



EPINews

Department of Epidemiology and Public Health Newsletter

February 2014

WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to introduce this first edition of EPINews, the Department of Epidemiology & Public Health's quarterly newsletter. The work of the Department is focused on research and teaching addressing the causes and prevention of disease in the population, the promotion of health & wellbeing, and the optimal delivery of health services. We will use this newsletter to keep you in touch with news and developments from the Department, including research highlights and information on our teaching programme. We offer a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate courses from BSc to PhD level in Public Health, Occupational Health and Health Services Research and we have an active research program. I hope you find something in EPINews that is of interest to you. EPINews is edited by Ms. Emily Kelleher, one of our BSc Public Health graduates, now in her first year of the HRB funded SPHeRE (Structured Population and Health-Services Research Education) Programme.

Wishing you all the very best for 2014,

Prof. Ivan Perry

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Staff and students shine at last year's Jacqueline Horgan Bronze Medal Prize Meeting

A total of 6 out of 8 abstracts shortlisted for this prestigious national public health /health services research prize were from the Department. The abstracts covered a wide variety of health topics ranging from 'Dietary salt intake in 8-10 year old Irish school children' to 'Satisfaction with cervical check high after four years of national programme'. [Dr. Claire Buckley](#), UCC won the award after presenting on her case-control study which investigates a possible association between the timing of patient access to secondary healthcare services for diabetes management, as a key marker of service-related factors, and lower extremity amputation in patients with diabetes.

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Staff get into the Christmas spirit for Simon

Friday 6th December saw an array of tinsel, baubles and colour as the staff from the department donned their Christmas jumpers in aid of the Simon Community. Many thanks to all of those who dressed up and for all donations, which were graciously received by the Cork Simon Community.

Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement Conference

In January, the 2nd Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement (ICE) Conference was jointly hosted by the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, the National Suicide Research Foundation and the National Cancer Registry Ireland. The networking event was attended by post-doctoral researchers and principal investigators involved in the Health Research Board's Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement Awards and representatives from the HRB.

The ICE Award is an innovative post-doctoral fellowship scheme funded by the HRB to build capacity in population health and health services research. To date there have been eleven ICE Awards, funding 31 post-doctoral fellows at universities and research institutes across Ireland.

The event, which took place in the Glucksman Gallery, was an opportunity for learning but also for building new contacts and research networks. The post-doctoral fellows gave a series of poster presentations and elevator pitches on their team-based research and progress to date. The theme of this year's conference was communication. The Health Innovation Academy delivered an engaging workshop on communicating the value of your research using video and multimedia. Prof. Donal O Shea gave the keynote address on 'Health messaging in the media – why we must inform it'. The final address was given by representatives from the HRB, Dr. Theresa McGuire and Ms. Donna Tedstone Doherty, on the value of this postdoctoral training scheme and the vision for future research training in Ireland.

HRB Research Leader Awards

In 2013, Professor Patricia Kearney was one of the first recipients of the HRB Research Leader Awards. Her award, in partnership with the National Clinical Programme in Diabetes (NCPD), is to lead a project titled: Improving Care for People with Diabetes: A Population Approach to Prevention and Control. The overarching vision of the research programme is to improve care for people with diabetes in Ireland and to reduce the preventable economic and societal burden of diabetes. The programme of research is based on maximizing existing collaboration between academic Epidemiology and Public Health, Health Services Researchers, Health Economists and Clinical Medicine. In recognition of Patricia's outstanding track record in terms of publications and peer reviewed research grant funding and her recent success in securing a prestigious HRB Research Leader award, UCC have awarded her the title of Research Professor.



Cork Simon Christmas Jumper Day at the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork

Congratulations to Dr. Sheena McHugh and Ms. Sinead O'Neill on their recent poster awards

Two UCC researchers recently won the first prize awards at the prestigious 'Society for Social Medicine 57th Annual Meeting' held in Brighton, UK, September 11th-13th 2013. Ms. Sinéad O'Neill (a 4th year PhD student of the Health Services Research PhD programme, based in the National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre [NPEC]) and Dr. Sheena McHugh (a post-doctoral researcher in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health) each received the award for 'Best Poster' at this, the UK's largest public health and social medicine conference. For two UCC members to win the only two prizes up for grabs is a great achievement for UCC, and in particular for the [College of Medicine and Health](#).

Follow Us

The Department is embracing the new age of social media and are busy posting and tweeting the latest in research, courses, events and news items. Come join the conversation on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



Launch of SPHeRE Programme

Thursday the 23rd January, saw the launch of the SPHeRE (Structured Population and Health-services Research Education) Programme.

The evening began with an opening address by Mr. Tony O'Brien, Director General of the Health Service, followed by presentations from the Programme Directors, and a keynote address from Prof Reinhard Busse (Technical University of Berlin and European Observatory on Health Systems). SPHeRE is an innovative and ambitious research programme in population health and health services research (PHHSR) funded by the Health Research Board (HRB). As an extension of the well-established and successful HRB structured PhD Scholars Programme in Health Services Research the programme encompasses population's health research alongside health services research. The new programme will provide education and training for five cohorts of PhD scholars annually (2013-20174). The 2013 cohort saw the department welcome [Mr. David O' Riordan](#) and [Ms. Emily Kelleher](#). For more information please visit the programme website.

Health Protection goes online

The [Online Postgraduate Certificate in Health Protection](#) (CKU13) was launched with the support of Income Generation Oversight Group e-Learning Project, University College Cork on the 27th of January 2014. This course is one of the first wholly online programmes to be offered by UCC. The course is designed to meet the learning needs for all those who have an interest in or who are directly responsible for preventing and managing healthcare-associated infections (HCAI) in primary, secondary or tertiary care or who are involved in the control of infectious diseases in Ireland and internationally. The course was developed with the intention of providing specialist training in health protection to an international student audience. The wholly online approach means that it is flexible so that students can study from anywhere at any time. As part of the inaugural launch of the course, with the support of the College of Medicine and Health, four students from low-income countries have been offered free scholarship places. This initiative supports the mission of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health and also that of the University. For more information please visit the course webpage.

National Children's Research Centre (NCRC) Research Seminar

A seminar will take place on March 5th from 13.30-16.30pm in Brookfield Health Sciences Complex G_o6 to highlight [NCRC](#) Cork Funded research. Primary results of the [Cork Children's Lifestyle Study](#) will be presented for the first time as well as research from the [BASELINE study](#); the first Irish birth cohort study. Seminar details will be circulated over the coming weeks. For further information you can contact Dr. Janas Harrington at j.harrington@ucc.ie.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Hogan, D.A.M., Greiner, B.A. & O'Sullivan, L. 2014. [The effect of manual handling training on achieving training transfer, employee's behaviour change and subsequent reduction of work-related musculoskeletal disorders: a systematic review.](#) *Ergonomics*. [Epub ahead of print]

Spoelstra, H., Stoyanov, S., Burgoyne, L., et al., 2014. [Convergence and translation: attitudes to inter-professional learning and teaching of creative problem-solving among medical and engineering students and staff.](#) *BMC Medical Education* 2014, 14:14

Shiely, F., Hayes, K., Horgan, M., [Comparison of risk factors for prevalent sexually transmitted infections based on attendees at two genitourinary medicine clinics in Ireland.](#) *Int J STD AIDS* 2014; 25(1):29-39

Lutonski, J.E., Shiely, F, Molloy, E.J. [The prevalence of syphilis at childbirth in Ireland: a six-year review.](#) *J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med.* 2014 Jan 13. [Epub ahead of print]

Smiddy, MP., Murphy, OM. 2013. [The use of point prevalence surveys of healthcare-associated infection to identify risk factors and facilitate infection prevention and control planning.](#) *Healthcare Infection*, 18 (4):162-167

Creedon, SA and Smiddy, MP. 2013. Principles of Infection Prevention and Control. In: Brady A-M., McCabe C., McCann, M(Eds.). [Fundamentals of Medical-Surgical Nursing: A systems approach.](#) United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons

Spoelstra, H., Stoyanov, S., Burgoyne, L., et al., 2013. [Use of a group concept mapping approach to define learning outcomes for an interdisciplinary module in medicine.](#) *Perspect Med Educ* 1-9

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

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

TRUST Research

The Thyroid Hormone Replacement for Subclinical Hypothyroidism Trial (TRUST) is an international EU-funded, double-blind placebo-controlled clinical trial, examining the treatment of subclinical hypothyroidism (SCH) in adults aged 65 years and over. This collaborative academic study will follow 3000 participants with SCH over a 3.5 year period in Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland and the Netherlands. SCH or a mildly underactive thyroid gland occurs in up to 1-in-6 people over the age of 65. Although those affected may not display symptoms, this condition can lead to poor health. Currently there is a lack of clinical trial evidence to guide best practice for the treatment of SCH.

TRUST aims to determine if thyroid hormone replacement will prevent cardiovascular disease, and improve health-related quality of life, along with physical and cognitive function for older adults with SCH. Professor Patricia Kearney from the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCC is the Principle Investigator for TRUST in Ireland. The Irish study site is based in the HRB Clinical Research Facility in the Mercy University Hospital, Cork. The Cork team will follow 750 men and women with half of them receiving thyroid hormone replacement, whilst the other half receive placebo. These participants will be followed up at regular intervals by the TRUST team. For more information please visit the [TRUST](#) website.



Left to right: Jenny O'Connor study nurse, Audrey Russell study doctor, Professor Patricia Kearney Principal Investigator, Richard O'Sullivan study pharmacist, Dr. Vera McCarthy study coordinator/clinical nurse manager.

MEET...



Prof. Patricia Kearney

... Professor Patricia Kearney

Prof. Patricia Kearney completed her medical doctoral training in 1998 and her Internal Medicine residency training in 2001. She has a MPH (graduated 2002) and PhD (graduated 2006) in Public Health. She has worked as a clinical research fellow at the University of Oxford, England where her work included individual patient data meta-analyses of trials in primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease. She was awarded a Beeson Fellowship in 2007 to work on the Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing in Trinity College Dublin. In 2009 she took up a Senior Lecturer position in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at UCC. Her research interests include clinical trials and lifecourse epidemiology. She is the lead PI in Ireland for TRUST an EU FP7 funded clinical trial of thyroxine in older people with subclinical hypothyroidism. In 2013 she was one of 6 recipients nationally of the prestigious HRB Research Leader Award and was also appointed as a Research Professor in UCC. When not buried underneath paper you're most likely to find Professor Kearney out running.

One thing you didn't know about Prof. Kearney - Patricia met the Queen in Buckingham Palace!!

EVENTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

February 2014

[UCC Postgraduate Open Day 2014](#), 4th February, Cork, Ireland

[Nutrition Society Irish Section Postgraduate Meeting](#), 13-14th February, Dublin, Ireland

[Public Health Nutrition Network: Practical Public Health](#), 13th February, Birmingham, UK

Stroke rehabilitation and recovery conference, 28th February, Cork, Ireland

March 2014

[Diabetes UK Professional Conference](#), 5th March, Liverpool, UK

[Obese in Pregnancy](#) – mechanisms and potential interventions, 12th March, London

[The Hunger Games, The Big Bang Fair](#), 'You decide – why do we eat what we eat!', 13-16th March, Birmingham, UK

[ICO 2014](#): 12th International Congress on Obesity, 17-20th March, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

[Statistics for Nutrition Research](#), 21st March, London, UK

[Public Policy Exchange](#): Improving Mental Health in the Workplace: Towards Better Prevention and Inclusion in Europe, 25th March, Brussels, Belgium

[Public Policy Exchange](#): Fit for Purpose: Shaping the Future of General Practice Services, 25th March, London, UK

April 2014

Workshop: Introduction to Multilevel Modelling using MLwiN and STATA, 1st and 2nd April, Dublin, Ireland To reserve a place please email clsi@esri.ie

[Separating the fat from the fiction](#), 5th April, Edinburgh, UK

[ICPAPH](#): 5th International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health, 8-11th April, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

[European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology](#): 'Looking at the past - planning for the future: Capitalizing on OHP multidisciplinary', 14-16th April, London, UK

May 2014

[HSR conference: The international dimension in comparative health services research](#). 16-16th May, Utrecht, The Netherlands

[ISBNPA: International Society of Behaviour, Nutrition and Physical Activity 2014](#): 21-24th May, San Diego, California

[ECO\(2014\)](#): European Congress on Obesity, 28-31st May, Sofia, Bulgaria

July 2014

[Food and Nutrition Security in Africa: New Challenges for Sustainability](#), 21-25th July, Ghana, Africa

August 2014

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

October 2014

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

November 2014

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

CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Claire Buckley

Congratulations to Claire who recently submitted and defended her PhD thesis entitled 'Lower Extremity Amputations in People with Diabetes: Trends and Determinants'.

Dr. Vera McCarthy

Congratulations to Vera who recently submitted and defended her PhD thesis entitled 'Health of the Older Worker in Ireland - Occupational Physical and Psychosocial Factors in the Autumn of Work Life' which investigated the physical and psychosocial factors of health for older workers.

Ms. Karen Mulcahy

In December 2013 we said goodbye to one of our most valued members of staff Ms. Karen Mulcahy. Karen worked with the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health since it was established in 1999 and has since moved to Cork University Maternity Hospital where she will work with the [INFANT](#) (Irish Centre for Fetal and Neonatal Translation Research) Group.

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