



# SPH News

## The School of Public Health Newsletter

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### WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN 2022 EDITION

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 issue of SPH News.

Thank you for being here and thank you to all of the contributors for sharing the latest achievements and updates on the activities undertaken in the School and beyond during the last quarter of the year, including collaborations at the international level, between The University College Cork School of Public Health (SPH) and the World Health Organization.

This issue contains news on events organised in the SPH, in particular, the successful Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Festival organised by PPI Ignite Network@ UCC in October, conferences attended by our researchers, updates from the National Suicide Research Foundation, as well as awards, new graduates, new staff, and new publications.

To share achievements in relation to Teaching and Learning, in this issue you will find a new section entitled "Teaching Highlights". This issue also introduces the SPH Civic and Community Engagement Committee.

I hope you enjoy reading SPH News. Let me know if you have any feedback.

Happy holidays, with best wishes,

Dr Ana Contreras Navarro

*Editor SPH News*



## 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).*

## ISSUE 30 CREDITS

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### MEDIA PROMOTION:

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### SCHOOL MANAGER:

Ms Felicity Lee

## SCHOOL NEWS

### WHO's Dr Mike Ryan spoke at the SPH 'COVID-19 Now —What Next' Webinar



*Dr Mike Ryan*

Dr Mike Ryan, Executive Director of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Emergencies Programme, joined leading experts from The School of Public Health and Centre for Global Development (CGD) on September 20<sup>th</sup>, for the Webinar 'COVID Now – What Next?'.

Dr Ryan discussed the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and solutions to prevent future public health challenges. Over 270 people attended the Webinar for an inspiring and highly informative discussion.

We are delighted to report that the event was announced at RTÉ Six One News and three prominent national newspapers on the following day. This highly successful event was organised by Colette Cunningham, in collaboration with the CGD, where she is an Executive Committee member. The event was co-chaired by Dr Rosarii Griffin, Interim Director of the CGD.

A recording of the webinar is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93qplpU7jfU>

### *SPH has joined the Irish Climate and Health Alliance*

The Irish Climate and Health Alliance was established in 2019 and comprises of several Irish health organizations, advocacy groups, academic institutions, and NGOs all concerned about the impact of the climate crisis on public health. The Alliance also advocates for climate actions that elicit health co-benefits. The School of Public Health, through one of its representatives Dr Christie Godsmark, has been invited to sit on the steering committee of the Alliance.

website: [climateandhealthalliance.ie](http://climateandhealthalliance.ie)

twitter: [ClimHealthIre](https://twitter.com/ClimHealthIre)





## WHO published the new Guidelines on Mental Health at Work with external input from expert reviewer Dr Birgit Greiner

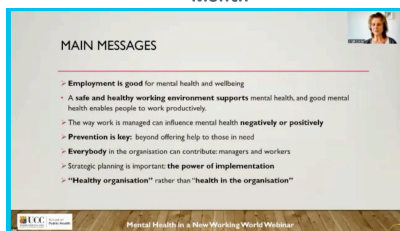


Dr Birgit Greiner

The World Health Organisation (WHO) just recently

published the Guidelines on Mental Health at Work with external expert reviewer input by Dr Birgit Greiner.

As part of her presentation “Workplace Mental Health – The big picture” Dr Greiner addressed these guidelines at a Webinar organised by Mental Health Ireland on the ‘Mental Health in a New Working World’ event during mental health week in October. The webinar was well subscribed by over 500 participants from all over the world.



Watch here: <https://worldmentalhealthmonth-mhi.ie/get-involved/national-wmhm-webinar/?external=1>

The WHO guidelines mark the salience of mental health and wellbeing issues in the workplace. Based on a range of high-profile systematic reviews and meta-analyses on the effectiveness of workplace interventions, they are aimed at providing orientation for practitioners to design and implement workplace mental health programmes. They also give guiding principles for navigating through a myriad of available unregulated programmes within the multi-million-dollar business of workplace health promotion. The WHO guidelines specify evidence-based recommendations on how to prevent work-related mental health problems, how to positively promote mental health, and how to enable people living with mental health conditions to participate and thrive in work. They are based on the notion that safe and healthy working conditions are not only a fundamental right for workers, they are also beneficial for employers, by reducing absenteeism, enhancing staff retention, performance, and productivity.

Recommendations go beyond supporting those living with mental health problems, and strongly emphasise the preventative role a workplace can play for individual and population mental health.

Under the headlines **Prevent**, **Protect & Promote**, and **Support**, the WHO guidelines encompass interventions to improve psychosocial working conditions, to enhance awareness and skills for managers and workers in relation to mental health, individual interventions to build resilience and coping with work stress, return to work procedures, and initiatives to facilitate entry to employment.



For further information:  
WHO Guidelines on Mental Health at Work: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240053052>

WHO/ILO policy brief: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240057944>

## FEAST Project

In October, Dr Janas Harrington and Dr Margaret Steele travelled to Heidelberg in Germany to attend the kick-off meeting for **FEAST** (Food systems that support transitions to healthy and sustainable diets), a Horizon Europe research and innovation project. **FEAST**'s goal is to support a shift away from the current 'Lose-Lose-Lose-Win' food systems that see only large food corporations 'winning' at the expense of enormous negative consequences for the environment, health and the public sector, and towards a 'Win-Win-Win-Win' scenario. The **FEAST** consortium is made up of 35 partners across fifteen countries, including academic, social enterprise and community groups. The consortium also includes thirteen living labs, a mix of cities, towns and rural areas, spread across the different regions of Europe. The living labs will facilitate co-creation of innovative solutions in real-world settings, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of citizens, especially those from vulnerable groups. Here in the School of Public Health, the focus is on mapping and monitoring of consumer behaviour and corporate activity. Lead investigator Dr Janas Harrington and postdoctoral researcher Dr Margaret Steele are currently conducting Business Impact Assessments (BIAs) on various food industry sectors in Ireland, collaborating closely with colleagues in Belgium, France and Portugal, who are also conducting BIAs in their regions.

FEAST's first article, "Transitions to food democracy through multilevel governance", has just been published in *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* and can be read here: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsufs.2022.1039127/full>. For more information and ongoing updates on FEAST, check <https://feast2030.eu/>, or follow FEAST on LinkedIn.



All FEAST partners at Kick off event in Heidelberg last October



Janas Harrington and Margaret Steele

## SSM Annual Scientific Meeting 2022

Aileen Callanan, PhD researcher, Jennifer Pallin, PhD researcher and Dr Zubair Kabir, Senior Lecturer, attended the Society for Social Medicine & Population Health (SSM) Annual Scientific Meeting in Exeter in September presenting on their respective projects.



Society for Social Medicine  
& Population Health

Photo left to right: Jennifer Pallin,  
Dr Zubair Kabir & Aileen Callanan



## New article on non-fatal drug overdose cases published

A new article by Dr Seán Millar of the School of Public Health UCC, which was published in Drugnet Ireland, examined non-fatal overdose cases involving drugs for the year 2020. In this research, which was highlighted in **the Irish Examiner**, data on drug-related hospital admissions were obtained from the Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) computer-based health information system.

Key findings include the following:

- The number of discharged overdose cases in 2020 (n = 5,402) was the highest recorded in 10 years, with trends indicating a general increase since 2015.
- The main substances involved in overdoses were painkillers (1,880), paracetamol (1,580), benzodiazepines (1,111), psychotropic agents (1,416), anti-epileptics and sedatives (2,536).
- Of the 1,322 cases involving illegal drugs, the bulk were opioids (897), accounting for 17% of all cases.
- There were 313 cocaine cases (6% of all overdoses) and 98 involved cannabis (2%). A further 14 cases involved LSD.

Drugnet Ireland is the quarterly newsletter of the Drug and Alcohol Unit of the HRB. Its role is to disseminate information, news and research findings among those involved in the drugs area in Ireland. For further information on how to disseminate information in Drugnet Ireland, please contact Dr Millar.



The most recent and previous editions of Drugnet Ireland can be accessed here: <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/php/drugnet-ireland.php>

An Irish Examiner article about the study can be accessed here: <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40996547.html>

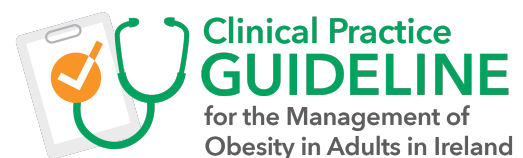
## MSc Clinical Trials Student Publishes in Journal of Clinical Epidemiology



Carolyn Moloney

Congratulations to Dr Carolyn Moloney, graduate of the MSc Clinical Trials who published in JCE from her dissertation. Carolyn was supervised by Dr Frances Shiely.

Dr Carolyn Moloney graduated with the MSc Clinical Trials from UCC in 2021. She is currently a specialist registrar in Medical Oncology in Beaumont Hospital and is planning to begin a fellowship abroad in a development therapeutics unit in 2023. She has a special interest in equity and inclusion in cancer care.



Dr Janas Harrington co-authored the *Epidemiology of Obesity* chapter in the recently released "Obesity in Adults: A 2022 Adapted Clinical Practice Guideline for Ireland", which is available here: <https://aso.info/guidelines/>.

The Guideline was published by The Association for the Study of Obesity on the Island of Ireland (ASOI), which is the Irish representative body at the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) and the World Obesity Federation.



## PPI Ignite Network@ UCC celebrates inaugural PPI festival

The first National Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Festival took place from the 10<sup>th</sup>–23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2022. PPI can be described as research done ‘with’ or ‘by’ members of the public rather than ‘to’, ‘about’ or ‘for’ them. The tagline for the inaugural festival was *Public & patient involvement: connecting communities*. As part of the festival, over 50 events were held by PPI Ignite lead sites, PPI groups, research teams, charities and patient organisations all over the country.



Dr Emmy Racine, Programme Manager PPI Ignite Network@ UCC welcoming over 85 attendees to the seminar on PPI in HRB Funding Applications and Official Launch of the Digital Badge in PPI in Research event.

PPI Ignite Network@ UCC hosted several successful events aimed at researchers and members of the public. The aim of these events was to increase awareness and knowledge of PPI and celebrate the fantastic progress and innovation in PPI in Irish research. The first year of the festival had an overwhelming success with over 200 participants attending in-person events. This success highlights the increasing appetite and momentum for PPI across the University and beyond.

PPI Ignite Network@ UCC is part of the National PPI Ignite Network and aims to build capacity for high-quality PPI within UCC and amongst wider society and to embed PPI within our institutional policies and practices. The National PPI Ignite Network is funded by the Health Research Board and Irish Research Council and seven HEI's across Ireland.

For more information about PPI and PPI Ignite Network@ UCC, visit <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ppi-ignite/> or email Dr Emmy Racine, Programme Manager

### CUSTOMISE hosted the first in-person PPI Meeting

As part of the National PPI Festival, the CUSTOMISE (Comparing and Understanding Tailoring Methods for Implementation Strategies in Healthcare) study hosted their first in-person PPI Group Meeting. CUSTOMISE is led by Dr Sheena McHugh and is funded through a Health Research Board (HRB) Leader Award. The project supports research on the process and impact of tailoring strategies to implement evidence-based interventions and build capacity and collaborations in implementation science. Although the CUSTOMISE-PPI Group was established in March 2021 and have been meeting regularly online since, the group met in-person for the first time on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October as part of the National PPI Festival.



CUSTOMISE PPI Contributors met in-person during National PPI Festival.



## Seminar on PPI in HRB Funding Applications and Official Launch of the Digital Badge in PPI in Research

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, PPI Ignite Network@ UCC hosted a lunchtime seminar on PPI in HRB Funding Applications and Official Launch of the Digital Badge in PPI in Research. Dr Carol Kelleher, Site Lead PPI Ignite Network @UCC and Dr Emmy Racine, Programme Manager PPI Ignite Network@ UCC welcomed over 85 attendees to the event.

The seminar was delivered by Dr Anne Cody, Health Research Board (HRB). Dr Cody has been working with the HRB in a variety of roles for over 20 years and is now the Head of Investigator-led Grants, Research Careers and Enablers. She has been the driver behind the HRB's approach to Public, Patient and Carer Involvement (PPI) and remains committed to this agenda.

During her seminar, Dr Cody spoke about how the HRB has implemented PPI into their own grant review processes in the form of lay reviewers and the expectation that all HRB funded projects and programmes fully incorporate PPI into their project plans and proposals. Dr Cody also spoke about the importance of involving PPI contributors in all lay summaries submitted to the HRB as part of research funding applications.

Following the seminar, Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health, officially launched the Digital Badge in PPI in Research. The Digital Badge is a validated micro-credential awarded to earners in an online format. The course is open to researchers at all career stages from within and outside University College Cork. Participants can take the course in their own time, at their own pace. The badge also highlights the collaborative nature of the PPI Ignite Network as it includes content from powerful PPI contributors and experienced academics from the University of Limerick, the University of Galway, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and Dublin City University—all fellow members of the National PPI Ignite Network.

During her speech, Professor Whelton reinforced her commitment to PPI and outlined the importance of the digital badge course, stating that *"This course is an important step forward in the embedding of PPI in all the work that we do. For PPI to be meaningful, it must be normalised into academic training. Current and future generations of researchers need to understand PPI, and how best to conduct and how to report and evaluate their PPI activities accordingly."*

For more information about the Digital Badge in PPI in Research, please contact [emmy.racine@ucc.ie](mailto:emmy.racine@ucc.ie) or [ppi@ucc.ie](mailto:ppi@ucc.ie).

Left photo: Dr Anne Cody, Health Research Board delivering a seminar on PPI in HRB Funding Applications as part of the PPI Ignite Network@ UCC Event.



Right photo: Prof Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health, UCC.



## Students and PPI contributors from the Collaborative Doctoral Programme in Chronic Disease Prevention share PPI guidance document for PhD Students

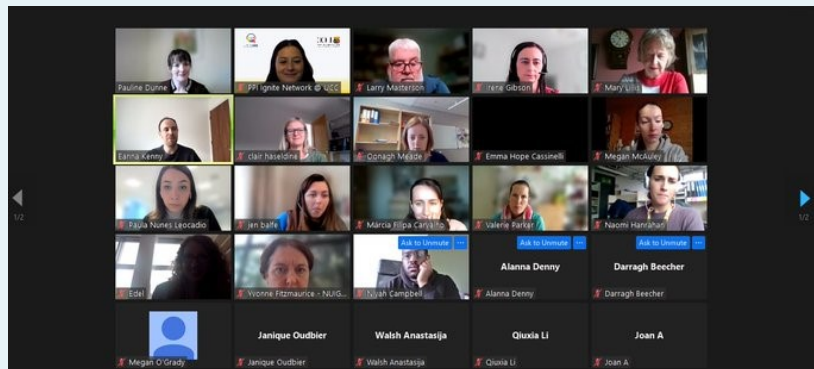
On the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, 2022, students and PPI contributors from the **Collaborative Doctoral Programme in Chronic Disease Prevention (CDP-CDP)** shared their experiences of PPI at the online seminar *PPI Shared Learning Group for PhD students*. There are six scholars on this award and the doctoral programme has a strong commitment to PPI. The scholars all had different experiences in setting up PPI panels. This led them to develop a guidance document to optimise the impact of PPI across the six projects and to ensure transparency and consistency within the programme.

*Members of the Collaborative Doctoral Programme in Chronic Disease Prevention, PPI Contributors and doctoral students attending the PPI Shared Learning Group for PhD Students on the 11th of October, 2022.*

The scholars presented this document and their approaches to PPI at the online event and were met with a positive reaction from other students in the group. Attendees stated that the guidance document will be useful for them as they begin to plan and implement PPI in their own projects as guidance on embedding PPI in structured doctoral programmes is still somewhat limited.

You can access the guidance document and a blog written by the scholars [here](#).

The Shared Learning Group for PhD students meets online once per month and provides an informal opportunity for PhD students to keep up-to-date with the latest PPI research and best practice approaches. It also provides a forum for members to discuss their own PPI plans and experiences. The group is open to PhD researchers of all stages and is facilitated by Dr Emmy Racine, Programme Manager PPI Ignite Network@UCC. If you are interested in attending these sessions, sign-up to the mailing list [here](#) or email [emmy.racine@ucc.ie](mailto:emmy.racine@ucc.ie) for more information.



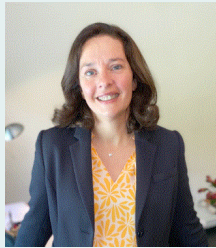
## Introduction to PPI for members of the public



*Members of the public at PPI event*

PPI Ignite Network@UCC hosted a free public event to introduce members of the public to PPI on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. The event, which was held in the Western Gateway Building UCC, was a huge success with over 35 people attending. The programme included a presentation delivered by SPHeRE PhD scholar's Clair Haseldine and Jennifer Pallin. Members of the public attending the event gave wonderful positive feedback, with most reporting that they would like to get involved in future research as PPI contributors.

# School of Public Health Civic and Community Engagement Committee



Maura Smiddy

The School of Public Health Civic and Community Engagement Committee (CCEC) had its launch in June 2022. The purpose of the Committee is to, “enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; contribute to the public good; and make available cultural, recreational and other

assets and contribute to the regeneration of neighbourhoods and community wellbeing” (Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, 2006).

While the Committee is limited to 10 members, Maura Smiddy, Margaret Mannix Sheehan, Zubair Kabir, Mary Cronin, Maria Roura, Edel Burton, Emmy Racine, Eunice Eliel Banduki, Denise Cahill and Martin Davoren as per UCC CCEC, our aim is to be inclusive of all SPH staff and students who are interested. We are currently working on developing a repository of CCE work being done by everyone in the School. You are asked to fill a brief form to provide a snapshot of your CCE work. This will be used to highlight the CCE work of the SPH and to use past learnings to inform future activities. If you have not already submitted your CCE activities, please email [SPHCivic@ucc.ie](mailto:SPHCivic@ucc.ie) to get a copy of the data collection form.

We will also circulate the minutes of the Committee meetings once ratified, so you can remain informed of the work being done. This will also provide an opportunity for you to contact the us if there is anything of particular interest to you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Maura Smiddy,  
*Chair SPH CCEC*



Photo source: Unsplash



## International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference 2022

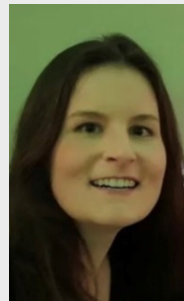
Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar facilitated a workshop on “Finding, critically appraising, and using a **Core Outcome Set (COS)** for your trial” at the **International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference (ICTMC)** in Harrogate in October. COS are standardised sets of outcomes for use in specific health areas to improve standardisation and evidence syntheses. This workshop was conducted with colleagues from the **COMET Initiative** and the HRB Trials Methodology Research Network. You can find more details of the workshop [here](#).



Dr Matvienko-Sikar also delivered an invited talk at the **Core Outcome Measures in Effectiveness Trials (COMET) Initiative Meeting** during the conference. Karen spoke about the use of behavioural science to increase the use of core outcome sets in trials. Dr Matvienko-Sikar also presented an oral presentation on HRB Trials Methodology Research Network funded research examining trialists use, knowledge and attitudes to Core Outcome Sets.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO SPH UCC GRADUATES



Orla Houlihan

**Congratulations to Dr Orla Houlihan** who completed a Master in Public Health (online) this August. Her dissertation, entitled “Maternal and perinatal outcomes following a diagnosis of Hodgkin lymphoma during or prior to pregnancy: a systematic review” was supervised by Dr Ali Khashan

and has been accepted for publication in BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The co-authors are Daire Buckley, Dr Gillian Maher, and Dr Fergus McCarthy. This systematic review and meta-analysis showed no increased likelihood of most adverse pregnancy outcomes among women with a previous or current diagnosis of Hodgkin lymphoma compared to the general pregnant population. Women with Hodgkin lymphoma during pregnancy may have a higher preterm birth rate and increased likelihood of venous thromboembolism, anaemia and blood transfusion, however further research is needed due to small study numbers and low to very low GRADE certainty of findings. Orla is a radiation oncologist currently working as a research fellow at Queen’s University Belfast.



Ruth Benson

**Huge congratulations to Ruth Benson**, who successfully passed her PhD Viva in October. Ruth's thesis addressed: “Real-time surveillance for evidence-based

responses to suicide contagion and clustering”, which she conducted in the School of Public Health and the National Suicide Research Foundation.



## Implementation Science Conference: *Complexities and Applications* organised in November at University of Limerick

A number of researchers and PhD students from the Health Implementation Research Hub attended the Implementation Science Conference: Complexities and Applications on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, which was hosted by the Health Implementation Science and Technology (HIST) Network at the University of Limerick. The conference, one of the first implementation research conferences to be held in Ireland, focused on bringing together researchers and practitioners interested in sharing best practices on implementation science.

Dr Claire Kerins and Dr Fiona Riordan presented research being conducted as part of the HRB-Research Leader funded **CUSTOMISE** project (**C**omparing and **U**nderstanding **T**ailoring **M**ethods for Implementation **S**trategies). Claire delivered a presentation on the preliminary findings of a mixed methods study evaluating stakeholder's experiences of tailoring strategies to support the implementation of **Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating (DAFNE)**, a structured patient education programme for people with Type 1 diabetes. Fiona presented a poster on a scoping review protocol to characterise processes and outcomes of tailoring implementation strategies in healthcare. Clair Haseldine, a PhD researcher on the HRB CDP-CDP programme in chronic disease prevention, delivered a poster presentation on a qualitative study of factors influencing participation in the online National Diabetes Prevention Programme.



*Claire Kerins, Nickola Pallin, and Fiona Riordan at the Implementation Science Conference 2022*



*Clair Haseldine presented research on the factors influencing participation in the online National Diabetes Programme.*

### Experiences of the DAFNE structured education programme and managing type 1 diabetes during COVID-19: A photovoice project (*continued in next page*)

This photovoice project was completed as part of a HRB Summer Student Scholarship awarded to Aoibheann Kavanagh, a final year of the BSc Public Health Sciences. Aoibheann undertook her 8-week scholarship under the supervision of Dr Fiona Riordan, who is part of the Health Implementation Research Hub.

The project explored experiences of the structured diabetes education programme, **DAFNE**, among people with type 1 diabetes, and how **DAFNE** graduates experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. Photovoice is a community-based participatory approach, whereby participants take photographs of important and meaningful aspects of their lives and explain their significance. It was used in this project to offer an insight into the reality of living with diabetes during the pandemic.

## Experiences of the DAFNE structured education programme

Ten **DAFNE** graduates took part in the project. The findings highlight the flexibility and freedom the **DAFNE** programme offers graduates to engage in exercise and make dietary choices. However, the findings also highlight how the programme can be enhanced, for example by tailoring the content and format, continuing or starting to offer the programme online to support greater access, and taking steps to embed psychological support and manage burnout.



It is hoped that the project outputs will raise awareness about diabetes management during COVID-19 and highlight the important role of the **DAFNE** education programme.

You can read the full report, project summary, or watch a slideshow with the full set of photographs taken by participants [here](#).

## Irish Global Health Network Conference, Trinity College Dublin, October 2022

Colette Cunningham travelled to Dublin to attend the annual IGHN Conference on Global Imbalance and Social Inclusion, co-hosted with the HSE Global Health Programme. The conference brought together academics, NGOs, donors and other stakeholders to reflect on the emergency response measures undertaken during COVID both in the global North and global South and how these affected health systems and healthcare delivery. It highlighted that Global Health has never been more relevant giving us all an opportunity to address the inequities that exist in the world for the delivery of equal healthcare to all and to safeguard populations. The conference addressed issues such as stigma, global mental health, global health leadership, social inclusion and marginalisation and war—its implications in the Ukraine and for health services in Ireland.

The School of Public Health UCC was well represented with former MPH student and colleague Eunice Philip leading the IGHN Student Outreach Group as their Coordinator and doing a stellar job in organising student volunteers for the day, some of whom were from our school and the MPH programme.



Colette with past (Eunice Philips and Sophia Egan) and present (Julia, Shraddha, Xin, Anthonia, Hannah, Collins and Sharon) at the IGHN Conference

## European Public Health Conference, Berlin, November 2022

Dr Zubair Kabir, Senior Lecturer and Ms Georgie O Sullivan—Research Assistant, attended the European Public Health (EPH) Conference 2022 in Berlin from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> of November.

Dr Kabir is involved in two European-funded consortia—the unCoVer H2020 and the EU COST Action-European Burden of Disease Network. The 2-year unCoVer project hosted its final conference at the EPH 2022. Dr Kabir is a work package leader on Ethics and Data Protection of the unCoVer consortium, which had a poster presentation on Real-World-Data and Real-World-Evidence. Dr Kabir also represents Ireland on the management committee of the COST Action project, which had a workshop at the EPH showcasing Burden of Disease studies across Europe.



EU COST Action on European Burden of Disease Network



Dr Zubair Kabir and Ms Georgie O Sullivan of the unCoVer Consortium at EPH 2022, Berlin



ASPHER stand at EPH 2022

Colette Cunningham and Lisa Wandschneider of Bielefeld University published an article on *Framing public health education to meet the needs of professionals for war and peacebuilding*, which was made available at the EPH Conference on the ASPHER Stand. The article is published in a special edition of an e-journal focusing on the War in Ukraine. It is available [here](#).



## ASPHER DEAN'S & DIRECTOR'S RETREAT, Sofia, October 2022

Colette Cunningham represented the UCC School of Public Health at the Annual **ASPHER** (Association of **S**chools of **P**ublic **H**Health in the **E**uropean **R**egion) Dean's and Director's Retreat in Sofia, Bulgaria. There was a warm welcome for all concerned by local hosts at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University Sofia. Over two days, a variety of sessions on the core business of **ASPHER** were delivered, including a session on public health workforce professionalisation, specialist training and continued professional development. Other sessions and workshops, such as the **ASPHER** Task Force on War and Public Health, of which Colette is a member, took place.

Colette and Dr Lisa Wandschneider of Bielefeld University, Germany, shared their recent article, *Framing public health education to meet the needs of professionals for war and peacebuilding*. The article looks at adapting the WHO-**ASPHER** Core Competencies for public health professionals and using them to educate about war and public health. Core competencies were high on **ASPHER's** agenda and on the final day there was an interactive workshop on defining core curricula to support the next edition of core competencies for public health professionals.

The next **ASPHER** Dean's and Director's Retreat will be hosted in Dublin in August 2023; an event not to be missed!



ASPHER DEAN and DIRECTORS Retreat delegates



The Irish Delegation, left to right: Karl Conyar, Dr Mary Codd, Dr Maisoon Mairghani, Colette Cunningham and Brian Lynch.



Dr Mary Codd, UCD, and Colette Cunningham, SPH presented at ASPHER workshop on Core Competencies for teaching during emergencies.



## New School of Public Health report on opioid use in Ireland published

Problematic opioid use is a significant problem in Ireland and across the world. However, measuring the prevalence of opioid use is challenging. Given the nature of this population, a simple head-count is not feasible and general population surveys are known to be ineffective at capturing this “hidden” population. Because drug users fear stigmatisation and are often marginalised in society, the **European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)** recommend the use of indirect approaches, such as the capture-recapture method, in order to estimate the prevalence of problematic (high-risk) drug users.

A recent study was conducted by Dr Michael Hanrahan (lead author), Dr Seán Millar (lead PI) and Professor Ivan Perry of the School of Public Health UCC, Dr Karl Phillips and Dr Thomas Reed of the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences UCC and Dr Deirdre Mongan of the HRB. Data on opioid use for the years 2015–2019 were collected from four sources: treatment clinics, GPs, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service. Employing the capture-recapture method, Poisson log-linear models were applied to the overlap data to find the model with the best fit in order to estimate the hidden population not identified by any of the data sources.

Notable findings from the study include the following:

- In total, there were an estimated 19,875 problematic opioid users in Ireland in 2019, which equates to a prevalence rate of 6.68 per 1,000 population.
- The majority of problematic opioid users were male (72.30%) and more than two-thirds (72.93%) of problematic opioid users were in the older 35–64-year-old age group.
- There were an estimated 11,729 problematic opioid users in County Dublin in 2019, with a rate over three times higher there than in the rest of Ireland.
- When examining trends across the years 2015–2019, it was observed that the prevalence of problematic opioid use among younger age groups (15–24-year-olds and 25–34-year-olds) appears to be in decline, while the number of problematic opioid users in the older age group (35–64 years) has increased.

Commenting on the report’s findings Dr Michael Hanrahan, who led on the data collection and analyses, said: “The decline in opioid use among young people is a positive development and could be attributed to the negative image of heroin among young people or the provision of prompt treatment that can break a cycle whereby heroin users introduce the drug to others, or a combination of these factors. However, these findings should also be viewed in light of recent data from the HRB’s National Drug and Alcohol Survey, which found that the use of stimulant-type drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy has increased among younger age groups since 2014.”



- ♦ The full report can be accessed [here](#).
- ♦ An Irish Examiner article detailing findings from the report can be accessed [here](#).
- ♦ A report on findings from the most recent national survey on drug and alcohol use in Ireland can be accessed [here](#).

## SDAU launches expanded research data management services

The **Statistics, Data & Analysis Unit (SDAU)** in the Clinical Research Facility-UCC are pleased to announce the addition of a new staff member, and, with this, an expansion of their services supporting patient-focused research within UCC and across the South/Southwest Hospital Group.

Christine Allan joined the team in late August this year as a Clinical Research Data Manager, working alongside Dr Darren Dahly (Principal Statistician) and Dr Brendan Palmer (Manager of Research Data Services). Christine has an academic background in archaeology and began her career working in cataloguing in the **GLAM (Galleries/Libraries/Archives/Museums)** sector. With additional studies in computer science, she moved into developing and maintaining databases and has most recently worked in cancer research database management.

Now with a strong base in data planning, management and analysis, the **SDAU** can provide support throughout the entire research data lifecycle. This offers the advantage of data management continuity from study conception to close, which is often lost where within-project staff turnover frequently occurs. With funding bodies and academic publishers increasingly demanding good data practices to

fulfil requirements, research data management is more important than ever.

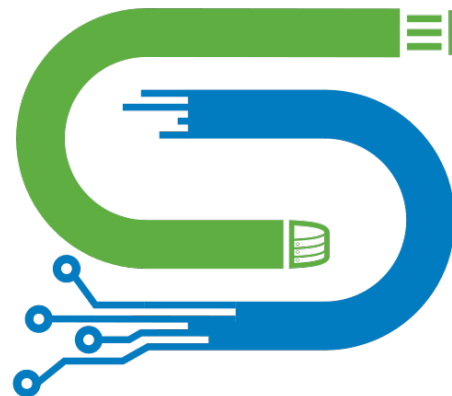
To publicise the availability of their services, the **SDAU** organised a Data Consultancy Clinic in November in association with the CUH Grand Rounds presentation by Professor Richard Greene on Reimagining Clinical Data. Researchers and consultants were given the opportunity to speak with members of the team about their data needs and how they could leverage the expertise provided by **SDAU** in their future projects, namely through availing of embedded supports data management and statistical supports.

Following on from this event, the **SDAU** are planning to organise regular events on the topic of Data Management, with invited speakers and information on supports offered to researchers based in UCC and the wider patient focused health research community. Keep an eye on this newsletter for announcements closer to the time!

In the meantime, if you are planning a new research project with clinical data collection and analysis, you can get in contact with Darren ([ddahly@ucc.ie](mailto:ddahly@ucc.ie)) or Brendan ([b.palmer@ucc.ie](mailto:b.palmer@ucc.ie)) to find out what supports the **SDAU** could offer you and your team.



Christine Allan



## UPDATES FROM THE NSRF

### World Health Organisation Collaborating Centres Meeting

Prof Ella Arensman, Ms Eileen Williamson and Mr Niall McTernan attended a meeting of World Health Organisation Collaborating Centres who are part of the Pan-European Mental Health Coalition in Copenhagen on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. NSRF areas of expertise in relation to key priority areas within the European Framework for action on Mental Health 2021-2025 were discussed.



### 19<sup>th</sup> European Symposium on Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour

Many of the NSRF team presented on a range of topics at the 19<sup>th</sup> European Symposium on Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour in Copenhagen from August 24<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup>. It was great few days of connecting, learning and collaborating with our international colleagues.

Read more about our projects and findings here: <http://nsrf.ie>



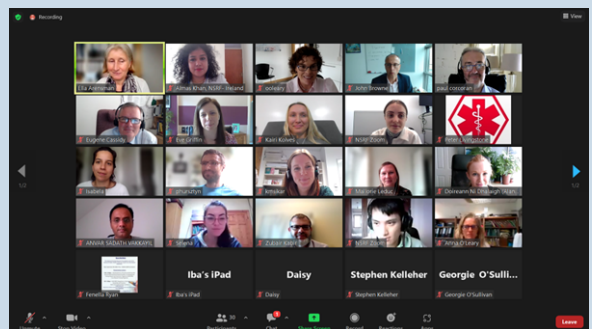
### World Suicide Prevention Day Webinar

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the NSRF hosted a World Suicide Prevention Day Webinar at which the new HRB Ireland Research Training Programme – **MHAINTAIN**, was launched.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdw7s8t8>

An EAAD-Best training demonstration and the iFightDepression website were also highlighted.

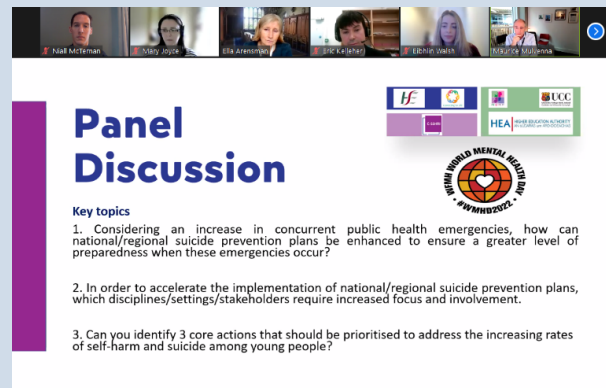
Read more here: <https://eaad-best.eu>.



## World Mental Health Week Webinar

On October 14<sup>th</sup>, the NSRF hosted a *Suicide, Self-Harm and Mental Health* virtual Seminar to mark World Mental Health Day.

The Dr Michael Kelleher Memorial Lecture was delivered by Prof Eamon Keenan, alongside an interactive panel discussion on the topic of 'Future directions in suicide, self-harm and mental health research', Masterclasses and research presentations.



## Launch of findings from Ireland's first Suicide Bereavement Survey

Ireland's First National Suicide Bereavement Survey 'AfterWords - A survey of people bereaved by suicide in Ireland', a collaboration between the NSRF and HUGG, was launched by Minister Mary Butler on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, at an event hosted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Caroline Conroy, at the Mansion House, Dublin.

The launch was followed by a key stakeholder workshop, which generated important action points and priority recommendations to inform service development and policy, along with further research in this area.

Over 80 people also attended a public webinar on November 16<sup>th</sup> which included a presentation of key findings, an overview of next steps and a panel discussion.

## Annual Report for 2021 published

The NSRF'S 2021 Annual Report was published on September 21<sup>st</sup> and is a great way to better understand the work of the NSRF and to learn about all activities in 2021.



## Launch of National Self-Harm Registry Ireland Annual Report 2020

The 2020 Annual Report of the National Self-Harm Registry Ireland was published on November 9<sup>th</sup>, in addition to a data briefing covering the period January-June 2021, utilising data from a sample of 22 hospitals.

2020 report — [access here](#).

2021 Data Briefing — [access here](#).



## NIPC Conference 2022

Clair Haseldine, SPHeRE PhD student, pictured at the recent National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health Conference in Athlone where she presented her poster entitled “Understanding Participation in the online National Diabetes Prevention Programme”. Clair also co-authored a second poster at the conference “Advancing research in cardiovascular disease and diabetes prevention through Public and Patient Involvement (PPI)” with fellow SPH SPHeRE PhD student Edel Burton and with the four other PhD students on their HRB Collaborative Doctoral Award - the Collaborative Doctoral Programme in Chronic Disease Prevention (CDP CDP).



Clair Haseldine at the NIPC Conference



## HIGHLIGHT FROM THE EPH CONFERENCE 2022

Dr. Maria Roura, Dr. Janas Harrington and Dr. Karen Matvienko-Sikar are members of the Steering Group of the Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice in Healthcare initiative led by the HSE Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services. The group is exploring the benefits of Interprofessional Education to help prepare future healthcare professionals to work effectively in interprofessional teams. As part of this work the poster “Public Health in Interprofessional Education” was presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> European Public Health Conference in Berlin, 9-12 Nov, 2022.

## TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS



Prof Ella Arensman, Dr Janas Harrington, and Prof Ivan Perry with Kerrie Gallagher and Lauren O'Mahony.

### Cameron Prize Award from the School of Public Health

Kerrie Gallagher, alongside with previous UCC SPH graduate Lauren O'Mahony, received the Cameron Prize for achieving the highest marks in the final year examination of the Bachelor in Public Health Degree Programme in the last two academic years. The Cameron Medal Ceremony took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November.

In the Ceremony, Professor Emma Wallace delivered a lecture titled '*Medicines optimisation for older community-dwelling people with multimorbidity.*'

## Reflection on coordinating the MSc Occupational Health

*By Dr Caleb Leduc*



With the return of the MSc Occupational Health (blended) cohort to campus in September 2022 there have been many new exciting opportunities to explore! This fall, as I embarked on my first term as Academic Director of the blended programme, I had the privilege of welcoming a diverse cohort of students from a number of industry backgrounds, including healthcare, pharmaceutical, construction, and retail/hospitality.

Back on campus Monday and Thursdays for interactive lecture and learning sessions, the students have completed three modules in the first semester led by myself and Prof John Gallagher offering students a comprehensive introduction to the multi-disciplinarity of occupational health research and practice from a public health perspective.

The Occupational Health and Safety Management in the Workplace module coordinated by Prof Gallagher aimed to give our students an understanding of core principles and practical implementation of modern occupational health and safety practice. Over the term, our students have had the opportunity to learn through both interactive lecture and case study-based sessions supported by a online activities from an experienced group of academic lecturers and occupational health consultants and physicians, including: Dr Kevin O'Sullivan (musculoskeletal disorders), Dr Paola Chavez (mental health), Dr Rozali Athanasaki (medical ethics), Dr Raul Venegas Perez (toxicology), and Dr Mark Rosso (occupational disease reporting in the EU). The students have also enjoyed interactive and hands-on sessions with a Certified Professional Ergonomist (Dr Mallorie Leduc), and an occupational health nurse (Sharon Cleary).

The psychosocial epidemiology module provided an epidemiological and population perspective on occupational health and safety and familiarised students with theoretical frameworks of psychosocial work factors and their measurement. Facilitated by our return to in-person learning, students were able to apply this learning through case study examples of assessing psychosocial risk factors in the workplace and the HSA's Work Positive Tool by Patricia Murray, Senior Organisational Psychologist with the Health and Safety Authority in Ireland who travelled to be with us from Dublin.

Indeed, our return to in-person learning has also opened new doors for our students to apply their learning in a hands-on way, with an on-site visit to an occupational health clinic in Cork city. The site visit provided the opportunity to learn and conduct workplace health screening and surveillance testing protocols and procedures.

As an accredited programme with the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), we were fortunate to host IOSH's Regional Development Manager, Michael Collins, alongside the online MSc cohort for a very informative session on the benefits of IOSH student membership while studying and the accelerated membership opportunities available to them on completion of the programme.

All told, it was a busy yet productive and energising return to campus this fall for the MSc in Occupational Health (blended) programme, and we are already looking forward to the next semester!

## AWARDS

### HRB Knowledge Translation Award (2022) for Dr Sheena McHugh, Dr Fiona Riordan and Dr Claire Kerins from the Health Implementation Research Hub

*Dr Sheena McHugh, Dr Fiona Riordan and Dr Claire Kerins have been awarded a Knowledge Translation Award (KTA) from the Health Research Board. The HRB KTA supports researchers and knowledge users to work together to deliver knowledge translation activities that will improve the exchange of research findings and/or its translation into policy and practice. The KTA will support knowledge translation activities in Dr McHugh's Research Leader Award **CUSTOMISE**.*

First, the team are planning a 'knowledge exchange' seminar for researchers, health professionals, policy makers and people with diabetes. The event will be an opportunity to share research findings from the ongoing study to tailor implementation strategies to support the DAFNE programme. This study is being conducted across hospitals in Ireland. The seminar will also be an opportunity to hear from health professionals and people with diabetes about their experience delivering and participating in DAFNE. Second, the team will design a series of videos explaining the tailoring process. They will use the DAFNE tailoring project as a case study, featuring stories from health professionals who are participating in the study.

The research team will collaborate with the HSE National Clinical Care Programme for Diabetes, Diabetes Ireland and DAFNE UK, the coordinating centre for the DAFNE education programme for Type 1 diabetes being rolled out in Ireland. The project will start in autumn 2023.



Health  
Implementation  
Research Hub



School of  
Public Health

## Open Research Funding



The **National Open Research Forum (NORF)** recently awarded 6 collaborative projects to advance open science in Ireland. The purpose of the grants are to build open research capacity and infrastructure in Ireland, and help to progress national strategic goals for research and innovation under Impact 2030. **Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar, Dr Brendan Palmer and Dr Darren Dahly** are co-applicants on the successful Open Research Training Programme award. This

award will facilitate development of a national open research training programme to enable researchers at all stages of their career to upskill in open research practices. **Dr Brendan Palmer and Dr Darren Dahly** are also co-applicants on the successful National Data Stewardship Network award, which will enable development data stewardship nationally by improving the recognition and professionalisation of data stewards and data stewardship skills. For more information see [here](#).



## School of Public Health Awarded two of UCC's three HRB Investigator Led Projects

*Congratulations to Dr Frances Shiely and Dr Linda O'Keeffe who have both been awarded a prestigious Health Research Board (HRB) Individual Led Project (ILP).*

**Link to press release [here](#).**



Frances Shiely

**Dr Frances Shiely** received €370,000 for her project entitled “Development, validation, and dissemination of the PRECIS-3 tool to support the design of pragmatic randomised controlled trials: Towards making clinical trials part of routine clinical care.” The project will run for 3.5 years.

**Summary:** Delivery of optimum health care is predicated on the availability of high-quality clinical evidence in relevant populations, best realised by randomised controlled trials (RCTs). However, this evidence is typically generated by RCTs using costly, standalone, non-reusable systems which are usually separate from clinical care, have rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, and are conducted under ideal conditions (explanatory RCTs). These lack external validity and may not be applicable to broader populations. We also know, that much of the evidence we rely on to make health care decisions is not of high quality through the use of inappropriate designs, unrepresentative or small samples, incorrect analysis methods or faulty interpretation. Pragmatic RCTs are a key part of the solution; these large-scale trials are embedded within routine clinical care. But, trial teams need guidance on making their trials more pragmatic. PRECIS-2 (Pragmatic Explanatory Continuum Indicator Summary-2) is a tool that provides this guidance. It consists of the PRECIS-2 wheel and table, both embedded in an information package (PRECIS-2 Toolkit). First published in 2009 and updated to PRECIS-2 in 2015 through extensive consultation, it requires another update, because trial design has changed significantly in the intervening period, and users of PRECIS-2 have made recommendations for its improvement. The purpose of our study is to develop the next generation PRECIS-3 tool by: systematically reviewing the existing use of PRECIS-2; engaging with users and nonusers of PRECIS-2 to elicit suggestions for improvement; conducting user interface design testing to assess usability; prospectively testing PRECIS-3 in pragmatic trials in critical care; updating the existing PRECIS-2 website including creating an additional section for patients and the public; and disseminating PRECIS-3 to ensure maximum use. Wide dissemination and use of PRECIS-3 will increase applicability, utility and uptake of RCTs, systematic reviews, guidelines and the care and clinical outcomes that follow.



Linda O'Keeffe

**Dr Linda O'Keeffe's project is entitled** “Social Paths: Sex-specific socioeconomic pathways to cardiovascular disease risk across the life course”.



## Funding success in childhood obesity prevention

**Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar** is a co-applicant on the recently funded “Co-production of a **C**aregivers intervention around **R**esponsive **I**nfant feeding **B**ehaviours to prevent childhood obesity (**CRIB**)” project. This project was funded by a National Institutes for Research (NIHR) Research for Patient Benefit Award. With UK based colleagues, and including participatory stakeholder approaches, the **CRIB** project will develop a responsive feeding intervention to prevent childhood obesity.



Photo source: Unsplash



Karen Matvienko-Sikar

***Congratulations** to **Dr Caroline Daly**,  
National Suicide Research Foundation, for  
winning the best poster presentation award at the  
19th European Symposium on Suicide and  
Suicidal Behaviour in Copenhagen, Denmark,  
for her work on “Preventing intentional  
paracetamol overdose in countries with increasing  
rates and existing sales legislation”.*



Caroline Daly

## MEET–New Staff



Margaret Steele

### Dr Margaret Steele

Dr Margaret (Mags) Steele has recently joined SPH as a post doctoral researcher working on the FEAST project with Dr Janas Harrington. Mags has a PhD in philosophy from Marquette University in the USA and an MSc in Obesity from the University of Galway. She was a lecturer in UCC's philosophy department for many years, teaching Philosophy of Health, Feminist Philosophy and Applied Ethics among others. Her research interests include public health ethics, especially in relation to commercial determinants of health and corporate political activity, as well as philosophy of food, food systems and everything to do with obesity/fatness. She is currently working with her husband to do up a small labourer's cottage outside Newmarket, Co Cork, using second-hand materials and sustainable technology like solar/photo-powered electricity and thermosiphoned hot water.

### Julie Arnott



Julie Arnott in 2022 SHINE Poster

Julie Arnott joined the School of Public Health as Lecturer in Health Protection/Infection Prevention and Control. This year, she was an invited speaker at the SHINE Festival to celebrate International Day of the Girl. Tammy Darcy, 2021 Irish Red Cross Humanitarian of The Year, asked tricky questions about infectious diseases like: What on earth is epidemiology? Has COVID-19 gone away? How do vaccinations work?

Julie previously taught public health on the UCC PLUS Easter School 2022. The UCC PLUS programme aims to increase underrepresented communities with their ability to compete for university places.

In her former role as HSE epidemiologist, Julie led a team to align COVID-19 data across HSE information systems for surveillance and monitoring of the pandemic in Ireland. The team developed a rapid robotic innovation to navigate the national infectious disease reporting system (CIDR) and process data on behalf of Public Health scientists; COVID-19 laboratory records, case notifications, contact-tracing data. This achieved time/cost savings for the eight HSE-Departments of Public Health, enabling the underfunded public health system to cope with COVID-19 caseloads. [Click here to watch an interview for HSE community engagement.](#) In addition, at the Department of Health's request, Julie led a review on Influenza vaccination in Ireland which was presented to the National Immunisation Advisory Committee, resulting in a change to the influenza vaccine for the 2019/2020 influenza season, from trivalent to a quadrivalent vaccine. This increased the protection of vulnerable populations from Influenza in Ireland.



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