

SPHeRE

network

POPULATION HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH NETWORK UPDATE

The First Annual SPHeRE Conference

'Health Research, Policy and Practice – Creating links for effective collaboration'

Friday 9th January 2015, RCSI

This first annual Conference will provide an opportunity for an exclusive focus on the key issues relevant to population health and health care delivery in Ireland. It will bring together representatives from the academic, policy and practice communities and highlight the diversity of current research as well as the potential for new, collaborative research between these communities.

The aim of the first annual conference is to create a space for dialogue between all interested stakeholders in the field of Population

Health and Health Services Research throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland and to showcase existing studies which will be of interest to Irish policymakers and practitioners.

Topics which will be explored in this one-day conference include:

- Resilience in the Irish Health System
- What works in Integrated Care
- Involving Key Stakeholders in the Research Process

WELCOME

Welcome to the second SPHeRE Network Newsletter. In this issue you will find information on the up-coming SPHeRE Network Conference which will take place in January, as well as news of SPHeRE scholar research, awards and life after the PhD. Congratulations to HRB Scholars Programme alumnus Dr Gerard McKenna on his appointment as Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Restorative Dentistry at Queens University Belfast and to current SPHeRE scholar Pdraic Flemming on winning a Young Forum Gastein Scholarship for the European Health Forum Gastein (FHFG) 2014.



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Meet the Keynote Speakers

#sphere15



Prof. Naomi Fulop, University College London and Chair of UK Health Service Research Network

Naomi Fulop is Professor of Health Care Organisation & Management in the Department for Applied Health Research, University College London and Visiting Professor at King's College London. Prior to her move to UCL in April 2012, Naomi was Professor of Health Policy at King's College London. Naomi led the recently completed major research programme on quality and safety in European Union hospitals, and currently leads the NIHR funded study of major system reconfigurations of stroke services implemented in London and Greater Manchester, and planned in the Midlands and East of England. She is a co-investigator on the newly established NIHR CLAHRC North Thames. Naomi is the elected Chair of the Health Services Research Network, a UK-wide network bringing together those who produce and use health services research to improve policy and practice.



Prof. Bernadette Hannigan, Director of Research & Development, Public Health England

Bernie took up her current role in August 2014; Public Health England itself was established in 2013 with responsibility for protecting the health of the population and promoting health and wellbeing. From 2008 until 2014 Bernie was Director of R&D for Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland and Chief Scientific Advisor to the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety. Previously she was at the University of Ulster in a range of posts including Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) and she is now an Honorary Professor.



Prof. Steve Thomas, Trinity College, Dublin

Steve is an Associate Professor in Health Policy and Management and a co-Director of the HRB-funded national SPHERE Programme in Population and Health and Health Services Research. Currently, he is leading research into: (1) The viability of Universal Health Insurance in the Irish context; (2) The resilience of the Irish health system in the current economic crisis and compared to other countries in crisis (Portugal, Greece and Spain); (3) Human resources motivation and international migration (4) Workforce planning for the universalisation of care.

NEW SCHOLARS

Siobhain O'Doherty	MU
Paula Byrne	NUIG
Caragh Flannery	NUIG
Daniele Rohde	RCSI
Alan Maddock	TCD
Amelia Smith	TCD
Brenda Lynch	UCC
Ailbhe Spillane	UCC
Kieran Walshe	UCC
Rebecca Dennehy	UCC
Sarah-Jane Flaherty	UCC
Pauline Clerkin	UL

Programme Updates

Meet our new scholars!

Congratulations and welcome to our new batch of SPHeRE Scholars, who began their Ph.D. journey on the 1st October 2014!

The new cohort includes 12 Scholars registered in 6 Higher Education Institutions nationwide, with backgrounds ranging from Oncology to Health Economics. Eight Scholars are funded by the HRB, and four are externally funded by a range of bodies including the Irish Cancer Society and the National Suicide Research Foundation. We will feature more on our new Scholars in later issues.



POSTER PRIZE

Sarah-Jo Sinnott, a scholar on the HRB Scholars Programme in University College Cork, recently won a poster prize at the International Conference of Pharmacoepidemiology in Taipei. The poster presented research on the impact of two prescription charges on the General Medical Services scheme in Ireland on patients' adherence to medicines.

The research found reductions in adherence to medicines, although the reductions in adherence to less-essential medicines were larger than those observed for essential medicines. The major exception to this trend was for anti-depressant medicines where large decreases in adherence were found.

(Sarah-Jo Sinnott has recently completed her PhD in UCC)



Scholar Awards

The Young Forum Gastein Scholarship

The Young Forum Gastein initiative is a joint project of the international Forum Gastein and the European Commission Directorate Generals SANCO (Health and Consumers), CONNECT (Communications Networks, Content and Technology) and JRC (Joint Research Council). This prestigious scholarship was initiated in 2007 to enable promising young health professionals to attend the annual EHFG conference for learning and networking. It offers a unique opportunity to learn about current developments in Europe and to network with a number of high level experts in the sphere of health.

Padraic Fleming, a SPHeRE scholar in the Department of Psychology at Maynooth University, has recently been awarded a Young Forum Gastein Scholarship for the European Health Forum Gastein (FHFG) 2014. Padraic is supervised by Dr. Sinead McGilloway (Director of the Mental Health and Social Research Unit, University of Maynooth) and co-supervised by Dr. Fiona Keogh, Genio and Dr. Sarah Barry, TCD.

(Padraic is in the 2nd year of his PhD, based at Maynooth University, and is funded by Genio)

The Shani Rushin Award for Academic Excellence

Shani Rushin was a wonderful colleague and friend of the programme who served as Programme Administrator from 2007 – 2010 before her premature death in 2010. Each year, the Shani Rushin Award is presented in her honour to the scholar who achieves the highest results in the first, taught year of the programme.

This year's award went to **Dr. Mark Murphy** (RCSI) for his outstanding results in the six taught modules of the programme, and was presented by Prof. Anne Hickey at the annual Peer Learning Event. Congratulations Mark on this fantastic achievement!



Peer Learning Event

The annual SPHeRE Programme Peer Learning event brings together SPHeRE scholars, alumni and faculty from participating institutions to inaugurate the academic year with a day of discussion, sharing and networking. This year's theme was "Knowledge Sharing, Generation, Transaction" and the afternoon keynote presentation was given by Dr. Stephanie O'Keefe, National Director of Health and Wellbeing, HSE.



Prof. Anne Hickey, RCSI, updating on SPHeRE progress



Dr. Sarah Barry, TCD, discussing knowledge sharing, generation and transaction



Keynote speaker Dr. Stephanie O'Keefe, Healthy Ireland



Scholars, alumni and academics from 7 national HEI's collaborating and sharing their vision for the SPHeRE Network

Scholar Snapshots

Year One Experiences by Marian Hernon, UCD

Initially, the experience of starting the SPHeRE programme was both exciting and slightly daunting. During our first week we attended a peer learning day where we met fellow scholars and got an in depth look at what SPHeRE is aiming to achieve; we were becoming part of a growing national network of high-quality population health and health services researchers with the aim of impacting the future quality and relevance of health research in Ireland. Although this was an immense opportunity which I was going to embrace, I knew that day that I had a lot to learn.

The taught modules provided a good grounding in all aspects of population health and health services research. Throughout the first year my knowledge on the workings and organisation of health systems, and the various factors that impact on population health began to expand. However, along with this expanding knowledge my desire to study every possible angle in the area of health research also grew.

Each lecture brought a new idea, a new angle, or a new interest area. This was certainly a key challenge for me throughout the first year.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the first year is the interaction and opportunity for discussion with classmates. With diversity in backgrounds ranging from clinical to research, the shared learning between fellow classmates became highly valuable. Much of my learning came from the past experience and knowledge of fellow classmates. This interaction will continue to be valuable as we progress through different stages of our PhDs. I know that the knowledge I have gained in year one will be drawn upon many times over the next three years. I am looking forward to the various challenges and experiences that I will encounter in the coming years.

(Marian is in the 2nd year of her PhD and is based in University College Dublin)

SCHOLAR PUBLICATIONS

Boyce MB, Browne JP, Greenhalgh J. 2014 "[The experiences of professionals with using information from patient-reported outcome measures to improve the quality of healthcare: a systematic review of qualitative research](#)" *BMJ Quality & Safety*

Brennan A, Morley D, O'Leary A, Bergin C, Horgan M. 2014 "[Determinants of HIV Outpatient Service Utilization: A Systematic Review.](#)" *AIDS and Behavior*: 1-16

Cooper NA, Barton PM, Breijer M, Caffrey O, Opmeer BC, Timmermans A, et al. 2014 "[Cost-effectiveness of diagnostic strategies for the management of abnormal uterine bleeding \(heavy menstrual bleeding and post-menopausal bleeding: a decision analysis\)](#)" *Health Technol Assessment* 18 (24)

Fleming A, Byrne S. 2014 "Prescriber preference may influence prolonged antibiotic usage more than patient characteristics in long-term care facilities." *Evidence Based Nursing* 17(2):61-2.

Estimating the cost of HIV care in Ireland

By Aline Brennan, UCC

The emergence of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection in the mid-1990s altered the status of HIV from an acute to a chronic disease. Consequently, the overall need for in-patient and palliative care has decreased and most HIV care is now provided in an out-patient setting except for age-related morbidity and late presentation of previously unknown diagnosis.

In Ireland the HIV service is centralised, with six centres of excellence providing care for approximately 3,000 adults. Demands on this service are going to increase in coming years due to changes in the epidemiology of HIV and its clinical management. Given the current finan-

cial climate in Ireland, it is reasonable to assume that additional demands on the HIV care service will have to be managed within currently available resources.

My research aims to describe current service delivery patterns and estimate the current cost of providing ambulatory HIV care in Ireland, in order to evaluate the financial impact of potential changes. The information generated by this research will provide policy and decision makers with the relevant information needed to plan and implement the most effective use of available resources.

(Aline is in Year 3 of her PhD and is based in University College Cork)

Understanding the Irish private health insurance market

By Conor Keegan, TCD

Understanding the effectiveness of competition within health insurance markets can be understood, to a large extent, through analysing consumer mobility. That is, the decision to switch health insurer should be based primarily on price and quality considerations while large inequalities in mobility should not exist for certain groups (e.g. older, sicker). Moreover, in community-rated markets insurers may face incentives to 'cherry-pick' younger and healthier enrollees, which can have a distorting effect on competition.

My PhD research hopes to understand the drivers of consumer mobility in the Irish private

health insurance market, as they relate to both the consumer and the motivations faced by insurers. In terms of the latter, this includes analysis of the efficacy of Ireland's recently introduced risk-equalisation scheme which attempts to reduce incentives for 'cherry-picking' through reimbursing insurers for the risk they hold. Such research is of particular importance given current plans to expand the role of health insurance in financing Irish healthcare.

(Conor is in Year 3 of his PhD, based in Trinity College Dublin)

The Irish Gerontological Society Presidential Medal

Congratulations to **Lorna Roe** (2011 Cohort, TCD) who recently won a Presidential Prize Medal for her poster presented at the Irish Gerontological Society 62nd Annual Scientific Meeting.

Lorna is pictured here with Prof. J.B Walsh, who presented the medal on the day.



POSTER AWARD

Frank Moriarty (2012 Cohort, RCSI) was recently awarded a Best Student Research Poster Prize for a poster he presented at the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR) congress, Nov 2014. Congratulations Frank!

Citation: Moriarty F, Cahir C, Fahey T, Bennett K. 2014. Potentially inappropriate medicines and potential prescribing omission in older people and their association with healthcare utilization: a retrospective cohort study. Poster presented at the ISPOR 17th Annual European Congress, Amsterdam, 11th November 2014.

SCHOLAR PUBLICATIONS

Fleming A, Tonna A, Byrne S, Stewart D. 2014 "[A cross-sectional survey of the profile and activities of Antimicrobial Management Teams in Irish Hospitals](#)" International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy 36(2):377-383

Cousins G, Galvin R, Flood M, **Kennedy M-C**, Motterlini N, Henman M, Kenny R-A, Fahey T. 2014 "[Potential for alcohol and drug interactions in older adults: evidence from the Irish longitudinal study on ageing.](#)" BMC Geriatrics 14(1): 57

Galvin R, **Moriarty F**, Cousins G, Cahir C, Motterlini N, Bradley MC, et al. 2014 "[Prevalence of potentially inappropriate prescribing and prescribing omissions in older Irish adults: findings from The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing study \(TILDA\)](#)" European Journal of Clinical Pharmacology 70(5):599-606

Murphy ME, Fahey T, Smith SM. 2014 "[Computer-based clinical decision support for GP. Family Practice](#)" (5):497-498 DOI: 10.1093/fampra/cmu045

O'Keeffe L, Kearney P, Greene R. 2014 "[Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System in Ireland: Methods and Response Rates.](#)" Maternal and Child Health Journal: 1-7.

O'Keeffe L, Greene R, and Kearney P. 2014. "[The effect of moderate gestational alcohol consumption during pregnancy on speech and language outcomes in children: a systematic review.](#)" Systematic Reviews 3(1): 1-11

O'Neill SM, Agerbo E, Kenny LC, Henriksen TB, Kearney P, Greene R, Mortensen P, Khashan, AS. 2014 "[Caesarean section and rate of subsequent stillbirth, miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy: a Danish register-based cohort study](#)" PLOS Medicine

O'Neill SM, Khashan AS, Henriksen TB, et al. 2014 "[Does a Caesarean section increase the time to a second live birth? A register-based cohort study](#)" Human Reproduction doi: 10.1093/humrep/deu217.

Sexton E, King-Kallimanis B L, Morgan K, McGee H. 2014 "[Development of the Brief Ageing Perceptions Questionnaire \(B-APQ\): a confirmatory factor analysis approach to item reduction](#)" BMC Geriatrics, 14(1), 44. doi:10.1186/1471-2318-14-44

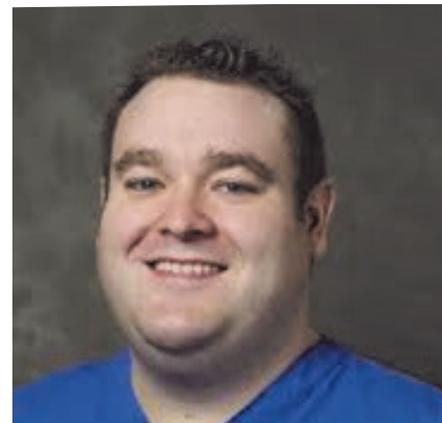
Sexton E, King-Kallimanis BL, Layte R, Hickey A 2014 "[CASP-19 Special Section: How does chronic disease status affect CASP quality of life at older ages? Examining the WHO ICF disability domains as mediators of this relationship](#)" Ageing and Mental Health 1–12. doi:10.1080/13607863.2014.955457

Wallace E, Stuart E, Vaughan N, Bennett K, Fahey TP, Smith SM. 2014 "[Risk prediction models to predict emergency hospital admission in community-dwelling adults. A systematic review](#)" Med Care 52 (8).

Cadogan S, Keane E, Kearney P, 2014. "[The effects of individual, family and environmental factors on physical activity levels in children: a cross-sectional study.](#)" BMC Pediatrics 14(1): 107

Dr. Gerald McKenna, UCC

I was one of the inaugural group of PhD Scholars who joined the Programme in 2007. As a clinical dentist I had very little formal research training and I benefitted immensely from undertaking modules in areas such as statistics, research methodology and health policy. As part of the Programme I got to know friends and colleagues from University College Cork, Trinity College Dublin and the Royal College of Surgeons. I had the opportunity to spend time at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands and attend a number of national and international conferences.



My PhD research focused on provision of care for older patients and has now been published in a large number of high impact dental journals. During the Scholars Programme I developed a particular interest in health economics and Professor Charles Normand from Trinity College Dublin acted as an external supervisor for my PhD alongside Professor Finbarr Allen and Dr. Denis O'Mahony from University College Cork. As a direct result of this collaboration I included a cost-effectiveness analysis in my research which added substantial credibility to the project outcomes.

After the HRB Scholars programme I was appointed as a Lecturer in Prosthodontics and

Oral Rehabilitation in University College Cork. Recently I have been appointed as Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Restorative Dentistry in Queens University Belfast and will take up my new post in November 2014. My other roles now also include contributing as a member of the National Oral Health Policy Advisory Group and as President of the European College of Gerodontology 2014-2015.

(Dr. Gerry McKenna is a HRB Scholar Alumni from University College Cork. The Programme wishes him every success in his new post in Queens University Belfast)

Dr. Laura Currie Murphy, RCSI

health. I am now using the skills I gained managing research projects, coordinating data collection and analysing large data sets to understand how we can improve the chances of a long and healthy life for women with breast cancer.

As a postdoctoral researcher with the Breast-Predict Collaborative Cancer Research Centre, I am working with the Breast-Predict team and our partners in hospitals across the country to establish retrospective and prospective breast cancer cohorts. We are collecting biological samples and information on general health, quality of life, medication usage, and lifestyle from women diagnosed with breast cancer across Ireland with linked information on tumour characteristics and cancer related outcomes from the National Cancer Registry. This infrastructure can be used to build collaboration for population health and health services research in the area of breast cancer.

The structured Scholars Programme equipped me with a broad foundation of knowledge, a range of transferrable skills and a fluency in the language of population health and health services research that have proven invaluable in my current role. The Programme enabled me to develop my competence and confidence conducting rigorous and robust research. The cohort of scholars who shared ideas and supported each other throughout the PhD process, are now a group of colleagues sharing expertise, contacts, and leads on jobs or funding opportunities. I am very grateful for the opportunities open to me as an alumni of the programme and feel privileged to be part of the growing SPHeRE network of highly committed population health and health services researchers.

(Dr. Laura Currie Murphy is a HRB Scholar Alumni from RCSI, 2008 Cohort)



As a PhD Scholar, my research sought to understand how governments can make the healthier choices the easier choices by implementing public health policies and evaluating whether these policies are effectively changing behaviour and improving population

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Future Directions and Collective Strengths in Dementia Research The Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland \(CARDI\) and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland Conference, 12 December 2014, Dublin.](#)

[Genio Annual Dementia Conference 12 December 2014, Dublin.](#)

[8th Congress of the International Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology- European Region 2015, 23 – 25 April, Dublin.](#)

[ICT for Ageing Well and e-Health \(ICT 4 Ageing Well\) Conference, 20–22 May 2015, Lisbon, Portugal. Call for abstracts now open.](#)

Congratulations

Congratulations to Prof. Jane Grimson on her recent retirement from her post as Director of Health Information with the Health Information Quality Authority (HIQA)!

During her career, Jane served as Chair of the Centre for Health Informatics at TCD, Vice-Provost of the College and Chair of the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology.

Jane also sat on the SPHeRE Steering Group and was involved in teaching on the Programme. We wish to thank Jane for her fantastic work and wish her every happiness in her retirement.



SPHeRE CONFERENCE

We look forward to seeing you all at the first annual SPHeRE Network Conference in RCSI on January 9th!

STAY IN TOUCH!

If you'd like more information about the SPHeRE Network or would like to contribute to our next newsletter, please email Margaret Curtin (m.curtin@ucc.ie)

For all the latest updates, follow us on Twitter [@SPHeREprogramme](#) or visit our website for more information : www.sphereprogramme.ie

The National Consultative Forum

The SPHeRE Programme's inaugural National Consultative Forum (NCF) meeting took place on Friday September 5th. The NCF's composition is by invitation and is composed of academics from the 8 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), policy, practice and advocacy groups as well as representation from the HRB. The Forum has three primary functions:

1. To advise on national population health and health services research (PHHSR) priorities;

2. To support the Programme in building a national network of researchers, policy makers and practitioners in PHHSR;

3. To advise on the development of a stronger knowledge translation role within the SPHeRE programme, bridging the gap between policy/practice and research/academia.

The discussions at the autumn meeting focussed on development of a list of key PHHSR research priorities for the coming 5 years, with

members in attendance agreeing to draw up a list of research priorities and topics of interest that are of direct concern to their organisations, through a process of collaboration with their colleagues. This list will be collated by the SPHeRE team and ultimately will inform the direction of PHHS doctoral research conducted via the HRB funded SPHeRE Programme.



L-R: Ciarán McCarthy (SPHeRE Programme), Tony O'Brien (Health Services), Prof. Richard Layte (ESRI), Prof. Jane Grimson (HIQA), Dr. Donna Tedstone (HRB), Dr. Stephanie O'Keefe (Health Services), Prof. Steve Thomas (SPHeRE Programme Co-Director, TCD), Prof. Anne Hickey (SPHeRE Programme Director, RCSI)

The Health Research Board (HRB) supports excellent research that improves people's health, patient care and health service delivery. We aim to ensure that new knowledge is created and then used in policy and practice. In doing so, we support health system innovation and create new enterprise opportunities.

