

IPH Newsletter

Vol 4 Issue 3 – September 2010

Welcome to Public Health News in Ireland

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25th All Ireland Social Medicine Meeting – abstracts available

A highly successful 25th All Ireland Social Medicine Meeting was held in Belfast on 9 September and supported by all the academic departments of public health on the island. Over 50 delegates registered from across the island. Professor Alun Evans gave a keynote speech and paid tribute to the founder of the All Ireland Social Medicine Meeting, Professor John Pemberton who sadly passed away in February this year. In his speech Professor Evans highlighted some of Professor Pemberton's major contributions and his links to Queen's University Belfast where he was Chair of Social and Preventative Medicine.

Eighteen papers were presented including a symposium of 4 papers on 'Halting the development of conduct problems in Ireland: Evaluating the effectiveness of the Incredible Years Parent and Teacher training series within a 'high risk', community based setting'. Abstracts are now available.

[Access the book of abstracts here](#)

[Access a list of poster presentations here](#)

Translating research into community action – presentations available

Community and voluntary organisations interested in improving links between research and practice recently attended an event on translating research into community action. The Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) organised the event with IPH and Queen's University Belfast (QUB) as part of the UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Public Health (NI) work stream on Public Health Knowledge Integration and Knowledge Brokerage. Post Doctoral Researchers based at QUB presented current research and generated a wealth of discussion.

[Access seminar presentations and Centre of Excellence research here.](#)



Dr Mark Tully, Centre of Excellence for Public Health NI

Gambling and health

Health impacts of problem gambling include mental illness, higher levels of substance misuse and violence. Across the island there is currently little information known about the prevalence of gambling in society. Gambling practice across the island of Ireland is currently subject to policy reform. In the Republic of Ireland the Department of Justice and Law Reform announced a review of gambling legislation in 2009 which aims to develop a modern, responsive code of practice. The Department for Social Development, Northern Ireland will undertake a strategic review of gambling policy, practice and law in 2010.

IPH has developed a briefing paper to inform these 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. The briefing paper will be available on the IPH website shortly.

IPH continues to promote tackling health inequalities in local government

IPH, NICVA and CDHN have developed a briefing paper outlining ten action points for elected officials in Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland, a similar paper outlines a strategic approach to tackling health inequalities and presents facts and action on health inequalities in specific areas of council responsibility.

[Access the Northern Ireland paper here](#)

[Access the Republic of Ireland paper here](#)

Injury hospital admissions – new data available

The Injury Observatory for Britain and Ireland (IOBI) presented new injury data at the Safety 2010 World Conference in September. The data compare emergency admissions to hospital for injuries in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

[Access this data at http://www.injuryobservatory.net](http://www.injuryobservatory.net)

Analysing variations in health expectancy

A recent report by the Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI) entitled *Illustrating Ageing in Ireland, North and South* found that since the 1920s the number of years males can expect to live rose by about 20 years while the number of years females can expect to live rose by about 24-25 years. It is not clear, however, if these years of life gained are lived in good health.



Picture left to right: Conor Breen (CARDI), Dr Roger O'Sullivan (CARDI), Lorraine Fahy (IPH) and Safa Abdalla (IPH/UCC).

While there is considerable policy focus on reducing inequalities in life expectancy, much less is known about the variation in health expectancy that exists across the island of Ireland. The debate hinges on our understanding of what is driving the changes in life expectancy, healthy life expectancy and the gap between the two.

IPH in association with CARDI, recently hosted a Health Analysts' Special Interest Group (HASIG) seminar discussing the policy implications of this debate. The seminar introduced the range of health expectancy measures and compared them to life expectancy. Initial findings from the all-island study of life expectancy and healthy life expectancy were also presented.

[Access presentations here](#)

Consultations

Department for Social Development (DSD) Warmer healthier homes - Consultation on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland

Fuel Poverty remains a huge concern across the island with growing numbers of people at risk of being unable to heat their homes. Recession is placing more people at risk of being unable to heat their homes. IPH welcomed DSD commitment to review the 2004 Strategy and the emphasis placed on public health impacts in the consultation, recommending that improving the health of fuel-poor householders is explicitly recognised as a key outcome of the new strategy.

[Access the DSD consultation](#)

[Access the full IPH response](#)

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources - Consultation on a National Energy Retrofit Programme

In 2011, the National Energy Retrofit Programme will build upon existing energy saving programmes in both the domestic and non-domestic sectors. This consultation focused on key design considerations. IPH agree with the commitment to deliver a National Energy Retrofit Programme as a sustainable means of securing energy savings and reducing energy poverty and the nations carbon footprint. The IPH response highlighted the significant benefit to health and would support the use of Health Impact Assessment to consider these impacts within the development and evaluation of the Programme.

[Access the consultation](#)

[Access the full IPH response](#)

Resources

Health Well

IPH in collaboration with the UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Public Health (NI), led by QUB and the HRB Centre for Health and Diet Research led by University College Cork (UCC) have

developed a unique all-island health information website. The Health Well supports evidence-based policy and practice. It is designed for policy-makers, health and social care professionals, managers and agencies, and others who provide services on their behalf.

Health Well focuses on health and social care priorities, provides easy access to authoritative sources of data, evidence and good practice and helps people use information effectively.

[Further information will be available from the IPH website](#)

Events

Focus on health inequalities month, 27 October-24 November 2010

A programme of events will highlight innovative action being taken by the Public Health Agency, together with partners, to address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing. Events will focus on poverty, disadvantage, economics and promoting a healthier society. A full calendar of all that is taking place throughout Northern Ireland is available from the PHA website www.publichealth.hscni.net

HIA Forum, November 2010

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. Join us at the next series of events for what promises to be lively and informative discussions.

- 4 November 2010, City Hall, Cork (Time to be confirmed)
How HIA can support local government and health promotion action on sustainable travel. Co-hosted with HSE South.
- 15 November 2010, Island Civic Centre, Lisburn, 1.30-5pm
How can HIA support local government action on health inequalities?
Co-hosted with the Public Health Agency as part of the Focus on Health Inequalities month.

There is no charge to attend these events however registration is essential.

Further information may be found at www.publichealth.ie

To book your place at one or both events please contact Leah Friend at

Leah.Friend@publichealth.ie

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

Applications are open for the next HIA training course on 21-23 March 2011 in the Holiday Inn, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast. 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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