

IPH Newsletter

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Welcome to Public Health News in Ireland

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Climate change and health

Climate change impacts on our health and will affect the places we live and our access to food and resources. A number of key agencies, including the Climate Change and Health Council (CHC), are working to raise awareness of the impact of climate change and health worldwide. IPH is also a member of the Climate Change and Health Group chaired by Dr Elizabeth Mitchell, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DHSSPS and facilitated by Belfast Healthy Cities.

IPH has published 'Climate change and health: a platform for action' providing an introduction to the links between climate change and health. The paper proposes ten steps to create a platform for action on climate change and health across Ireland.

The Lancet recently published a number of studies showing that appropriate mitigation strategies will themselves have additional and independent beneficial effects on health.

[Access the IPH paper 'Climate change and health: a platform for action'](#)
[Access the Lancet report 'The health benefits of tackling climate change'](#)

New data on the changing face of poverty on the island

IPH is currently considering the health inequality implications of recently released government figures on poverty in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In the Republic of Ireland, new features in the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2009 report include data on children's deprivation and preliminary estimates of persistent poverty. Income distribution was becoming less unequal and those at risk of poverty rates remained fairly static. There was a sharp increase in the numbers of households reporting deprivation, with children remaining the group most vulnerable to poverty.

In Northern Ireland, similar patterns were reported in the Lifetime Opportunities Monitoring Framework Baseline Report with static relative income poverty. Pensioners were the group most vulnerable to poverty and income inequality appeared to be widening. Despite ongoing increases in life expectancy, there was little improvement evident in reducing premature mortality or the social inequalities evident in mortality rates.

[Access Survey on Income and Living Conditions \(SILC\) 2009 \(Republic of Ireland\) here.](#)
[Access Lifetime Opportunities Monitoring Framework Baseline Report \(Northern Ireland\) here.](#)

Developing a population approach to gambling: health issues

Health impacts of problem gambling include mental illness, higher levels of substance misuse and violence. Gambling practice across the island is currently being reviewed. Recent developments include the publication of the Northern Ireland Gambling Prevalence Survey by the Department for Social Development.

IPH has developed a briefing paper to inform the reviews. The paper presents ten key points highlighting links between gambling and health (and potential harm associated with problem gambling) and provides suggestions on the policy approach and practice change required to minimise potential harm from gambling.

[Access the IPH paper 'Developing a population approach to gambling: health issues'](#)
[Access the key findings from the Northern Ireland Gambling Prevalence Survey published by the Department for Social Development](#)

Active travel and health



Across Ireland, there is considerable scope to replace many short car journeys with walking and cycling which would bring about a range of benefits to health as well as saving money for individuals and society. IPH will issue a new briefing paper in January 2010 entitled *Active travel – healthy lives*. The paper presents a summary of international evidence on the health and

economic benefits of active travel and makes recommendations on how active travel can become a viable, safe and attractive alternative to car use. For further information please contact Teresa.Lavin@publichealth.ie

Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Strategy for Public Health in England

The English White Paper *Healthy Lives, Healthy People* sets out a vision for responding to the major public health challenges of the 21st Century in England – including smoking, obesity and alcohol. It includes the idea of an integrated, national public health service, Public Health England, and a return to local authorities for local public health teams, bringing with them an imperative to put health at the heart of public services. IPH will continue to observe how this strategy develops.

[Access Healthy Lives, Healthy People here](#)

All Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care (AIHPC)

Palliative end of life care is the active, holistic care of patients with advanced and progressive illness. The AIHPC was established in November to improve the patient, family, carer and community experience of death, dying and loss. It will address care, education, research and policy development. It is comprised of a consortium of eight health agencies and four universities, with expert knowledge of palliative care.

[Access AIHPC press release](#)

Making Chronic Conditions Count: Chronic Airflow Obstruction

IPH predicts an increase of 47,000 people on the island with chronic airflow obstruction by 2020.

A new IPH report *Making Chronic Conditions Count: Chronic Airflow Obstruction* estimates and forecasts the population prevalence of chronic airflow obstruction among adults on the island of Ireland.

The report reviews data for 2007, 2015 and 2020, for sex, age and local socio-economic circumstances and for Local Health Offices in the Republic of Ireland and Local Government Districts in Northern Ireland. The report shows 140,000 adults living with chronic airflow obstruction on the island in 2007 which is forecast to increase to 187,000 adults by 2020.

This is the latest publication in the IPH Making Chronic Conditions Count programme of work which aims to systematically estimate and forecast the population prevalence of chronic conditions across the island. Estimates and forecasts for hypertension, stroke, coronary heart disease and diabetes were published in March 2010.

[The latest publication Making Chronic Conditions Count: Chronic Airflow Obstruction is available from the IPH website](#)

[Access Making Chronic Conditions Count: Hypertension, Stroke, Coronary Heart Disease and Diabetes here](#)

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Forum



Picture left to right: Owen Metcalfe (IPH), Liam Hannaway (Banbridge District Council), Seamus Mullen (PHA), Claire Higgins (IPH) and Dr Eddie Rooney (PHA)

HIA Forum meetings provide an opportunity for those with an interest in HIA to meet, share experiences, hear about new developments and consider how to progress HIA. Two HIA Forum meetings were held during November:

- **How HIA can support local government and health promotion action on sustainable travel** was the focus on 4 November in Cork City Hall and was co-hosted with Health Services Executive (HSE) South. IPH introduced the topics of HIA and sustainable travel. The session discussed HIA and sustainable travel and the need for a Healthy Cities approach. Ian Winning from Cork City Council presented an overview of the Council's bid for funding to the Department of Transport's Smarter Travel Areas National Competition.
- **How HIA can support local government action on health inequalities** was the theme on 15 November in Lisburn Civic Centre and co-hosted with the Public Health Agency (PHA) as part of the *Focus on Health Inequalities* month. Dr Eddie Rooney, Chief Executive, PHA, outlined the importance of partnership working with local government and practical examples of where HIA can add value in a local government setting Liam Hannaway, Chief Executive, Banbridge District Council provided practical examples of how partnership working enhances the lives of citizens and has positive outcomes for health. HIA was highlighted as a tool to support joint working arrangements.

[Presentations from both sessions may be found here](#)

The Public Health Agency hosted the *Focus on Health Inequalities* month and the closing conference 'Meeting the challenge: economics and a healthier society'.

[Access information on the Focus on Health Inequalities month here](#)

[Access 'Meeting the challenge: economics and a healthier society' presentations here](#)

Consultations

Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Regional Development, Transport Bill

IPH has responded to recent transport consultations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland including evidence on the Transport Bill in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The interactive session provided the opportunity for MLAs and those giving evidence to hear other responses.

[View IPH recent transport consultations here.](#)

The Regional Transportation Strategy is expected to be launched soon by the Department for Regional Development and IPH will respond to this.

Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, 'Everyone's Involved' - Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan

Following our submission in January 2010 to the Sustainable Development Strategy, IPH was pleased to have the opportunity recently to comment on the Implementation Plan for the Strategy. [Both consultation responses can be found here.](#)

Department of Education: Early Years (0-6) Strategy

Tackling inequalities in social, cognitive and personal development in the early years is recognised as a priority action to reduce health inequalities. IPH welcomed the development of a strategic approach to the early years in Northern Ireland and drew evidence from the *Health Impacts of Education – a review (IPH, 2008)*.

[Access Health Impacts of Education – a review](#)

[Access the IPH response](#)

Department for Social Development: Introduction of powers to prohibit or restrict irresponsible alcohol promotions

Alcohol-related harm is an increasing public health concern and contributor to health inequalities on this island. IPH considered this consultation on powers to restrict alcohol promotions as a significant development towards harmonised all island regulations to tackle excessive alcohol consumption.

[Access the consultation documents](#)

[Access the IPH response](#)

What consultations are we working on?

- [Tobacco control regulations to ban display of tobacco products at point of sale and to prohibit sales of tobacco products from vending machines](#) (Northern Ireland)
- [A Fitter Future for All – an Obesity prevention Framework for Northern Ireland 2011-2021](#)

Resources

Health Well

The Health Well is a unique all-island health information website that promotes health and wellbeing by supporting evidence-informed decision making. It is managed by IPH in collaboration with its academic partners: the UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Public Health (NI) led by Queen's University Belfast, and the Health Research Board (HRB) Health and Diet Research Centre led by University College Cork and University College Dublin. Visit Health Well at <http://www.thehealthwell.info> and let us know what you think by filling out the online feedback form or emailing us at info@thehealthwell.info

Health Well will help you

- Access the information you need
- Work collaboratively across the web
- Use information more effectively

Health Well covers population health as well as health and social care and has an initial focus on chronic conditions and includes the Obesity Hub and Fuel Poverty Hub. Information from Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory (INISPHO) is now available from the Health Well and includes *Community Profiles*.

Community Profiles contain over one hundred health related indicators collated for every county in Ireland and every Local Government District in Northern Ireland providing an instant snapshot of health and wellbeing across the island. Data can be viewed by geography or topic or you can explore the dataset in full. The indicators are drawn from the All Ireland Health and Wellbeing Dataset. Access <http://www.thehealthwell.info/community-profiles>.

2010 Information Seminars

Access seminar presentations from any of the following 2010 Information Seminars that you may have missed from www.inispho.org and www.publichealth.ie

- The HASIG seminar on "Indicators of the Social Determinants of Health" in Athlone on 5th May;
- The HSE Seminar on "Quality Improvement, Patient Safety and Knowledge Integration in health services" in Dublin on 9th June;
- The HASIG seminar on "Increasing life expectancy on the island: healthy years or just extra years?" in Belfast on 28th September; and
- The HSE Seminar on "Building a Learning Health & Social Care Service: The Role of Evaluation" in Dublin on 26th October

Events

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Comprehensive Training – 21-23 March 2011

Applications are open for the next HIA training course in Belfast. HIA is a practical, systematic methodology which can be used to assess health impacts and health inequalities of policies, programmes and projects that may not have health as their primary objective. The course will interest those working in public health, planning, regeneration, socio-economic development, education, environmental health and community development. The course links HIA theory and practice. [Further information and application form may be found here.](#)

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