

- HRB TMRN Summer Student Scholarship 2022. Peer reviewed. Comparing trialists' choice of primary outcome with what patients and health professionals want. Did PPI involvement in the trial make a difference?
- HRB TMRN Summer Student Scholarship 2022. Peer reviewed. Presenting information to potential trial participants in PILs in the: does the order matter to the patient and adhere to the guidelines?
- HRB TMRN Summer Student Scholarship 2022. Peer reviewed. Lay summaries: are they really suitable for lay readers?



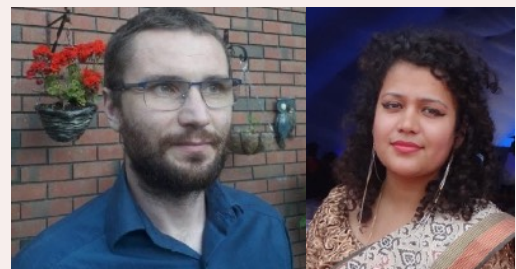
### NEW PhD Scholarships

On 12th April, the NSRF invited applications for five positions on the HRB funded **MHAIN** programme!

MHAIN is a research training network addressing the need for doctoral training and career paths, to improve early identification and intervention of self-harm and suicide risk. The Vision of MHAIN is *to improve capacity building in the assessment of risk of suicide and self-harm and evidence-based interventions*. More information here: <https://tinyurl.com/2h9wtek3>.

### Congratulations!

On 13th April, two National Science Research Foundation (NSRF) team members, Mr Pawel Hursztyn and Ms Almas Khan, graduated from the Master's in Public Health programme in University College Cork. Pawel's dissertation was co-supervised by Dr Eve Griffin and Dr Paul Corcoran and focused on 'Trends of Hospital Presenting Self-Harm in Cork City area and individual level factors', while Almas' dissertation examined 'Sexual health and Physical Disability: A scoping review exploring the services and supports available to the persons with disability in the EEA and United Kingdom' and was supervised by Dr Martin Davoren.



MPH Graduates Pawel Hursztyn and Almas Khan

## MEET

## Elizabeth Bodunde



Elizabeth began her PhD studies at the School of Public Health in September 2021, as part of the 2021 SPHeRE programme cohort. She has a Bachelor's degree in Public Health and specialised in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, earning a Master's degree in the same school. Elizabeth has worked as a disease prevention and control surveillance officer for the HSE. She worked as a program officer for Fistula Foundation and Christoffel Blinden Mission for over four years. She has been involved in studies related to maternal and perinatal health outside of the area of her profession. She is also passionate about gender equity, women's health, and obstetric fistula, areas in which she has volunteered and had a significant impact.

Elizabeth's smile is her favourite feature, and a fascinating fact about her is that she crafts the majority of her outfits herself.

## Dr Eimear Morrissey will join the Health Implementation Research Hub (HIRH) as an Evidence Synthesis Ireland Fellow



Eimear will work with the HIRH team on an update of a Cochrane review, entitled 'Tailored interventions to address determinants of practice'. During her 12-month fellowship, Eimear will be co-mentored by Dr Sheena McHugh and Prof Luke Wolfenden, National Health and Medical Research Council Investigator Fellow, based in the University of Newcastle, Australia.

Eimear is a Postdoctoral Researcher and Project Manager with the Health Behaviour Change Research Group in the School of Psychology at NUI Galway. She completed her PhD in Health Psychology in 2018. Her research centres on self-management of chronic disease, with a strong focus on Patient and Public Involvement. She has a special interest in intervention development and is currently managing the MIAMI study, which aims to develop and pilot an intervention to **Max**imise medication **A**dherence and **Min**imise physician **I**nertia to improve outcomes for people living with hypertension. You can find out more about Eimear and her research [here](#).

The Evidence Synthesis Ireland fellowship scheme runs a few times every year and gives the Fellow the opportunity to learn about evidence synthesis in general, as well as to develop the practical skills of how to plan, design, conduct, and report an evidence synthesis. The next call is expected in June 2022.



## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Arensman E, O'Connor C, Leduc C, Griffin E, Cully G, Ní Dhálaigh D, Van Audenhove C, Coppens E, Corcoran P et al. (2022). Mental Health Promotion and Intervention in Occupational Settings: Protocol for a Pilot Study of the MENTUPP Intervention. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19020947>
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- Millar SR, Navarro P, Harrington JM, Shivappa N, Hébert JR, Perry IJ, Phillips CM. (2022). Dietary score associations with markers of chronic low-grade inflammation: a cross-sectional comparative analysis of a middle- to older-aged population. *Eur J Nutr*. [In Press]
- Moloney C, F Shiely. (2022). Under-served groups remain underserved as eligibility criteria routinely exclude them from breast cancer trials. *J Clin Epidemiol*. Epub ahead of print. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2022.03.011>
- Mongan D, Millar SR, Doyle A, Chakraborty S, Galvin B. (2022). Gambling in the Republic of Ireland: Results from the 2019–20 National Drug and Alcohol Survey. Health Research Board, Dublin.
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## UPCOMING

### Cork-Kerry Alliance Against Depression and EAAD-BEST **KICK-OFF SEMINAR 2022**

In Ireland, the NSRF, in collaboration with the Cork-Kerry Alliance Against Depression and EAAD-BEST, will host a kick-off online meeting for the project **via Zoom**.

Thursday 5th May  
19:00 to 20:30

Register your attendance here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/53czb3re>

For any questions, email [eaadb3st@ucc.ie](mailto:eaadb3st@ucc.ie).

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