



SPH News

The School of Public Health Newsletter

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WELCOME TO THE WINTER-SPRING 2023 EDITION



Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the April 2023 issue of UCC's School of Public Health newsletter.

This issue contains a summary of news updates and achievements from our School, students and staff. Among these achievements, you will find information on the new APHEA accreditation that recognises the continued high quality performance of our School in the training and development of an exceptional public health workforce, an impressive representation of SPH graduates in UCC's Spring Conferring ceremonies, three new SPH holders of Quercus scholarships, two new staff appointments, our most recent publications, and contributions and collaborative activities with colleagues in the National Suicide Research Foundation and the Clinical Research Facility.

We celebrate and congratulate the launch of new research projects, awards, and collaborative activities happening within our local communities, as well as the successful participation in conferences and meetings. The topics addressed in these projects and presentations include implementation research, health inequities, alcohol policy, sustainable diets, health inclusion, childhood obesity prevention, mental health and suicide/self-harm prevention. We also welcome and introduce three new staff members, and the Public Health student Society's newsletter, PH SOC.

Sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition.

Best wishes,

Professor Ella Arensman



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.

ISSUE 31 CREDITS

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SCHOOL NEWS

UCC School of Public Health receives APHEA accreditation

The School of Public Health is delighted to have been awarded accreditation from the **Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA)**, becoming the eighth institute globally to receive the prestigious recognition.

Our *Accredited Institution* award recognises that our School drives the delivery of superior quality in research and advocacy in population health, health services and health systems to address global challenges.

Established by Professor Ivan Perry and his team in 1997, the School of Public Health UCC is the largest and highest-ranking school of public health in Ireland with high-quality teaching and research programmes led by world-leading investigators.

Commenting on the **APHEA** accreditation, Professor Ivan Perry said: *"With COVID-19 and emerging crises including those linked to chronic disease, climate change and biodiversity loss, there is now a clear recognition that we need Public Health graduates to sustain and develop public health systems nationally and internationally. I am delighted that the School of Public Health UCC has received this recognition from the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation. It represents a significant external validation of the quality of teaching, research and public service within the School. I am immensely proud of the work and dedication of my administrative and academic colleagues in the School."*



Pictured left to right: Dr Fiona MacLeod, lecturer in School of Public Health; Prof Ella Arensman, Head of School of Public Health; and Prof Ivan Perry, Founder of the School of Public

APHEA Accredited Institution *(continued from page 2)*



Professor Ella Arensman, Head of School of Public Health UCC and Chief Scientist, National Suicide Research Foundation, said: *"The institutional accreditation of the School of Public Health by APHEA is timely, considering the increased priority given to public health and mental health in terms of the impacts of COVID-19 and other public*

health emergencies. Building on our work during the COVID-19 pandemic, the School of Public Health aims to be at the heart of society's organised efforts to prevent disease and to protect and promote the health and well-being of the population. We will continue to do this by prioritising research that addresses the root causes of disease and the factors that positively promote good health and wellbeing for people of all ages."

Professor Helen Whelton, Head of College of Medicine and Health, UCC welcomed the accreditation: *"This prestigious accreditation is an important milestone in the development of the School and is testament to its work, its leaders and the outstanding team there. As Head of College, I am extremely proud to see the School go from strength to strength and look forward to its next chapter."*

Professor John Middleton, President of Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation said: *"We are delighted to see the quality and range of excellent public health teaching and research being undertaken by SPH of University College Cork. There is a strong ethos of public health values of equity and ethical practice of public health and a strongly supportive environment for students and staff."*

Introducing the School of Public Health UCC Research Champion

In 2022, the university Leadership Team established a sub-committee for Research-Innovation Strategy & Impact, responsible for the development, implementation and oversight of processes, supports and activities that will define a step-change in research culture at UCC and the creation of a distinctive, competitive, global research and innovation reputation.

The sub-committee will be instrumental in supporting **Goal 1 of the UCC Strategic Plan 2023-2028**: *"Delivering impactful research and innovation that addresses global grand challenges in signature areas of excellence, through the UCC Futures Framework, resulting in a distinctive research reputation."* The activities of this sub-committee will be complemented by the Research and Innovation Committee of Academic Council.

As part of the Terms of Reference for this committee, a Research Champion has been nominated for each School and research unit.

Dr Darren Dahly has been nominated for the position of **Research Champion**, which he has kindly accepted. Dr Dahly is Senior Lecturer in Research Methods at the School of Public Health UCC and Principal Statistician for the HRB Clinical Research Facility Cork.



Dr Darren Dahly

In order to ensure consistency, the Research Champion will also fulfill the role of Research and Innovation Lead at School and College level.

Congratulations on this new appointment Dr Dahly!

SPH students received Quercus Undergraduate College Scholarships

The School of Public Health offers our sincere congratulations to our very own Quercus College Scholars: **Etain Cantwell**, **Cormac Mahony** and **Aoibheann Kavanagh**. Well done on this significant achievement!



Pictured left to right: Professor Stephen Byrne, Deputy President & Registrar; Aoibheann Kavanagh; Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine & Health; Etain Cantwell; and Professor Ella Arensman, Head of the School of Public Health.

On 23rd March, the College of Medicine and Health celebrated the achievements of 36 students who received a Quercus Undergraduate College Scholarship at a special event in the Dr Dora Allman Room. The scholarship acknowledges the achievement of a first class honours standard in their University examination in 2022. The event was a great afternoon of celebration for the students, friends and family.

Professor Stephen Byrne, Deputy President and Registrar of UCC, said: *“Excellence fortifies everything we do at UCC and the University recognises exceptional students when they join, as well as those who develop their talents while studying here. I would like to*

congratulate the 36 Quercus College Scholarship recipients and Grace O’Sullivan on becoming Quercus University Academic Scholar for the College of Medicine and Health and commend you all on this remarkable academic achievement.”

Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health, UCC, congratulated all the recipients across the six schools within the College of Medicine and Health: *“Success requires a diverse skillset, meaning that those who come out on top must truly be all-rounders. This entails not only being able to learn and critically appraise material presented to you, but also being a valuable team member, a competent leader and a willing follower, depending on the situation at hand. You have all displayed these abilities in abundance.”*



Etain Cantwell and Professor Helen Whelton



Aoibheann Kavanagh and Professor Helen Whelton

Congratulations to our newest graduates



The Spring Conferings for students graduating in the College of Medicine and Health took place on Wednesday 29th March in UCC's historic Aula Maxima.

Professor Ella Arensman commented: *"It was a very impressive and engaging event, with the School of Public Health being represented with the highest number of students: 70 Masters of Public Health students and 2 students from the MSc in Occupational Health."*

Sincere congratulations to our graduates, we are so proud of you all on your significant academic achievement.

Both Professor John O'Halloran, UCC President, and Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health, were impressed by the number of students graduating from the School of Public Health and they expressed their gratitude to all staff involved in coordinating the programmes and teaching and supervision.

It is both the achievements of the students and staff that make the School proud!



Colette Cunningham is WFHPA Working Group Co-Chair



Colette Cunningham

The World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFHPA) has announced that Colette Cunningham is the newly appointed Co-Chair of the Public Health in Emergencies and Disasters Working Group.

WFHPA is the only worldwide professional society representing and serving the broad field of public health internationally to make a difference in the health of the people in today's globalised world. It represents over 5 million public health professionals worldwide.

Sincere congratulations from the School of Public Health on this major achievement.

Developing a Health Impact Assessment Implementation Model– Enhancing Intersectoral Approaches in Tackling Health Inequalities



The **Health Impact Assessment Implementation Model (HIA-IM)** project is funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) under the Emerging Investigator Award scheme. The project started in January 2023 and will run for four years. Dr Monica O'Mullane is Principal Investigator on the project.

HIA-IM is currently recruiting researchers to the project, a postdoctoral researcher and research assistant. The project includes colleagues from UCC including Professor Ivan Perry, Dr Sheena McHugh, Dr Ger Mullally from the School of Sociology & Philosophy, and Dr Hannah Daly from the Environmental Research Institute. Dr Joanna Purdy (Institute of Public Health Ireland), Professor Uduak Archibong (University of Bradford) and Dr Lisa Pursell (University of Galway) are members of the Steering Group with Sheena and Ger.



The premise of the project is based on our knowledge that incorporating a health focus, drawing on the determinants of health across all publicly designed, funded and implemented policies can help create supportive living environments. We know that marginalized groups in society are particularly vulnerable to policies that do not consider the determinants of health. One established tool and approach developed to create health-focused policies is **Health Impact Assessment (HIA)**. It allows for an analysis of potential or unintended impacts of a policy to be highlighted, and in addressing these impacts, it creates an opportunity to change these policies. In Ireland, we are presented with a unique opportunity to examine **HIA** implementation by capitalising on the synergy of recent policy commitments driving **HIA** implementation. Specifically, the national public health framework Healthy Ireland 2013-2025, and the newly developed all-island Institute of Public Health **HIA** guidance (2021), have coalesced in steering the strategic direction of **HIA**. Building on these policy commitments, **HIA-IM** aims to further strengthen intersectoral policy and practice in tackling health inequalities through the development of an enhanced **HIA** implementation model. The model will be developed by applying an action research methodological approach to the conduct of two **HIAs** in Ireland—one at a local policy level, addressing the Cork City Development Plan, and one at a national policy level addressing the Irish Government's Climate Action Plan. This model will assist stakeholders including state bodies, community groups and the health services in carrying out **HIAs**. Research findings will directly inform the national roll-out of the Institute of Public Health Ireland **HIA** programme. **HIA-IM** is now needed more than ever in order to 'health-proof' public policies, as we cope with challenges such as the global climate emergency. The project will help reduce the risk of policies that impact adversely on health and wellbeing with particular reference to Ireland's marginalised groups.

For more information on HIA-IM, please contact Monica (m.omullane@ucc.ie).

SPH researchers publish new paper on support for evidence-based alcohol policy in Ireland

Alcohol use is a leading risk factor for death and disability and there is a need for evidence-based policy measures to tackle excess alcohol consumption and related harms. A recent UCC-led study examined attitudes towards alcohol control measures among the general public in Ireland in the context of significant reforms undertaken in the Irish alcohol policymaking landscape.

In this research, conducted by Dr Susan Calnan and Dr Seán Millar of the School of Public Health, and Dr Deirdre Mongan of the Health Research Board (HRB), a representative household survey was undertaken in three regions of Cork and Kerry. A total of 1,069 participants took part. Descriptive and univariate analyses were used to examine factors associated with support for alcohol control policy measures.

Notable findings from the study, which has been published in the *European Journal of Public Health*, include the following:

- There is broad public support for evidence-based alcohol policies legislated under Ireland's Public Health (Alcohol) Act. Support was strongest for a ban on alcohol advertising near schools and creches (85.1%) and for warning labels on alcohol products (81.9%). A ban on price promotions and support for minimum unit pricing generated the lowest levels of support overall, although over 50% of respondents still indicated their support for these measures.
- Differences were found in levels of support according to sociodemographic characteristics, alcohol consumption patterns, knowledge of health risks and harms experienced. For example, women were more likely than men to support alcohol control policy measures while participants with harmful alcohol use patterns were significantly less likely to support these measures. Respondents with a greater awareness of the health risks of alcohol also showed higher levels of support.
- Surprisingly, participants who had experienced harms due to other people's drinking showed lower support compared with those who had not experienced such harms. However, this may be partly explained by the fact that these subjects were also more likely to have engaged in harmful alcohol use patterns themselves.

The authors suggest that additional research could help further shed light on reasons for such differences and to help inform strategies aimed at increasing public support for, and understanding of, public health policies related to alcohol use.

The Open Access article can be found here: <https://academic.oup.com/eurpub/advance-article/doi/10.1093/eurpub/ckad031/7067991>.



Photo credit: [Unsplash](#)

How human adaptability can help us transition to healthy and sustainable diets

Article originally published on [FEAST 2030 website](#) on 21st March 2023

“To one degree or another,” writes Michael Pollan in *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, “the question of what to have for dinner assails every omnivore, and always has. When you can eat just about anything nature has to offer, deciding what you should eat will inevitably stir anxiety.” Pollan contrasts the omnivore with a species like the koala, which does not have to – indeed, cannot – choose between different possible food sources. Humans are at the opposite end of the food choice spectrum. We are, so to speak, *superomnivores*. Not only can we eat both plants and animals, but we can mix and synthesise thousands of different plant and animal products, conjuring up an endless stream of edible combinations and concoctions. From Pollan’s point of view, not all these creations are real food; some are merely “edible food-like substances.” The distinction taps into ancient concerns that we humans have become corrupted by greed, laziness, and other vices; that our way of living is no longer natural.

These concerns can be seen in the work of philosophers like Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus, who sought to identify the true nature of humans, and to figure out how we should live in light of that nature.

By cultivating good habits and traits like self-control, curiosity, generosity and self-knowledge, they thought, we could live in harmony with one another and with the cosmos itself. By contrast, the failure to cultivate these virtues would lead to misery. In Plato’s *Republic*, for example, Socrates cautions that giving into the desire for delicious, luxurious, and novel foods sets us on a path to sickness, decadence, and war. Today, this fear is still with us: examples in film, from *Wall-E* to *The Last of Us*, a steady stream of dystopian pop culture artifacts purport to show us what will happen if we don’t stop eating flour, sugar, or junk food.

It is tempting to think that there is some specific diet or way of eating that is natural for all humans, to which we must all return if we want to avoid such a catastrophic future. And indeed, there are some principles that seem to recur across different times and cultures. Strikingly, for example, the healthy diet described by Socrates in *Republic* sounds quite like what we now call the Mediterranean diet, and it also neatly matches Pollan’s suggestion that we should “eat food, not too much, mostly plants.”

Others, however, argue that our true nature is to eat like our Palaeolithic ancestors, while still others suggest that redemption lies in eating intuitively, following the natural cues and rhythms of our bodies.

The bad news is that, even if we did all agree on which is the natural way for humans to eat, currently, it probably would not be possible for the vast majority of humans. But the good news is that change is possible, and it doesn’t require us all to eat the same way. With enough buy-in from individuals, communities and, especially, the public and private sectors, we can foster food systems that enable diverse diets that are healthy and sustainable without being rigid or uniform. Whatever else human nature is, it is adaptable – perhaps more than any other animal. There is no one diet that is natural for all humans, but as ‘super-omnivores’, it is in our nature to get nourishment from an almost infinite variety of sources. That physiological openness, allied with an equal openness to new ideas, and to our fellow humans in all their diversity and vulnerability, might just be our salvation.

Author: Margarete Steele



First Inclusion Health Forum in Cork held at UCC

The Inclusion Health Research Group (IHRG) in the College of Medicine and Health held an 'Inclusion Health Forum' on 22nd March 2023, at the UCC Mardyke Pavilion. Mary Cronin, Co-Convenor of the IHRG and lecturer in the School of Public Health, chaired both the organising committee and the keynote address, which focused on a participatory study to develop a Traveller Mental Wellness Continuum Framework. The keynote was delivered by Mary Nevin, a Traveller peer-researcher and Jacopo Villani, Program Manager for HSE Mental Health Engagement and Recovery. Professor Ella Arensman, Head of the School of Public Health, is a member of the study advisory group.



Pictured left to right: Mary Nevin, Longford Traveller Primary Healthcare and Traveller Peer-researcher; Mary Cronin, Co-Convenor of IHRG and SPH lecturer; and Jacopo Villani, Programme Manager, HSE Mental Health Engagement and Recovery.

Inclusion Health is a growing approach in which those with lived experience of social exclusion, health professionals and researchers collaborate to develop impactful initiatives to reduce marginalisation and promote social inclusion within health service provision, and thus work together to reduce health inequities.

The Inclusion Health Forum, chaired by IHRG Convenor Angela Flynn, had over 80 attendees bringing together people from community representative agencies, people with lived experience of marginalisation, staff from hospital and community health services, along with academics from UCC, for a very successful information sharing and networking event. The event was generously supported by Carol Kelleher and Emmy Racine of PPI Ignite@UCC. Three MPH students volunteered at the event – Ann Ogafor, Lauren Muttucomaroe and Shraddha Ghosalkar.



Inclusion Health Forum Organising Committee. Left to right: Carol Condon, Ciara O'Toole, Mary Cronin, Ann Ogafor, Angela Flynn, Shraddha Ghosalkar, Margaret Curtin, Lauren Muttucomaroe and Carol Kelleher.

Professor Helen Whelton addressed the event and spoke of her own experiences of working with marginalised communities, emphasising the need to impact at policy level to achieve progress on health inequalities.

After the keynote address there were seven rapid fire presentations addressing a broad range of Inclusion Health topics including the role of the inclusion health nurse, homeless and addiction services, infant and early childhood development, inclusion of people with an intellectual disability, inclusive sexual health promotion, the health of migrants, especially those in direct provision, and the impact of trauma on health. The event concluded with a networking lunch during which there was great energy and lots of new contacts developed.

Inclusion Health Forum *(continued from page 9)*

The **IHRG** is now working to develop an inter-sectoral Inclusion Health Network in Cork.

If you're interested in joining the **IHRG** and/or the Inclusion Health Network please contact Mary Cronin at mary.cronin@ucc.ie or Angela Flynn at angela.flynn@ucc.ie. New members are very welcome!



Inclusion Health Forum Guest Speakers. Left to right: Angela Flynn, IHRG Convenor & School of Nursing and Midwifery; Naomi Masheti, Cork Migrant Centre; Eilish Neally, HSE Cork-Kerry Homeless & Addiction Services; Eibhlín Collins, Inclusion Health Nurse, Mercy University Hospital; Niamh Harrington, Advocate for people with an Intellectual Disability; Grace Walsh, Let's Grow Together! Infant & Childhood Partnership; Joe Kirby, HSE Cork-Kerry Homeless & Addiction Services; Mary Nevin, Longford Traveller Primary Healthcare & Traveller Peer-researcher; Jacopo Villani, HSE Mental Health Engagement & Recovery; Derval Mc Donagh, Inclusion Ireland; Ciara O'Toole, IHRG & School of Clinical Therapies;

Sharon Lambert, School of Applied Psychology; and Mary Cronin, Co-Convenor of IHRG & SPH.

Launch of the Standardised Measurement for Childhood Obesity Prevention (SCOPE) project!

The SCOPE project is funded by a Health Research Board Emerging Investigator Award to Principal Investigator Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar. The aim of the SCOPE project is to develop a **Standardised Outcome Measurement Set (SOMS)**, including reliable, valid, and appropriate measures of core infant-feeding outcomes for implementation in research and practice. Developing a **SOMS** will enhance synthesis and evaluation of childhood obesity prevention interventions.

Full details of the project, the project team, and news and events can be found at the project website:

www.eiascope.com.



SCOPE

Standardised measurement for
Childhood Obesity Prevention



Launch of Healthy Campus research project

A new joint research project has been launched aimed at informing implementation of the Healthy Campus Charter at University College Cork (UCC) and Munster Technological University (MTU).

Healthy Campus is a framework through which Higher Education institutions can address locally identified needs and national health priorities using a whole-campus approach. It recognises the unique role that Higher Education institutions can play in a range of areas, including promoting health and well-being among both students and staff. The Healthy Campus framework aligns with both national and international priorities. At a national level, it supports the vision of Healthy Ireland, a strategic framework for the improved health and well-being of the Irish population.

In January 2023, UCC and MTU signed the Healthy Campus Charter, acknowledging their commitment to implementing evidence-based, best-practice national policies across key lifestyle domains including (but not limited to) physical activity, obesity, tobacco, alcohol and drugs, mental health and sexual health, in a way that addresses local needs.

The Healthy Campus Research Project will comprise three main components:

- A baseline survey of student/staff health and well-being at UCC and MTU;
- A stakeholder mapping of health-related services and programmes at UCC and MTU;
- Pre-implementation focus groups with key informants at UCC and MTU on perceived barriers/facilitators and recommended supports for implementation of the Healthy Campus Charter.

The core Healthy Campus research project team includes Dr Michael Byrne, Project PI and Head of Student Health, UCC; Dr Andrea Bickerdike, MTU, Project Co-Lead; and Dr Susan Calnan, Research Support Officer, and Dr Seán Millar, Data Analyst – both from the School of Public Health, UCC.

For further information on the Healthy Campus research project, please email Dr Susan Calnan at: susan.calnan@ucc.ie.

Healthy Campus research project team below:



Dr Michael Byrne
Project PI



Dr Andrea Bickerdike
Project Co-Lead



Dr Susan Calnan
Research Support Officer



Dr Seán Millar
Data Analyst



Lauren Muttucomaroe
Research Assistant



Viviane Oliveira
Research Assistant

Undergraduate student publication

Congratulations to Anna Daly, BSc Biological and Chemical Sciences, Year 3, who recently published in the Journal of Clinical Epidemiology with Dr Frances Shiely. The paper is available for reading here: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2023.02.023>



Photo credit: [Unsplash](#)

Launch of the Professor Tadhg O'Mullane Award for Academic Excellence in the School of Microbiology



Photo- Tadhg and Eileen (nee Barry) O'Mullane on their wedding day, 24th June 1945. They were married in the Honan Chapel UCC.

Professor O'Mullane started to work in UCC in 1961 until his retirement in 1984 as Professor of Dairy and Food Microbiology and Head of the Department of Dairy and Food Microbiology (now the School of Microbiology). He brought a shrewd business approach to UCC and became the driving force behind the development and diversification of the Faculty of Dairy Science; he was involved in, or was responsible for, many of the developments during the next 20 years. One of the most important of these was the establishment of a BSc Degree programme in Microbiology, initially as a General and later at an Honours level which has become the flagship degree for the School of Microbiology. He lectured in the area of dairy and food microbiology throughout his time at UCC and became Dean of the Faculty of Dairy Science in 1967, a post he held until 1976. He forged many links with US universities in the 60s and 70s, at a time when it was quite innovative to do so, and his dedication and devotion to UCC contributed magnificently to the development of what are now the thriving disciplines of Food Science, Nutrition and Microbiology in UCC.

Dr Monica O'Mullane : *"Many thanks to the School of Microbiology and to my family, the Professor Tadhg O'Mullane Award for Academic Excellence has been established."*

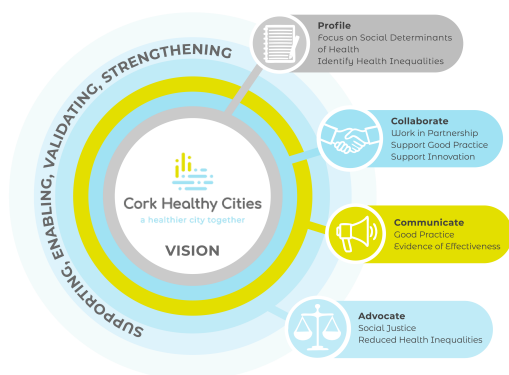


Monica (hasn't changed a bit 😊) and her grandparents, August 1983

Dr Monica O'Mullane: *"This scheme awards the top-scoring student in the third year of the BSc in Microbiology, UCC. Luckily my childhood coincided with Grandad's retirement, so we spent a lot of time together. My most treasured memories are the science lessons we did. When I started secondary school, every Wednesday for those six years I would go to my grandparent's home in Bishopstown. Grandad would have prepared a science lesson, complementing whatever I was studying in science at school. I cherished those times then, as I do the memories now. His influence on me was enormous, and certainly informed my career choice of research and academia. I remember his passion for science; I have that also for my own work. I'm delighted with this Award, as I'm sure he would be too, commemorating his memory in support of student learning and encouragement."*

Denise Cahill, Coordinator of Cork Healthy Cities, joined the SPH Civic and Community Engagement Committee

Health can be improved or harmed by social policy, transport policy, education policy and the built environment and has a particular impact on vulnerable groups in society. European health policy 'Health2020' puts increased emphasis on, and brings new evidence on, the right to health, equity, well-being and health in all policies through whole-of-government and whole of-society approaches.



Action Plan 2020-2030: Cork Healthy Cities

Cork is a designated World Health Organisation (WHO) Healthy City since January 2012. With this designation is a requirement of the local authority to commit to health and to plan and implement a process and structure to achieve it. A WHO Healthy City is one that continually creates and improves its physical and social environments and expands the community resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential. Healthy Cities is based on a recognition that population health is not merely a product of health sector activities but largely determined by policies and actions beyond the health sector.

Cork Healthy Cities Vision: A city that connects to improve the health and well-being of all its people and reduce health inequalities. SUPPORTING, VALIDATING, ENABLING, STRENGTHENING.

In November 2021 Cork City was officially designated by the WHO into Phase VII of the European Healthy Cities Network. This provides a strong European mandate for the delivery of the Cork Healthy Cities Action Plan 2020-2030. For more information go to <https://corkhealthycities.com/>.

UCC is a strong and active member of the Cork Healthy Cities steering group. Denise Cahill, Coordinator of Cork Healthy Cities, is a member of the School of Public Health Civic and Community Engagement Committee (CCEC) and is committed to the development of community engagement within the School, through the involvement of Cork Healthy Cities.

Cork Healthy Cities has worked with several departments, students and staff across the School of Public Health progressing work at community level from research to student placements, funding proposals and advisory groups over the past 10 years and will actively contribute to the School's CCEC for the next two years.



Photo credit: Cork Independent. Lord Mayor of Cork Cllr Colm Kelleher with An Taoiseach Micheal Martin, along with from left, Denise Cahill, co-ordinator and Judy Cronin, chairperson of Cork Healthy Cities, with Cllr Tony Fitzgerald and Adrienne Rodgers, Director of Services.

SPH represented at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Faculty of Public Health Medicine Winter Scientific Meeting

The Faculty of Public Health Medicine Winter Scientific Meeting took place on 7th December 2022 at No 6 Kildare Street. The event featured keynote speakers across the spectrum of public health. Multiple researchers from the School of Public Health UCC presented at this conference.



Aileen Callanan, Prof Patricia Kearney and Edel Burton at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, Faculty of Public Health Medicine Winter Scientific Meeting

Professor Patricia Kearney delivered an oral presentation on “Cross-sectional survey of compliance behaviour, knowledge and attitudes among cases and close contacts during COVID-19 pandemic”.

Irene Gorman, MPH Student supervised by Dr Éilis O'Reilly, delivered a poster presentation entitled “Neurological and cognitive outcomes from heading the football in female soccer players: a systematic review”.

Edel Burton, PhD Scholar, delivered an oral presentation entitled “Temporal trends

of ambulance times for suspected stroke/transient ischaemic attack before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland: a retrospective cohort study” and a poster presentation entitled “Effects of the covid-19 pandemic on prehospital emergency care for adults with stroke/transient ischaemic attack: systematic review and meta-analysis”.

Aileen Callanan, PhD researcher, presented the findings of a pilot opportunistic atrial fibrillation screening programme entitled “Atrial Fibrillation screening in primary care in Ireland: results of a pilot screening programme”. This oral presentation outlined the key findings of the study.



Irene Gorman presenting a research poster in Dublin

Association of University Departments of General Practice in Ireland and Irish College of General Practitioners Joint Conference in Galway

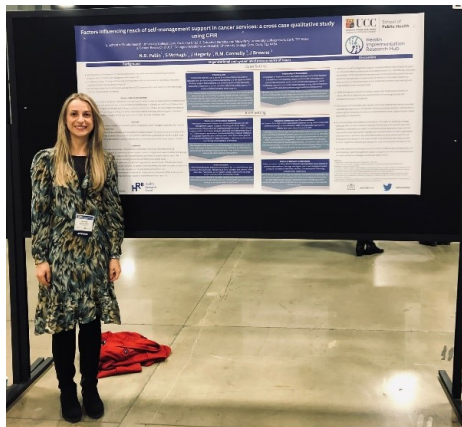
Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar was invited to deliver a **plenary talk** at the **Association of University Departments of General Practice in Ireland (AUDGPI)** and the **Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP)** Joint Conference in University of Galway on 3rd March.

Dr Matvienko-Sikar's talk, entitled “Interventions and outcomes in childhood obesity prevention trials in practice”, focused on current issues in childhood obesity prevention, development of an infant feeding intervention to prevent childhood obesity (the CHERISH intervention), and measurement of infant feeding outcomes to prevent childhood obesity.



Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar delivering a plenary talk at the AUDGPI & ICGP Joint Conference in Galway last March

15th Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Health: Washington D.C.



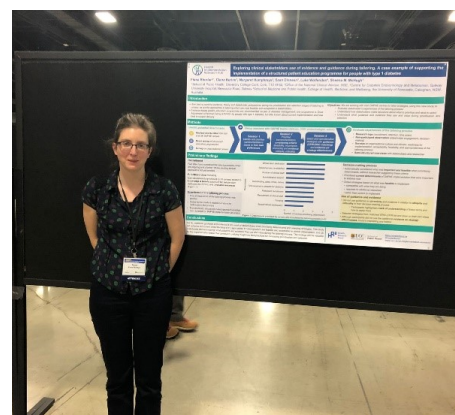
Ms Nickola Pallin, presenting author

Dr Fiona Riordan, Postdoctoral Researcher in the SPH, and Ms Nickola Pallin, SPHeRE PhD student, presented posters at the 15th Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Health in Washington DC from 11th to 14th December, 2022. The conference represents a leading multidisciplinary implementation research conference and was co-hosted by the US National Institutes of Health and *AcademyHealth*.

Nickola presented a poster on “Factors influencing reach of self-management support in cancer services: a cross case qualitative

study using the consolidated framework for implementation research”.

Fiona presented a poster on an ongoing study entitled “Exploring clinical stakeholder’s use of evidence and guidance during tailoring. A case example of supporting the implementation of a structured patient education programme for people with Type 1 diabetes”.



Dr Fiona Riordan, presenting author

HRB TMRN Summer Scholarships

Dr Frances Shiely was recently awarded three HRB TMRN summer studentships which will support 3 undergraduate students in Summer 2023. The three projects are:

1. How we use and process sensitive data and samples collected from trial participants: what would patients and the public would prefer?
2. How are trial teams recording and reporting information on disability?
3. Exclusions for lacking capacity: who assesses capacity and how?

Congratulations to Amy O'Connor

One of our undergraduate students, Amy O'Connor, just got a short peer-reviewed report published, in *Clinical and Experimental Allergy* ([available here](#)). Amy did this work as part of her work placement last year which was followed by a College Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) Award.



Amy O'Connor at SPHeRE Network Conference

Amy is a year four BSc Public Health student, so it is a great achievement. She also had an oral presentation at SPHeRE Network 9th Annual Conference in Dublin.

UPDATES FROM THE NSRF

First and second webinars of the MHAINTAIN Research Training Network

On 22nd November 2022, the National Science Research Foundation (NSRF) hosted the first webinar of the MHAINTAIN Research Training Network, including presentations on:

- PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES AND THE IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR;
- CANCER AND THE IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR;
- ELIMINATING MIND BODY DUALISM: THE INTEGRATION OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH IN CHILDREN; AND
- YOUTH IN PAEDIATRIC CARE.

The second webinar of the MHAINTAIN network took place on Tuesday 28th March 2023, which included a research presentation by Dr Kirsten Barnicot from City University of London.

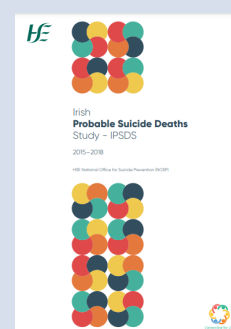


Irish Probable Suicide Deaths Study 2015-2018 published

Dr Katerina Kavalidou is a co-author on the Irish Probable Suicide Deaths Study (IPSDS). This report from the IPSDS contains information on 2,349 deaths that occurred during the period 2015–2018. The aims of the IPSDS are to:

- improve understanding of the demographic, social and clinical characteristics of those who die by probable suicide in Ireland, using a broad definition of a suicide death;
- identify risk factors for probable suicide; and
- inform the planning, implementation and evaluation of suicide prevention measures in Ireland.

Download the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/4t39mu7m>



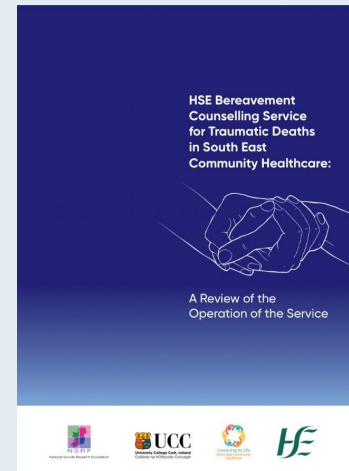
First independent review of the HSE Bereavement Counselling Service for Traumatic Deaths in South East Community Healthcare published

Led by Dr Eve Griffin and Dr Selena O'Connell, with the support of HSE Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, Tracy Nugent, findings indicate that the HSE Bereavement Counselling Service for Traumatic Deaths in **South East Community Healthcare (SECH)** service has a vital role in providing therapy for individuals bereaved by suicide by:

1. Utilising existing community resources, and
2. Providing a free service with a minimal waiting time.

Recommendations include:

- Further resourcing the existing service as a standalone bereavement service.
- Exploring the feasibility of establishing a similar model in other regions.
- Expanding the service criteria to key groups, including other sudden deaths and young people.



Read the NRSF/HSE report in full here: tinyurl.com/3f6nsvr8.

Generation Hope: Youth Suicide Prevention Conference

Professor Ella Arensman, Chief Scientist at the National Science Research Foundation, presented a keynote lecture on 'Self-harm and suicide in young people: associated risk factors, evidence-based interventions and protective factors' at the Generation Hope: Youth Suicide Prevention Conference in Belfast on 27th February 2023.



In Conversation With...
Dr Caroline Daly



National Suicide
Research Foundation



National Office for
Suicide Prevention



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

An overview of self-harm involving
paracetamol overdose and
ongoing prevention interventions

Dr Caroline Daly delivered a webinar on 'self-harm involving paracetamol overdose and ongoing prevention interventions' as an invited guest of the Irish Institute of Pharmacy on 23rd November 2022.

Cork-Kerry Alliance Against Depression Launch Seminar

The NSRF hosted the Cork-Kerry Alliance Against Depression Launch Seminar on 2nd March 2023 in Nano Nagle Place, Cork City, including:

- ♦ An overview of EAAD-Best Ireland. For more information, visit: <https://eaad-best.eu>;
- ♦ Stakeholder presentations including delegates from the Irish College of General Practitioners, the Irish Prison Service and the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention; and
- ♦ Panel discussion, covering how EAAD Best can contribute to addressing gaps and challenges and long-term sustainability in Cork/Kerry, including within Connecting for Life.



First Digital Mental Health Research Exchange

The NSRF's Niall McTernan and Dr Paul Corcoran attended the first 'Digital Mental Health Research Exchange' on 9th March.

We look forward to further collaboration in this space.

Thank you to Ian Power, CEO of Spunout, for organising!



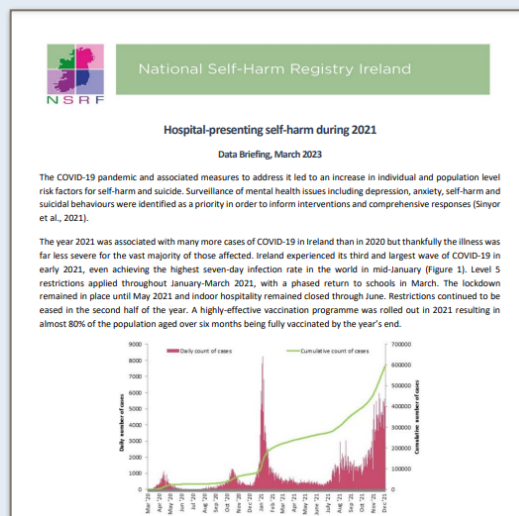
National Self-Harm Registry Ireland Data Briefing and Community Healthcare Area reports published

The National Self-Harm Registry Ireland Team published data by **Community Health Care Organisation (CHO)** Area in March.

Access reports for **CHO** Areas 1-8 here: <https://www.nsr.ie/registry-reports-and-publications/>.

An update on monthly hospital-presenting self-harm during 2021, utilising data from a sample of 24 hospitals, is also available here: <https://tinyurl.com/m2h92btb>.

- Overall, the rate of hospital-presenting self-harm to the 24 hospitals with available data was just 1.6% lower in 2021 than it was in 2018-2019.
- The rate in January 2021, at the peak of the third wave of COVID-19 and start of the third lockdown, was 22% lower than it was in January 2018-2019.
- The rate increased across the four months of lockdown and in April 2021, the rate was 44% higher than in January and 12% higher than in April 2018-2019.
- Coinciding with the easing of restrictions in May, the self-harm rate fell by 21%, a reduction that meant the rate in May 2021 was 15% lower than in May 2018-2019.
- For the remaining seven months of 2021, the rate of hospital-presenting self-harm was similar to the rate for the equivalent month in 2018-2019.



Cork Film Festival Panel Discussion

NSRF researcher Dr Eve Griffin participated in a panel discussion at the Cork Film Festival on 12th November 2022.

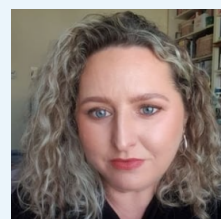
A WHO resource for filmmakers and others working on stage and screen, including contributions from several of the NSRF team, can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/237mek3e>.





Why new obesity drugs are not a magic bullet for weight loss

Congratulations to Dr. Margaret Steele, a post-doctoral researcher with the School of Public Health, who just had an article published on RTE Brainstorm having attended the UCC/Brainstorm workshop organised by Joe Leogue earlier this month.



Dr Margaret Steele

To read Dr. Steel's article, click [here](#).

Well done to Margaret on this excellent article. Great to see another RTE Brainstorm success!

NEW PODCAST ALERT

Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar recorded a podcast episode for the Narrowing the Void podcast. The podcast aims to raise awareness of important topics in medical research and clinical practice and also promotes public patient involvement by speaking with patient advocates on the show. It is run by Brian Curtin and Mark Vesey, who are both students in UCC.

Dr Matvienko-Sikar spoke about research on childhood obesity perinatal mental health, including health behavior change and intervention development. The episode can be accessed in the Narrowing the Void podcast: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/0Pq9wYRooKS0WQXsartrMo>.



Cork's Lifelong Learning Festival 2023



Dr Janas Harrington was invited to speak at the Cork Learning Cities Festival as part of a panel discussion on Lifelong Learning for Health in Cities.

The dates for the 2023 festival were 27th Monday March - 2nd April 2023.

AWARDS

Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Award

Mary Cronin, of the School of Public Health, is one of nine colleagues from the College of Medicine's Inclusion Health Research Group (IHRG), who successfully collaborated on an application for Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement funding from Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL), UCC.

Involving representatives from all six schools in the College of Medicine and Health (CoMH), and the Graduate Attributes Programme Manager, in February, the applicants were collectively awarded €25,461 to undertake the *INCLUDE* study which will map current curriculum content related to Inclusion Health in taught programmes across CoMH and develop a repository of 'reusable learning objects' related to this area.

Congratulations to the collaborators (listed below):

Dr Margaret Bermingham – School of Pharmacy

Prof Anthony Roberts – Cork University Dental School and Hospital

Dr Geri McLoughlin – School of Nursing and Midwifery

Dr Helen Kelly – School of Clinical Therapies

Dr Ciara O'Toole – School of Clinical Therapies

Dr Angela Flynn – School of Nursing and Midwifery

Dr Gabriella Rizzo – School of Medicine

Adel Colman – Graduate Attributes Programme Manager

Funding success in childhood obesity prevention



Dr Karen Mativenko-Sikar is a Co-Investigator on a successful Flinders Caring Futures Institute Accelerator Scheme 2024-2025 grant. The funded project is

TOPCHILD-translate: Understanding end-users' needs for

an implementation-ready evidence base for the prevention of obesity in young children. The project seeks to 1) generate an understanding the needs and expectations of end-users for a flexible elements evidence base; 2) identify facilitators and barriers for end-users to use a flexible elements evidence base; 3) conduct a realist evaluation to determine how the flexible elements evidence base will work for which end-users, in what context, and why or why not.

RCSI Oral Presentation Award

Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar was awarded an oral presentation award at the 42nd Annual Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) International Nursing & Midwifery Research and Education Conference. The conference was held on 22nd and 23rd March in the RCSI, Dublin. Dr Matvienko-Sikar presented on "Modifiable and non-modifiable vulnerability factors for perinatal stress and anxiety".



MEET

Two new researchers join the Health Implementation Research Hub (HIRH) team



Dr Jane Murphy



Ms Laura-Jane McCarthy

Dr Jane Murphy (Postdoctoral Researcher) and Laura-Jane McCarthy (Research Assistant) have joined the [HIRH](#).

Jane Murphy previously worked on the Horizon2020 **SEURO** (Scaling **EURO**pean citizen driven transferable and transformative digital health) project at Trinity College Dublin (TCD). In **SEURO**, Jane applied health psychology to the development and evaluation of digital health behaviour change interventions, focusing on older adults managing multi morbidity. In 2021, she completed her PhD research on digital health interventions to support medication adherence in young adults living with asthma, at the School of Psychology, University of Galway. Jane has worked on several research projects and co-supervised postgraduate students conducting research in digital health and self-management of chronic conditions across the lifespan including hypertension, type II diabetes and asthma. She has contributed to teaching on a range of programmes in the School of Psychology and College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences at University of Galway, and the School of Nursing & Midwifery at TCD. Jane's research interests include behaviour change, self-management of chronic conditions and implementation science.

Laura-Jane McCarthy graduated from UCC with a bachelor's degree in Nursing (General). More recently, she completed a Master's degree in Public Health at UCC. Laura-Jane's interests include health protection, global health equity, healthcare quality improvement and implementation science.

Both Jane and Laura-Jane will be working with the team on an update of the Cochrane review entitled "Tailored interventions to address determinants of professional practice" and on a scoping review to characterise the processes and outcomes of tailoring. In addition, Laura-Jane will provide research support for an ongoing national study to develop tailored strategies to enhance the implementation of DAFNE, a patient education programme for people with type 1 diabetes. Jane will lead the evaluation of the tailoring approach.

New to the School! DR MONICA O'MULLANE



I'm thrilled to have joined the School of Public Health, UCC! I started in January 2023 with my project HIA-IM, funded by the HRB under the Emerging Investigator Award 2022 scheme.

Career pathway. My career trajectory has been a winding one for sure! My educational background is politics and health, with a BSc in Government (UCC), Masters in Health Promotion (University of Galway), and back to UCC in the Department of Government & Politics to complete my PhD on the use of HIA in local policy across the island of Ireland. I published a book on that work (HIA and Policy Development) and edited a book on the Integration of HIA with Policy

Processes, which is a collection of experiences from across the globe on using evidence from HIA in contextualised and creative ways. I also carried out a study of HIA implementation in Slovakia, where I worked as a lecturer in the Department of Public Health, Trnava University.

During my time in Trnava I also worked on consultancy projects for the ECDC. I was team lead on two EC funded consortium projects. ACTION-FOR-HEALTH, where we developed action plans with local authorities in tackling health inequalities; and GENOVATE, where we developed gender equality action plans to transform organisational culture for research and innovation in our own universities. It was an incredible experience working in Slovakia. It was a baptism of fire, living and working in a completely new language and in a very different cultural and working context. However it blew open so many opportunities for me and pushed me to my limits in many good ways. My husband Peter, daughter Petra and myself moved to Cork in 2018, where I started my Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (MSCA) fellowship in ISS21, UCC. The move has been a really good for the three of us. We remain close to our family in Slovakia and love visiting when we can. We produced this [Mother tongues podcast](#) for RTE Junior if you'd like to check it out!

Interests. I'm really passionate about ways of working across sectors to enhance health and wellbeing. I'm currently focused on HIA as way to enable intersectoral partnership working. Another effective way of working for health in an intersectoral way is the WHO Healthy Cities platform. I'm a member of the Cork Healthy Cities Steering Group with Michelle Syron from the School.

In terms of personal interests, the book I'm currently reading is The Patriarchs by Angela Saini. Thanks to Ivan for the suggestion as it's an excellent read—highly recommended. In my spare time, I love to nap!

Current projects. I'm PI on the HIA-IM project. Although my MSCA project GendeResearchIreland, which explored the process of embedding gender equality in Irish higher education through the Athena SWAN Ireland Charter is finished, I continue to publish and present from the work. I recently created a [video](#) from that project if you'd like to check it out. I have been invited to publish a chapter from the project's study in an upcoming HEA funded book. Regarding other projects and endeavours, I am co-PI on an NIHR project (Developing Methods for Systems-Informed Health Impact Assessments (System-HIA)), advisor on an EPA funded project (Toolkit for Proportionate and Consistent Consideration of Population and Human Health in Strategic Environmental Assessment) and a member of the HIA Section in EUPHA.

Fun facts. I'm a massive Elvis Presley fan! When I visited Graceland in 2006, I got to sit in the blue suede chair in the Elvis radio station, interviewed by George Stein, one of Elvis' close friends.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Buckley D, McHugh SM, Riordan F. What works to recruit general practices to trials? A rapid review. *HRB open res.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.12688/hrbopenres.13650.1>
- Buckley C, Treweek S, Laidlaw L, Shiely F. Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in outcome selection in breast cancer and nephrology trials. *Trials.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-022-06980-9>
- Calnan S, Millar SR, Mongan D. Support for evidence-based alcohol policy in Ireland: results from a representative household survey. *Eur J Public Health.* 2023 [Online ahead of print]
- Cousins G, Durand L, O’Kane A, Tierney J, Maguire R, Stokes S, O’Reilly D, Arensman E, Bennett KE, Vázquez MO, Corcoran P. Prescription drugs with potential for misuse: protocol for a multi-indicator analysis of supply, detection and the associated health burden in Ireland between 2010 and 2020. *BMJ open.* 2023 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2022-069665>
- Doyle A, O’Dwyer C, Mongan D, Millar SR, Galvin B. Factors associated with public awareness of the relationship between alcohol use and breast cancer risk [In press]
- Escañuela Sánchez T, Matvienko-Sikar K, Meaney S, O’Donoghue K. Exploring first-time mothers’ experiences and knowledge about behavioural risk factors for stillbirth. *Health Expect.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.13662>
- Greiner BA, Leduc C, O’Brien C, Cresswell-Smith J, Rugulies R, Wahlbeck K, Abdulla K, Amann BL, Pashoja AC, Coppens E, Corcoran P. The effectiveness of organisational-level workplace mental health interventions on mental health and wellbeing in construction workers: A systematic review and recommended research agenda. *PLoS One.* 2022
- Kavalidou K, Daly C, McTernan N, Corcoran P. Presentations of self-harm and suicide-related ideation among the Irish Traveller indigenous population to hospital emergency departments: evidence from the National Clinical Programme for self-harm. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-023-02439-7>
- Kenny TA, Woodside JV, Perry IJ, Harrington JM. Consumer attitudes and behaviors toward more sustainable diets: a scoping review. *Nutr Rev.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1093/nutrit/nuad033>
- McCarthy M, Gillies K, Rousseau N, Wade J, Gamble C, Toomey E, Matvienko-Sikar K, Sydes M, Dowling M, Bryant V, Biesty L. Qualitative data sharing practices in clinical trials in the UK and Ireland: towards the production of good practice guidance. *HRB open res.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.12688/hrbopenres.13667.1>
- McLoughlin A, Sadath A, McMahon E, Kavalidou K, Malone K. Associations between humiliation, shame, self-harm and suicidal behaviours among adolescents and young adults: A systematic review protocol. *PLoS one.* 2022 <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0278122>
- McMahon EM, Hemming L, Robinson J, Griffin E. Suicide and self harm in young people. *Front Psychiatry.* 2022 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2022.1120396>
- O’Connor A, McCarthy FP, Kelly L, Khashan AS, Maher GM. Mode of delivery and asthma in childhood and adolescence: Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study. *Clin Exp Allergy.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1111/cea.14282>
- Pope J, Redsell S, Houghton C, Matvienko-Sikar K. Healthcare professionals’ experiences and perceptions of providing support for mental health during the period from pregnancy to two years postpartum. *Midwifery.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2022.103581>
- Riordan F, Kerins C, Pallin N, Albers B, Clack L, Morrissey E, Curran GM, Lewis CC, Powell BJ, Presseau J, Wolfenden L. Characterising processes and outcomes of tailoring implementation strategies in healthcare: a protocol for a scoping review. *HRB open res.* 2022 <https://doi.org/10.12688/hrbopenres.13507.2>
- Rychlickova J, Nagy V, Shiely F, Cechova Z, Nebeska K, Mouly S, Kovacs GL, Nemeth A, Oliveira T, Maia S, Batuca J. Training clinical trial teams of the future: open online teaching programs. *Eur J Clin Pharmacol.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00228-022-03426-8>
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- Sadath A, Troya MI, Nicholson S, Cully G, Leahy D, Costa AP, Benson R, Corcoran P, Griffin E, Phillip E, Cassidy E. Physical and mental illness comorbidity among individuals with frequent self-harm episodes: A mixed-methods study. *Front Psychiatry.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1121313>

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- Shiely F, Daly A. Trial lay summaries were not fit for purpose. *J Clin Epidemiol.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2023.02.023>
- Staines L, Healy C, Corcoran P, Keeley H, Coughlan H, McMahon E, Cotter P, Cotter D, Kelleher I, Wasserman C, Brunner R. Investigating the effectiveness of three school based interventions for preventing psychotic experiences over a year period—a secondary data analysis study of a randomized control trial. *BMC public health.* 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15107-x>
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PH SOC NEWSLETTER

April 2023

THE AIMS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SOCIETY:

- To communicate public health, wellness, and preventative health to the UCC community.
- To foster interdisciplinary cooperation between various faculties at UCC.
- To foster innovation at UCC towards solving problems in public health.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- *UNBOXING MONKEYPOX* with Dr. Peter Barrett & a PH nurse
- Movie Night Screening of *Vicky*

INTERESTED IN HEALTHCARE AND SUSTAINABILITY?



Why not join **Irish Doctors for the Environment** and keep up to date with their monthly newsletter. Sign up here for free: <https://ide.ie/join-us/>. You don't have to be a doctor or medical student to join, all healthcare professionals and enthusiasts are welcome!

CONTACT

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[Link to PH SOC Newsletter here.](#)



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