

IPH Newsletter

Vol 3 Issue 3 - September 2009

Welcome to Public Health News in Ireland

Last year the September issue of Public Health News in Ireland focused on the launch of the seminal Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, *Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health*. This issue presents details of the *Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England* being carried out by Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Chair of the Commission. We are delighted that Sir Michael will be visiting Belfast in October to give the 20th Anniversary Lecture for Belfast Healthy Cities.

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Major review of England's health inequalities strategy underway



Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post-2010

Professor Sir Michael Marmot, international expert on health inequalities and chair of the World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health, is leading a *Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post-2010*. The Review is expected to have national and international relevance and influence future development of the Investing for Health Strategy in Northern Ireland. A Review Team is working with nine expert task groups to draw out learning from the successes and failures of interventions and policies tackling health inequalities. Review findings will be published in early 2010 and guide the development of a new health inequalities strategy for England. The task group reports are an exciting new source of evidence on tackling health inequalities across a range of areas including early childhood development, built environment and employment and can be accessed [here](#). Access IPH submission to the Review [here](#).

Tackling obesity – an all-Ireland obesity observatory

A new all-Ireland Obesity Knowledge Hub will be established within IPH to support the implementation and strategic development of the island's obesity strategies. The obesity knowledge hub is being developed by

IPH and partners; the HRB's Health and Diet Research Centre (led by UCC) in the Republic of Ireland, the UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Public Health (led by QUB) in Northern Ireland and the National Obesity Observatory for England. For further information contact kevin.balanda@publichealth.ie.

Fuel poverty and health – what's new?

IPH continues to extend work relating to health inequalities associated with fuel poverty. Recent involvement includes directing new research, influencing policy, and strengthening strategic alliances and networks. We are:

- contributing from a health perspective to the forthcoming Energy Affordability Strategy being developed by the Interdepartmental Group on Affordable Energy
- facilitating an informal North/South research group on fuel poverty and health
- advising on health issues within fuel poverty research led by Sustainable Energy Ireland
- contributing to a proposed review of fuel poverty and stroke
- meeting with community and voluntary sector groups (e.g. Age Action and St Vincent De Paul)
- making evidence-based recommendations on fuel poverty in response to consultations (e.g. DETI Strategic Energy Framework)
- developing the quality of our collection of fuel poverty resources as a themed collection on the [All-Ireland Electronic Health Library](#)

If you would like any further detail on this work, please contact helen.mcavoy@publichealth.ie

Fuel Poverty - Did you know?

An analysis of the health impacts of Strabane District Council's Heating Conversion Programme estimated that for every £1 spent, 60p can be offset in health benefits.

C. Liddell (2009) Health Impacts of Strabane District Council's Heating Conversion Programme. University of Ulster.

Addressing health inequalities through community participation in primary care

IPH is continuing to support the HSE/Combat Poverty Agency initiative on Community Participation in Primary Care. This initiative is funding 19 projects to develop effective means of participation among disadvantaged communities and primary care staff. Further information and the first project bulletin can be sourced [here](#). The IPH online [partnership evaluation tool](#) will be used as part of the evaluation. If you have used the IPH partnership evaluation tool, we would be delighted to hear about your experience, contact helen.mcavoy@publichealth.ie.

HIA Forum: progressing HIA

The HIA Forum provides an opportunity for those interested in Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to meet, share experiences, hear about new developments and consider how to progress HIA. The latest HIA Forum took place in Waterford Institute of Technology on 17 September. Issues discussed included:

- an overview of how health is being incorporated into the Environmental Impact Assessment process
- an update on HIA in the HSE South region
- healthy communities – the input of two graduate-entry medical students to collaborative projects in education and green space

Presentations and further information on HIA Forums may be found at <http://www.publichealth.ie/ireland/hiaforum>

Injury deaths – new data available

The Injury Observatory for Britain and Ireland (IOBI) is compiling new injury data from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Analysis of these data will compare emergency admissions to hospital for injuries in the five nations, and extend IOBI's previous work comparing injury-related deaths in the five nations. Data and commentary on the mortality analysis can be found at http://www.injuryobservatory.net/bri_ire_deaths.html.

We'd like your help to develop a new health information portal

The All-Ireland electronic Health Library (AleHL) will be redeveloped to form the basis of a new all-Ireland health information portal. The portal will present health information from diverse sources and offer services helping people organise, share and use information. Before redeveloping we would like to gather feedback on the current AleHL. [To help us - and be entered into the draw for a €100 \(£100\) book voucher - please follow this link.](#)

Consultations

Department for Social Development (DSD), consultation on Marine Gardens, Bangor

In a recent consultation DSD outlined plans to create a new development at Marine Gardens, Bangor, Co. Down. The proposal includes the development of retail, office and housing space. IPH response called for a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to be conducted on the proposal due to the range of factors which could impact on health including employment, housing and leisure facilities. [Access IPH response](#)

Northern Ireland Assembly Sustainable Transport Inquiry

The NI Assembly Regional Development Committee is conducting an inquiry into Sustainable Transport for Northern Ireland. The IPH response outlined support for a sustainable transport system and associated health impacts. Reference was made to the *Republic of Ireland's Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future* which places health as a central element of sustainable transport. [Access IPH response](#)

EU publishes results of consultation on health inequalities

IPH contributed to the European Commission consultation on health inequalities earlier this year. A summary of responses has now been published. Work to provide better indicators, comparable data and easier ways to exchange best practice were raised as areas where EU action could have added value.

[Access IPH response](#)

[Access European Commission summary of responses](#)

Resources

Health Impact Assessment Guidance

Revised Health Impact Assessment Guidance will be published by IPH in October. The up-dated guidance supported by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Health and Children provides a step-by-step guide to undertaking HIA. The guidance provides a range of tools to assist organisations undertaking HIA which are also available online at

<http://www.publichealth.ie/eventsandresources/hiatools>

Request a copy of the new Health Impact Assessment Guidance by emailing Leah Friend

leah.friend@publichealth.ie

Events

6th Population Health Autumn School – 1 and 2 October 2009

Building on the highly successful schools in Cork, the 6th Population Health Autumn School will be held in Queen's University Belfast and focus on complex interventions and their evaluation. Co-hosted by the UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Public Health (NI), HRB Centre for Diet and Health (University College Cork) and the Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH) participants will learn from and debate with a panel of distinguished international speakers with varied perspectives and vast experience. [Access the full programme for 'When is a simple answer sufficient?'](#)

This event is currently oversubscribed due to a high level of interest but will be accessible as a podcast from [here](#).

Belfast Healthy Cities 20th Anniversary Lecture to be given by Professor Sir Michael Marmot – 8 October 2009

Sir Michael Marmot is an international health inequalities expert and Chair of the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. For further information or to register to attend please contact Maura Ahern at 028 90328811 or email maura@belfasthealthycities.com

Health Impact Assessment Training

Applications are open for the next Health Impact Assessment training course. The course will take place 8th – 10th February 2010 in Dublin and interest those working in public health, central and local government and community and voluntary sectors. Further information and application form available at <http://www.publichealth.ie/ireland/hiatraining/comprehensivehiatrainingcourse>

Public Health Alliance for the Island of Ireland (PHAI) Roadshows.

In October and November 2009 PHAI will run a number of events explaining their work and future plans. Anyone interested in public health or health inequalities and wanting to join PHAI is welcome. Dates and locations include:

21 October – Derry
22 October – Belfast
3 November – Galway
4 November – Cork
5 November – Dublin

Venues and times to be confirmed. Email info@phaii.org for further information or to register.

Health analysts' special interest group seminar

We often lack accurate and reliable population data – particularly relating to lifestyle - to support public health action at small area level. In the final 2009 Health Analysts' Special Interest Group (HASIG) seminar, we explore some analytical approaches that can be applied, including:

- model-based approaches (synthetic estimation) where data from a larger area is combined with other demographic and social data to derive small area estimates
- using Bayesian approaches to combine estimates from a number of different source of varying quality.

The seminar will be in **November**. The date and venue will be circulated shortly. For information about HASIG contact lorraine.fahy@publichealth.ie.

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