INHALE Newsletter

Issue 1

26th June 2019

The INHALE research team in the School of Public Health, in collaboration with the Environmental Research Institute in UCC and funded by the HSE and EPA Ireland, will investigate possible ways of linking air quality monitoring data and health data to extend the capacity for extensive and ongoing environmental epidemiological research. The project will identify and recommend improvements to the existing data infrastructure to enable effective use of health data in research for evidence-based policy decisions and cost allocation.

Linking Air Quality and Health Data in Ireland

In May, UCC's INHALE team lead by Dr Éilis O' Reilly hosted a joint symposium with Professor Margaret O'Mahony from Trinity College Dublin. The symposium titled *'Linking Air Quality and Health Data in Ireland'* was held in the Environmental Research Institute building on 22nd of May 2019. The aim of the symposium was to bring together researchers interested in linking existing and routinely collected health and environment data and devise feasible and secure strategies to overcome obstacles relating to access to health data at a small area scale. Attendees included members of staff from the HSE, CSO, EPA, Cork County Council, University College Cork, Trinity College Dublin, National Cancer Registry Ireland, Kings College London, Technological University Dublin, Cork Environmental Forum, ESRI and Dublin City Council.

The **symposium** brought together a range of experts to offer a series of presentations on the current status, previous experiences and scale of research in Ireland involving linkage of health and environmental data. The **opening session** of the day on 'Current Research Projects on Environmental and Health Research' saw presentations by Dr Michael O'Dwyer from the EPA who discussed current available air quality data and future plans for data collection by the EPA; Professor Margaret Mahoney and Professor Brian Broderick from Trinity College Dublin (TCD) presenting their findings on the association between NO_2 and health, while our own Dr Stig Hellebust (CRAC) presented our INHALE Project. The **second session** focused on 'Lessons Learned' to date and saw Professor Pat Goodman from TU Dublin give a brief outline of his experience in environmental and health research; UCC's Dr Jean O'Dwyer discussed her experience in assessing clinical data; Sean Lyon, Associate Research Professor at the ESRI, discussed a 'microdata analysis' of NO_2 exposure and asthma in over 50's in Ireland from a collaboration with the TCD hosts. The **final session** of the day title 'Opportunities Identified' saw presentations from Dr Claire Buckley (HSE) on available health data in Ireland; Dr Éilis O'Reilly on the potential of having an 'Honest Broker Service' in Ireland; Dr Gerry Brady from the CSO who presented on environment and health statistics provided by the CSO and Dr Marguerite Nyhan (UCC) who described her previous work using mobile-based technology to map air pollution exposure in urban areas.

The next symposium will be hosted in Trinity College Dublin.

INHALE Team