

SPHeRE *network*

POPULATION HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH NETWORK UPDATE

A word from your new Network Director



A new academic year, a new cohort of SPHeRE scholars and a new SPHeRE Director for Network and Knowledge Translation!

"I joined the SPHeRE team in August as your new Assistant Director for Networks and Knowledge Translation. I completed my PhD in University College Cork investigating alcohol consumption among university students. My post-doctorate research involves evaluating the impact of community and education sector approaches in reducing the harmful impacts of alcohol consumption. And now it involves you—the SPHeRE Network. I've lots of ideas on how to build the network and make it easier for you to contact one another, coordinate activities and share knowledge on priorities in improving the public's health. I am also really interested in hearing all of your ideas on what you want from the SPHeRE Network and how it could best work for you."

Recently, the SPHeRE Network said goodbye to Dr Margaret Curtin who moved to a new post in the School of Nursing in UCC. Many thanks to Margaret for all her hard work in developing the network, organising network events, and investigating future research areas.

As Margaret says goodbye, it's hello to Dr Martin Davoren, your new Assistant Director for Networks and Knowledge Translation. Martin took up the post in August.

WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of the SPHeRE Network Newsletter. In this edition we are focusing on our achievements to date and our plans for the future. We are welcoming our new Assistant Director for Networks and Knowledge Translation and our new cohort of SPHeRE scholars embarking on their PhD journey. We are looking back at the images and impressions taken from events past, and looking forward to our Autumn Seminar, as well as the 3rd Annual SPHeRE Network conference early in the New Year.

SPHeRE *network* 3rd Annual Conference

SUPPORTING SOLUTIONS:
Connecting Research, Policy & Practice

Thursday, Jan. 12th, 2017
RCSI, Dublin



Call for Abstracts

Abstract submission for the 3rd Annual SPHeRE Conference opened on September 22nd. The closing deadline is October 24th. Speakers will be notified by 29th November.

Visit www.sphereprogramme.ie to view the abstract submission guidelines and submit an abstract

REGISTRATION

Conference Registration will open on 29th November. Registration information will be disseminated across our network mailing list, twitter and website.

Building on the success of the last two annual conferences, in early 2017 we will have an opportunity to engage again with the most recent Population Health and Health Services Research emerging from Ireland. In keeping with the overarching aim of creating a space for dialogue, the conference will be structured to encourage discussion.

To find out more about the Conference and confirmed speakers, visit www.sphereprogramme.ie

@sphereprogramme
#sphere17

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 until 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 **Fergal O'Shaughnessy (UL)** for his outstanding results in the six taught modules of the programme, and was presented by Prof. Steve Thomas at the annual Peer Learning Event. Congratulations Fergal on this fantastic achievement!

Welcome to our new scholars!

Congratulations and welcome to our new batch of SPHeRE scholars who will begin their PhD journey next month. The new cohort includes 8 scholars registered in 6 Higher Education Institutes nationwide.

We will feature more on our new scholars - Claire Kerins, Gillian Maher, Deirdre Coy, Kathleen Harkin, Aine O'Dea, Isabelle Jeffares, Caroline Walsh and Eamon O'Murchu - in later issues.

Scholar Publications

To be completed

Year One Experiences

by Marita Hennessy, NUI Galway



Inspiring, enlightening, mind-blowing, challenging – these are just some of the words that come to mind as we reflect on our first year of the SPHeRE Programme.

It has been action-packed since we set out on our SPHeRE journeys, which have taken us to many places – cognitively, physically, and emotionally. From the outset, the group bonded and this peer support, academically and personally, has been the highlight of the year. Each one of us brings, not only our own disciplinary perspectives to the programme, but also our professional and life experiences. And that's before you get to the personalities! This really enriched our learning throughout the year.

We have also benefitted from the support of fellow scholars in other years, the SPHeRE team and the wider network. This has been in addition to the support networks at our individual host institutions, online and personal networks. We have been taught by academics/researchers in population health and health services re-

search (PHHSR) nationally during our modules. In equal measure, they inspired and challenged us on PHHSR and were key sources of support. This research-informed teaching is a cornerstone of the programme and crucial as we aspire to excel and become leaders in our own areas. It gave us an expanded awareness of some of the critical issues in the design and execution of population health and health services research, as well as the importance of building cross-disciplinary relationships and networks.

The experiential learning through group tasks and activities further fostered a rich learning experience. It gave us deeper insights into how to collaborate with other disciplines in practice, for example, being open to different perspectives, recognising the added value that it brings, and being realistic about the challenges and practicalities also of conducting this kind of research. Through our national placements, we were able to witness first-hand the inter-relationship of research, translation and practice.

We look forward to what year two brings and wish everyone, especially the incoming cohort, the very best for the year ahead.

Opening Kingdon's Policy Window: Translating Disability Research into Practice

by Pádraic Fleming, Maynooth University

Recent developments in my doctoral research led me to consider 'Kingdon's policy window', a concept introduced during first year of the SPHeRE programme. Researchers can potentially influence policy and practice when a window of opportunity arises during the convergence of: 1) **problem recognition**, which in the case of my own research, describes a growing discontent with the traditional provision of support services for people with a disability; 2) the **identification of a solution** – that is, 'individualised funding', a new funding mechanism/scheme in Ireland which facilitates self-determined, community-based support, also a key policy recommendation in Ireland since 2012 and; 3) **political will** – in this case, a commitment from the new Minister of State for Disability, Finian McGrath, to set up a taskforce to oversee implementation of 'individualised funding' in Ireland.

Within weeks of the Minister's announcement, Inclusion Ireland and Down Syndrome Ireland had organised a seminar on individualised funding. Following a kind invitation to open the seminar, I presented an overview of our research on four pilot initiatives in Ireland.

The seminar offered me the ideal opportunity to highlight a recently completed research report which provided valuable and unique findings within the Irish context. Minister McGrath was



presented with a copy of the research report and I have subsequently been invited to write a follow-up piece for the September issue of *Frontline*, a top Disability publication in Ireland. Whilst almost impossible to plan, this convergence was not by chance either. It was the result of careful collaboration between SPHeRE, Genio (external funder) and Maynooth University to undertake timely, topical, relevant, and high quality research based on informed, policy and sector-specific knowledge.

For more information on the summary research report or to see my presentation follow the links below:

www.genio.ie/personal-budgets

<http://www.inclusionireland.ie/content/news-items/1504/inclusion-ireland-and-down-syndrome-ireland-host-successful-personal-budgets>

International Society of Behavioural Nutrition & Physical Activity 2016

The International Society of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity (ISBNPA) held its 15th annual meeting in June, in Cape Town, South Africa, bringing ISBNPA to the African continent for the first time.



The meeting, comprising symposia, short orals and workshops provided key updates and debate on recent progress in theory, methods and new findings related to physical activity and nutrition behaviour.

Representing the SPHeRE Scholars programme were Ms Emily Kelleher and Ms Sarah Fitzgerald, who are both based in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health in University College Cork. Ms Kelleher had two oral presentations which focused on the implementation of a multicomponent, community-based, family-focused childhood weight management programme while Sarah Fitzgerald presented her research on obesity, diet quality and absenteeism in the workplace.

*From the art to the science of implementation: perspectives from the **Kings** College London Centre for Implementation Science*

You are invited to attend the SPHeRE Autumn Seminar with Prof. Nick Sevdalis from the Centre for Implementation Science, **Kings** College, London.

The seminar is scheduled to take place on Friday 28th October from 12:30 to 13:30 at Irish House of Lords Chamber, Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2.

As numbers are limited, to register please contact Martin Davoren on m.davoren@ucc.ie.



Nick Sevdalis, PhD—is Professor of Implementation Science & Patient Safety and Director of the Centre for Implementation Science at **Kings** College London. Nick also leads implementation science research at the Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care South London—a collaboration funded by the UK National Institute for Health Research.

PLANNING TO USE THIS SPACE TO TALK ABOUT THE BLOG AND FLAG THE COMING OF A NEW WEB SITE—WHICH WILL BE THE NEW HOME OF THE BLOG

Research Prioritisation

<insert image of exercise taking place>

As you know, the SPHeRE Programme aims to produce research excellence in our PhD students to meet the growing demand for high quality graduates in Population and Health-services Research and so build on and improve the quality and relevance of health research in Ireland.

As SPHeRE has expanded to include all Higher Education Institutes in Ireland and to focus on population health as well as health services research and therefore has implicitly expanded to focus on the wider spectrum of research themes. In order to ensure that this thematic expansion is strategic and reflective of priorities identified by key national stakeholders, SPHeRE is committed to engagement in a research prioritisation process.

The 2nd Annual SPHeRE Network Conference provided an ideal opportunity to engage in research prioritisation exercise with a broad range of stakeholders. The objective of the research prioritisation exercise was to aid the research community in identifying specific research topics which are: (a) in the field of Population Health and Health-services Research (PHHSR); (b) based on Irish health policy and practice related research needs.

During the exercise, a list of all research questions identified during a brainstorming session were prioritised by participants on the following broad themes: Implementation Science; Health Behaviour; Health Policy; Chronic Illness Management; Economic Evaluation; Healthy Aging; Children's Health and Well-being; Health Service Delivery; Public Patient Involvement; Complex Interventions; Mental Health; Translational Research; Physical Activity; Dementia; **Pyscho-social** / Socio-cultural Aspects of Health; Quality and Safety; Healthy Ireland; Patient Outcome Measures / Patient Experience; Health Informatics; Health Systems.

All of the information gathered at the conference has been synthesised into a report and sent to the SPHeRE Steering Committee for review. The Steering Committee are currently discussing the report and with a view to highlighting research priorities for the network by year end.

Many thanks for all of your input during the research prioritisation exercise at the 2nd SPHeRE Network Conference in Feb 2015. We would also thank the Programme Alumni and Scholars who gave generously of their time to facilitate the research prioritisation exercise and participate in a preparatory facilitation workshop. In addition to their work at the conference, they participated in a preparatory facilitation workshop and pilot dummy run.

Upcoming Events

INSERT 3RD PARTY EVENTS

Past Events — in Pictures

2nd Annual SPHeRE Network Conference

The 2nd SPHeRE Conference “Population health & health services research in Ireland: current trends and future direction” took place on 29th February this year in RCSI. It was a resounding success – a lively and informative event attended by over 170 delegates. There were 2 keynote presentations, 40 parallel presentations and 36 posters on a range of topics reflecting the diversity of Population Health and Health Services Research in Ireland. The afternoon was dedicated to a research prioritisation exercise with a broad range of stakeholders.

<INSERT IMAGES>

Conference Session Summary

By Fergal O’Shaughnessy, RCSI

‘Acute Hospital Dementia Care: A four country comparison’ - Emma O’Shea (UCC) and ‘Patterns of prescribing in older people with and without dementia on admission to Irish hospitals’ - Kieran Walsh (UCC).

Emma delivered an interesting presentation which compared dementia care in acute hospitals in England and Wales (EW), Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland. Of particular interest to the session audience was the finding that antipsychotic prescribing was significantly higher in the Republic of Ireland (24%) compared with other countries studied (6% (EW) & 5% (NI)). In addition to this, Emma reported poor documentation of reasons for antipsychotic prescribing in acute Irish Hospitals compared with other countries.

This was nicely followed up by Kieran Walsh’s presentation which described the use of psychotropic medicines among older people in acute Irish Hospital settings. Kieran’s findings also demonstrate a high use of psychotropic medicines in older hospitalised patients and a significant level of psychotropic polypharmacy in people with dementia. Due to the adverse outcomes which are associated with psychotropic polypharmacy in this population, Kieran stressed the importance of medication reviews during hospital admission. However, as alluded to by Emma, poor documentation at the time of initiation may be a barrier to reviewing psychotropic polypharmacy in an acute hospital setting.

SPHeRE Network Summer Seminar

The SPHeRE Network Summer Seminar “The use of randomised controlled trails for complex interventions” with Professor Ken Ward took place on 18th May in the Long Room Hub, Trinity College, Dublin.

Ken Ward, PhD is Professor and Director of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences at The University of Memphis School of Public Health.

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Suggestions for back page....

STAY IN TOUCH!

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

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