Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 9th issue of EPINews. Summer is upon us and many of our colleagues are busy attending and presenting at various national and international conferences. In June Ms Shelly Chakraborty and Ms Laura McCarthy showcased their research at the European Obesity Summit in Gothenburg while Dr Martin Davoren presented at the 42nd Annual Alcohol Epidemiology Symposium held in Stockholm. From 8th-12th June, I had the pleasure of accompanying Dr Fiona Geaney and Ms Sarah Fitzgerald to Cape Town, South Africa where we presented at the International Society for Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Conference.

Since the last issue, many of our PhD Students have submitted or defended their theses. Congratulations are in order for Dr Aline Brennan, Dr Anne-Marie O’Flynn, Dr Sara Leitao, Dr Christina Dillon and Dr Eileen Curran on their outstanding achievements.

This issue is once again packed full with news, research updates, events and training opportunities and as always, 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

Spotlight in the IJE

Earlier this year, David Gunnell, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Bristol, highlighted work conducted by Dr Paul Corcoran and colleagues in the National Suicide Research Foundation. Prof Gunnell has a particular interest in understanding the cause of suicide in populations and developing prevention strategies to prevent suicide. The research, which he covered in the International Journal of Epidemiology Blog, utilized data generated by the National Self-Harm Registry Ireland as well as national suicide data. Results found that five years of economic recession and austerity in Ireland have had a significant negative impact on rates of suicide in men and on self-harm in both sexes. Read more on the IE Blog and access the full paper here.
ISBNPA 2016

The International Society of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity (ISBNPA) held its 15th annual meeting earlier in June, in Cape Town, South Africa, bringing ISBNPA to the African continent for the first time. The meeting, comprising symposia, short orals and workshops provided key updates and debate on recent progress in theory, methods and new findings related to physical activity and nutrition behaviour. Representing the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health were Dr Fiona Geaney, Ms Emily Kelleher and Ms Sarah Fitzgerald. Dr Geaney attended to showcase her research on the Food Choice at Work Study and also presented research she has conducted around the attitudes of Irish food service businesses that do and do not display menu calorie posting. Ms Kelleher had two oral presentations which focused on the implementation of a multicomponent, community-based, family-focused childhood weight management programme while Sarah Fitzgerald presented her research on obesity, diet quality and absenteeism in the workplace.

Welcome Dr Myles Balfe

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr Myles Balfe who joined the Department in late June. For the past three years Dr Balfe has been a lecturer in Sociology of Health in UCC. Prior to that, Myles worked for a number of years in the Department of Public Health in the Royal College of Surgeons (RCSI) in Dublin. While based at the RCSI Myles completed a number of projects on sexual abuse, young adults’ experiences of attending Irish health services for STI screening and young adults with diabetes. His current research interests include chronic illness (particularly Type 1 diabetes), technology, ethics and the sociology of deviance/stigma.

Studies within a Trial (SWAT) Award

The Health Research Board-Trials Methodology Research Network provides funding for three SWATs annually in 2016 and 2017. These awards are up to €10,000 each in value and provide for the implementation of a self-contained research study in an existing clinical trial. Congratulations to Professor Patricia Kearney and colleagues who recently were awarded with funding for their submission entitled ‘Patients’ perspectives and preferences on clinical trial dissemination: the TRUST Thyroid trial experience’. The aim of this SWAT is firstly to develop and implement a Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) strategy to disseminate material to Irish participants and secondly to compare this approach with the documents developed by the UK TRUST site.
IOSH - THE ROAD FORWARD
A big thank you to all, friends and members of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) & the MSc Occupational Health UCC, who attended our very positive information event last Thursday evening, 9th June in the UCC Staff Common Room. An interesting and informative evening was had by all. We are delighted that the MSc Occupational Health has recently received IOSH accreditation and at our information event prospective students, future graduates and graduates alike were able to learn first-hand about the benefits and advantages of chartered membership of IOSH and in which projects the institution are currently engaged with. The positive implications for all graduates of the MSc course were outlined and celebrated. Our guest speakers included our own Dr. Birgit Greiner who welcomed our guests and Norita Robinson, IOSH Development Manager (Ireland) who spoke about IOSH and its place on the world stage and updated us on the current health and safety campaigns that this professional body is engaged in both nationally and internationally. Brenton Phillips, Membership Advisor with IOSH, outlined the CPD and the benefits of becoming a chartered member of the institution. Liam Howe, Member of the IOSH Board of Trustees and former Head of Engineering at Coillte, expanded on the role of IOSH in the workplace. Thank you once again from the MSc Occupational Health Team to all for attending what was a very positive and rewarding event.

42nd Annual Alcohol Epidemiology Symposium of the Kettil Bruun Society
The Kettil Bruun Society (KBS) held their 42nd Annual Symposium from May 30th-June 3rd in Stockholm, Sweden. KBS aims to investigate social, epidemiological and cross-cultural research on alcohol use, to promote the exchange of scientific knowledge and experiences among researchers from various disciplines and to encourage international collaboration. The primary purpose of this symposium was to provide a forum for researchers involved in studies on alcohol to exchange ideas about their ongoing research. Dr Martin Davoren of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health was in attendance to present his research entitled ‘Alcohol consumption among university students: A latent class analysis’. This research employed a latent class analysis to describe alcohol consumption among university students, with particular reference to gender. The analysis focused on attitudes, behaviours and consumption profiles over 2,000 university students.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Obesity, diet quality and absenteeism in a working population. Fitzgerald S, Kirby A, Murphy A and Geaney F. Public Health Nutrition 2016. DOI: 5s368980016001269


A typology of alcohol consumption among young people – A narrative synthesis. MP Davoren, M Cronin, IJ Perry, J Demant, F Shiely, K O’Connor Addiction Research and Theory 2016. DOI: 10.3109/16066359.2015.1121244


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Faculty of Public Health Medicine Summer Scientific Meeting

The Department was well represented at this year’s Faculty of Public Health Medicine Summer Scientific meeting held in the Royal College of Physicians Ireland, Kildare Street on May 31st-June 1st. In addition to Dr Claire Buckley and Dr Fiona MacLeod, colleagues from the National Suicide Research Foundation were present to showcase their research into self-harm and drug abuse. The theme of this year’s Summer Scientific meeting was ‘Is fearr an tsláinte ná na táinte’ or ‘Health is better than wealth’ and included a variety of sessions ranging from suicide prevention to migrant health. Child Health was the focus of the keynote address given by renowned advocate Professor Mark Bellis. Mark challenged delegates with thought provoking research findings as well as his own personal experiences. In the same session Professor Christopher Whelan from the Economic and Social Research Institute spoke on the issue of child poverty while Dr Phil Jennings presented a talk entitled ‘Early years last a lifetime’ which focused on an innovative implementation project currently underway in her region. In recognition of the 40th Anniversary of the Faculty, time was devoted to the pioneers of Public Health. Dr Lydia Carroll entertained the audience with a fascinating account of Public Health in Dublin under Sir Charles Cameron, Medical Officer of Health from 1862 to 1921 while Dr Anne McClennan presented on the life and work of the rebel doctors, Dr Dorothy Stopford and Dr Kathleen Lynn. Adding to the diversity and innovation of the Scientific Meeting were two sessions of ‘2 Minute Magic Presentations’. These rapid fire sessions kept participants both involved and interested and provided a platform for participants to showcase their own research. More information about the conference can be found by clicking here.

Congratulations to Prof Patricia Kearney and Dr Claire Buckley on MFPHMI Awards

We are delighted to share the news that two of our colleagues Professor Patricia Kearney and Dr Claire Buckley were awarded with a Diplomate Membership of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine and Membership of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (MFPHMI), respectively, on May 31st.

The Faculty was established in 1976, as one of six postgraduate specialist training bodies based in the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. It is the national professional and training body for Public Health Medicine in Ireland and there are close to 180 Members. Membership of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine is an internationally recognised benchmark of excellence, identifying expert knowledge of health protection, health service development and health improvement.

European Obesity Summit 2016

Ms Shelly Chakraborty and Ms Laura McCarthy attended this year’s European Obesity Summit which was held in Gothenburg, Sweden from 1-4th June. During the conference Shelly had both an oral and a poster presentation through which she showcased her research into selected non-communicable disease burden attributable to dietary risks and low physical activity and the burden of cancer attributable to high BMI, respectively. Laura’s presented a poster highlighting her research into overweight and obesity. The aim of Laura’s research is to examine the change in the prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity among children aged 4-13 in the Republic of Ireland between 2002 and 2014 using two cross-sectional surveys conducted by the Oral Health Services Research Centre.
Farewell to Vicky and Alice
Ms Victoria Nolan and Ms Alice Madden joined the Department on work placement in September 2015 from University College Dublin where they are currently studying for a BSc in Human Nutrition. Over the 10 month work placement they had the opportunity to work on the Mitchellstown Cohort rescreen which began in October 2015. The study seeks to understand the causes and underlying trends of heart disease and diabetes in middle aged men and women and is currently rescreening 2000 men and women aged between 55 and 75 who attended the last screening in 2010/2011. The research team will examine a range of factors such as changes in diet, obesity, physical activity, blood pressure and blood lipids. Victoria and Alice’s role included inviting participants, scheduling appointments, and updating data files. We would like to sincerely thank both Alice and Victoria for their important contributions and wish them all the best for their future studies.

12th European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology
Researchers from the Department of Epidemiology & Public Health and the School of Nursing and Midwifery were well presented at the International Conference of the European Academy for Occupational Health Psychology which was held in Athens in April. Presentations included, for example, the results of the HITS Study (Health and Safety in Hand-Intensive Tasks in Healthcare - presented by Dr Birgit Greiner and Ms Dervla Hogan). Results from this study show that Irish physiotherapists and physical therapists are at higher risk of musculoskeletal disorders than the general population and that older therapists are more vulnerable to psychosocial work risk factors in relation to upper limb disorders. Other presentations included the systematic analysis of data from the study SSIS-ACE ‘Psychological, psychiatric and work related factors with suicide – a case-control study’ (presented by Dr Sara Leitão), comparing employed and unemployed cases of suicide, and a paper on ‘The Role of Personality Traits in the Association between Job Characteristics and Depression’ (presented by Dr Vera McCarthy). The latter paper involved a sample of older workers who were recruited from a primary healthcare clinic in Southern Ireland. The Department was also represented in the Poster session where the study ‘Psychosocial, Health Promotion and Safety Culture Management - are Health and Safety Practitioners involved?’ was presented and caught the interest of many of the delegates. Furthermore, Dr Birgit Greiner, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Academy conducted a Forum for Young researchers in this field. The conference attracted over 400 delegates from all over the world. Our representation continues the fruitful collaboration between public health, epidemiology and psychology.

Global Burden of Disease Technical Training
The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington, Seattle hosted the Global Burden of disease (GBD) Technical training workshop in Greece in May 2016. The aim of this workshop was to train students interested in the data, methods, findings, and implications of the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study - the largest and most comprehensive scientific effort to measure epidemiological levels and trends worldwide. Components of the training included instruction in the methods behind the GBD approach, key assessment factors for data, the principles underlying the analytic process, and how to interpret results. The sessions promoted debate, discussion, and an open exchange of ideas.

Ms Shelly Chakraborty was in attendance and felt the workshop was a unique way to learn from the creators of the burden of disease approach, including Christopher Murray, Alan Lopez, Mohsen Naghavi, and Theo Vos. Shelly received partial funding for this course from the Centre for Health Trends and Forecasts and the Global Burden of Disease group, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health.
APIC includes Department of EPI in Top 10 Infection Control Articles of 2015
The Association for Professionals in Infection Control held their 43rd Annual Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina on June 11-13th. With more than 60 educational sessions and workshops led by experts from across the globe it is the most comprehensive infection prevention conference in the world. During the three-day conference the Top 10 Infection Prevention Articles of 2015 were announced. Included in this top list was a systematic review conducted by Ms Maura Smiddy, College Lecturer in the Department of Epidemiology. Her paper concludes that noncompliance with hand hygiene guidelines remains a collective challenge that requires researchers to adopt a consistent and standardized approach. Congratulations Maura on this outstanding achievement. Please click here for access to full paper.

Psychology, Health and Medicine Conference 2016
The 13th Annual Psychology, Health and Medicine Conference, an event hosted by the Division of Health Psychology of the Psychological Society of Ireland, was held on May 27th at the School of Applied Psychology here in University College Cork. The aim of the conference was to promote health psychology, and to provide a forum to share the findings from high quality research on psychology and health. The conference draws practitioners and researchers in psychology, health and cognate fields, and provides an opportunity to build and strengthen professional networks. In addition to Professor Jane Ogden of the University of Surrey and Dr Molly Byrne from National University of Ireland, Galway, Professor Ivan Perry of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health was present to deliver a keynote speech entitled ‘Obesity: A public health perspective on behaviour change’. The focus of this presentation was on behaviour change from a public health perspective. Examples from work on obesity were used and the challenge of complexity in public health were highlighted. The importance of whole population based versus high risk intervention strategies was discussed and the limits of personal agency and of individually targeted behaviour change strategies were addressed. Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar and Ms Emily Kelleher were also in attendance to present their research into the role of perinatal and obstetric factors in postpartum parenting stress and attendance at childhood weight management programmes, respectively.

Knowledge 4 Health
The Knowledge 4 Health Conference 2016 took place on 25th May at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, in Dublin. This all-Island Conference explored innovative and practical ways of providing knowledge support for the implementation of two public health frameworks. These are ‘Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health & Wellbeing 2013-2025’ in the Republic of Ireland and ‘Making Life Better – A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health 2013–2023’ in Northern Ireland. ‘Innovation’ was the cross-cutting theme of the Conference which included a broad range of speakers. It was a very interactive programme that ended with an expert panel discussion answering questions from the audience. The Conference included two plenary and four parallel sessions focusing on the following themes: 1) Monitoring Health and Wellbeing across the Population, 2) Crossing Boundaries for Better Knowledge, 3) Knowledge Exchange: Formulating Policy and Practice and, 4) Information Systems for Health and Wellbeing. Mr Barrie Tyner and Ms Shelly Chakraborty represented the Department at this conference with a stand showcasing research conducted within the Centre for Health and Diet Research.

Spotlight on Dr Frances Drummond
Dr Frances Drummond, who is based at the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, has been awarded a grant by the Irish Cancer Society and National Adult Literacy Agency to explore health literacy issues around men and how they access and understand information about cancer. The initiative follows a report commissioned by the Society, which revealed a significant difference between cancer rates and deaths among Irish men and women. The report also pointed to the need for a more targeted cancer prevention approach for Irish men. Dr Drummond is now embarking on the ‘Mechanic Study’ to explore issues around accessing information about cancer awareness and cancer symptoms. The six-month study will involve focus groups with men over 40 from different socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as a survey of 400 men. Click here for more information.

Success for Carol at the AGM of the Irish College of General Practitioners
Dr Carol Sinnott, Research Fellow in General Practice, was joint winner of the best research paper of the year for a paper on strategies to help GPs improve prescribing in patients with multiple illnesses. Congratulations Carol! The paper is accessible by clicking here.
Train-The-Trainer (TTT) Programme for Emergency Healthcare Staff in Seoul, Republic of Korea

On May 23-24th Professor Ella Arensman and Dr. Alexandra Fleischmann delivered a TTT programme to Emergency Healthcare professionals in Seoul, Republic of Korea, which was facilitated by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). During the two days, 57 healthcare professionals were trained, each of whom will share their knowledge and skills obtained in working with self-harm patients with colleagues in their work setting. The TTT participants represented all geographic regions in the Republic of Korea, and the roll out of the training will be coordinated by the Metropolitan and Community Mental Health Centre, Seoul and the Korea Suicide Prevention Centre. The programme ‘Increasing awareness of suicide and self-harm among emergency healthcare staff’ is based on a training model developed and tested by the European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD), and further optimised within: Optimising Suicide Prevention Programmes and their Implementation in Europe (OSPI-Europe). The programme uses the sustainable TTT model to enable healthcare professionals to deliver a 3-hour training to fellow emergency healthcare staff. The programme has proven effectiveness in increasing knowledge in relation to suicide and self-harm, and improving attitudes and confidence in engaging with self-harm patients. The TTT programme itself is an evidence-based self-harm and suicide awareness-skills training, which incorporates role plays and the dissemination of a comprehensive, take-home training manual for all participants. This subsequent 3-hour programme targets emergency healthcare staff including ED doctors, nurses, midwives, clerical and security staff, paramedics, porters and healthcare assistants and will be delivered onsite by two trained facilitators.

MEET...

Prof Ella Arensman

Prof. Ella Arensman completed her training in Clinical and Health Psychology at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands (MSc, PhD). In 1996, she worked as Senior Researcher at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford, followed by a position of Senior Lecturer at the Vrije University of Amsterdam (1997-1998), and Assistant Professor at the University of Leiden (1999-2003). Since 2003, she is Director of Research with the National Suicide Research Foundation, where she is responsible for a research programme including 39 studies, and training and supervision of research staff. In 2015, she was recipient of the HRB Research Leader Award for the 5-year research programme: Individual and Area Level Determinants of Self-Harm and Suicide in Ireland: Enhancing Prediction, Risk Assessment and Management of Self-Harm by Health Services.

Since 2013, she is President of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), with members in more than 60 countries. For more than 30 years, she has conducted research in population science and health services research relating to suicide, self-harm and associated mental health and social problems, and she has been involved in numerous international research consortia. She had a leading role in a successful application for the NSRF to become a WHO Collaborating Centre in Surveillance and Research in Suicide Prevention. She serves on various national and international scientific committees, and she is an expert advisor for WHO with involvement in advisory boards and delegations, such as South Korea, Egypt, French Polynesia and Afghanistan. In Ireland, she had a key role in developing two national suicide prevention programmes: Reach Out (2005-2014) and Connecting for Life (2015-2020).

Did you know? Ella enjoys helping out on the farm in weekends when she is at home with her partner and sons. They have a special breed of black pigs (Gascon) and the farm is in development for work placements for young adults with a learning disability.
UPCOMING EVENTS

July 2016
Summer School: Occupational Epidemiology, 4-15th July, Turin, Italy
Summer Conference: New technology in nutrition research and practice, 11-14th July, Dublin, Ireland
Health Services Research UK 9th Annual Symposium, 13-14th July, Nottingham, UK
Short Course: Population and Public Health, 4-22nd July, London, UK
10 Day Seminar on the Epidemiology and Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease, 24th July - 5th August, California, US

August 2016
Screening & Epidemiology, 10-14th August, Copenhagen, Denmark
Measurement, Design, and Analysis Methods for Health Outcomes Research, 15-17th August, Boston, USA
37th ISCB Annual Conference, 21-25th August, Birmingham, UK
32nd International Congress on Pharmacoepidemiology & Therapeutic Risk Management (ICPE), 25-28 August, Dublin, Ireland

September 2016
Society of Social Medicine Annual Meeting 2016, York
Twenty-Eighth Conference of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology, Old risks and new challenges for environmental epidemiology, 1-4th September, Rome, Italy
UK Congress on Obesity (UKCO), 9-11th September, Glasgow, Scotland
The Association for the Study of Obesity-UK Congress on Obesity 2016, 19-20th September, Nottingham, UK

October 2016
4th International Conference on Epidemiology and Public Health, 3-5th October, London, UK
Aging & Society: Sixth International Conference, 6-7th October, Sweden
Introductory Course on Epidemiology and the Surveillance of Infectious Disease, 10-14th October, Colindale, UK
Introduction to Food Policy, 25th October, London, UK
World Cancer Congress, Oct 31st – 3rd Nov, Paris, France,
Promoting Public Health: Skills, Perspectives and Practice, Online Course, UK

November 2016
Statistics for Nutrition Research, 9th November, London, UK
9th European Public Health Conference, 9-12th November, Vienna, Austria
AICR 2016 Research Conference on Nutrition, Physical Activity, Obesity, and Cancer, 14-16th November, North Bethesda, United States
ICPAPH: 6th International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health, 16-19th November, Bangkok, Thailand
A New Politics for Health – Moving Forward from the Ottawa Charter, 23rd November, Birmingham, UK

December 2016
Winter Conference: Diet, Nutrition and Mental Health and Wellbeing, 6-7th December, London, UK

March 2017
ICOHS 2017: 19th International Conference on Occupational Health and Safety, 9-10th March, Miami, USA

April 2017
16th World Congress on Public Health, 3 - 7 April 2017, Melbourne, Australia

June 2017
International Society for Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Conference, 7-10th June, Victoria, Canada

Ongoing
Stata courses
Stata training

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