

## IPH Newsletter

### Vol 4 Issue 2 – June 2010

#### Welcome to Public Health News in Ireland

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#### **Ireland on the move: enhancing opportunities for physical activity in the built environment**

Rethinking our built environment to improve physical activity was the focus of a recent seminar organised by IPH and the Centre of Excellence for Public Health in Northern Ireland. Over 90 delegates discussed the urgent need to rethink built environment policies which have contributed to increasing levels of physical inactivity and obesity.

Professor James Sallis, a leader in tackling inactivity in schools and communities across the United States, shared highlights from the successful programmes he has developed to improve physical activity in schools. Director of Active Living Research and Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University, California, Prof Sallis is a passionate advocate for the creation of opportunities for exercise for everyone in daily life and illustrated his talk with many examples showing the impact of walkable versus non-walkable neighbourhoods. New York in particular is a walkable city and the least obese place in the United States. Delegates engaged in an animated two-way discussion on the critical need to change the built environment in Ireland.

Teresa Lavin, IPH Public Health Development Officer, presented current physical activity levels in Ireland and reflected on the consequences of inactivity on population health. She linked her presentation with recent IPH findings forecasting a dramatic 40% increase in the number of people living with hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke and diabetes in the Republic of Ireland, and 30% increase in Northern Ireland by 2020.

[Access further information and presentations](#)



Advocates for public health can access the advocacy toolkit developed by the Public Health Alliance for the island of Ireland (PHAI) to help those wishing to do more to improve health  
<http://advocacy.phaii.org>

### **EU and health equity: completion of the DETERMINE project**

DETERMINE is a EU programme developed to achieve greater awareness and capacity amongst decision-makers to take health and health equity into consideration when developing policy. IPH led one of the work packages in this project which aimed to strengthen knowledge on policies and actions addressing the social determinants of health inequalities. This included a focus on economic arguments. The three year EU-funded project concluded with a conference in April 2010.

[Access further information including working document reports and the final project publication](#)

**'Building young hearts – Physical activity, young people and the physical environment'** How the physical environment can improve young people's opportunities for physical activity and be a key focus of policy is at the centre of a recently launched paper from the National Heart Alliance. IPH is Chair of the National Heart Alliance and contributed to the development of this paper.

[Access the report](#)

### **Reviewing Health Impact Assessment (HIA)**

An IPH commissioned review into HIA in Ireland found knowledge of HIA is no longer limited to a few people and understanding has now extended to a much wider range of people many of whom have key responsibilities at the centre of policy-making, partnership and service development. HIA has established itself, at least as a concept, across other sectors as well as throughout the public health sector. Senior health personnel North and South acknowledged that HIA has made significant in-roads and had been one of the key achievements of IPH.

Access the summary and full report

<http://www.publichealth.ie/publications/reviewofhealthimpactassessment>

### **HIA Forum – progressing Health Impact Assessment (HIA)**

The HIA forum provides an opportunity for people to meet, share experiences, hear about new developments and consider how to progress HIA. Each forum explores a relevant theme.

Most recently Sarah Simpson, World Health Organization (WHO) shared her experience on working to ensure health equity is considered in policies developed both within and outside the health system. Referring to recent WHO and Commission of the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) recommendations on Health Equity Impact Assessment, Sarah gave an overview of a framework for equity focused HIA. Galway Traveller Movement presented on their recent HIA of Traveller Accommodation.

Access all presentations and further information on HIA Forum Meetings in 2010

<http://www.publichealth.ie/hiainireland/hiaforum/hiaforum2010>

## **Consultations**

### **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) Consultation on Palliative End of Life Care Strategy**

Palliative end of life care is the active, holistic care of patients with advanced and progressive illness. IPH welcomed the DHSSPS Strategy and agreed with its broad direction and vision. The IPH response recommended that the issue of equity in the provision of palliative care receives a greater priority and becomes a more substantial component of the strategy.

[Access the full response](#)

### **Draft Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022**

The Dublin Regional Authority and Mid-East Regional Authority have published guidance for future growth of the Dublin area in the medium and long term with the aim of supporting the strategic planning framework of the National Spatial Strategy published in 2002. The IPH response recommends more explicit links to the RPG's potential health impacts. Spatial planning affects health in many ways but some of the biggest impacts are

through influencing transportation, buildings and communities, homes and flood risk. Specific health risks associated with poor spatial planning include heart disease, respiratory disease, mental health, obesity and injuries.

[Access the full response](#)

### **Department of the Environment (DOE) Consultation on Preparing a Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2010-20**

Transport and road safety are key determinants of health. IPH welcomed the strong focus on cross-sectoral working in the Strategy and inclusion of targets to reduce road casualties in Northern Ireland in line with Investing for Health. The IPH response highlighted recent research conducted by DoE showing that across all child age groups (0-15 years) children resident in the most deprived areas are nearly 5 times more likely to be injured as a pedestrian in a road collision than those resident in the most affluent areas. Women from the most deprived areas are 15 times more likely to be injured as a pedestrian. IPH recognised that the strategy should also support a greater focus on disadvantaged areas.

[Access the full response](#)

### **Department for Social Development Draft Regeneration and Housing Bill, April 2010**

The IPH response highlighted the potential key role local government, particularly through housing and regeneration initiatives, has in enhancing health and ensuring health inequalities are not further exacerbated. IPH welcomed the proposed transfer of planning powers to local councils but stressed the need to build on our understanding of planning and the built environment and how this impacts on health.

[Access the full response](#)

### **Central Statistics Office (CSO) consultation on Census 2011 outputs, April 2010**

The CSO outlined a number of changes being considered for the 2011 Republic of Ireland Census. IPH advised that census data be disaggregated by social factors such as social class, education, employment, income, household composition, social capital, geography etc. The IPH response highlighted the potential to examine population-level associations between the social determinants of health and self-rated health. A census is also being conducted in Northern Ireland in 2011 providing an excellent opportunity to compare population measures across the island. IPH recommended CSO present census data by relevant sectors (eg health, finance, transport) which would allow people to see the important links between sectors.

[Access the full response](#)

## **Resources**

### **Health Analysts' Special Interest Group (HASIG) – Meeting materials**

Presentations and a recording of the most recent HASIG seminar 'Indicators of the Social Determinants of Health', held in Athlone Institute of Technology on 5 May 2010. The seminar focused on the importance of social determinants of health indicators to tackle health inequalities and the role health analysts play.

[Access the recording and report](#)

## **Events**

### **'Get up. Get out. Get Going' Men's Health Challenge – 4 September 2010, 1.30pm**

Men are invited to take part in a 10 km or 5km run or 3km fun run/walk organised by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) as an extension of the week-long celebration of International Men's Health Week 2010.

Venue: Ardgillan Castle, near Skerries, Co Dublin

For further information or to register email Colin Fowler at [colin@mhfi.org](mailto:colin@mhfi.org) or visit the MHFI website <http://www.mhfi.org>

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