



SPHeRE network

POPULATION HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES NETWORK UPDATE...

ABOUT THE SPHERE PROGRAMME

The SPHeRE (Structured Population and Health-services Research Education) Programme is an innovative and ambitious research programme in population health and health services research (PHHSR) funded by the Health Research Board (HRB).

It encompasses the expansion of a well-established and successful structured PhD Programme in Health Services Research, alongside key objectives to establish a national network in PHHSR, expanding to include all higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ireland beyond the three founding institutions (the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), University College Cork (UCC) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD)), and developing a programme of online modular education accessible to all.

The new programme will provide education and training for five cohorts of PhD scholars annually (2013-2017). The SPHeRE Programme will develop a national training facility that (i) encompasses all universities in the Republic of Ireland; (ii) provides a meeting place for future cohorts of researchers; (iii) is accessible to those outside the PhD training system; (iv) focuses on research that is relevant to population health and health services challenges in Ireland; and (v) aims to facilitate the translation and implementation of the research produced by its students. In order to enhance the process of research translation the SPHeRE Network has been established. The Network will provide opportunities to share research priorities and findings across sectors.

WELCOME

Welcome to the first SPHeRE Network newsletter. This quarterly newsletter will provide updates on the SPHeRE Programme, developments in Population Health and Health Services Research in Ireland, and notification of events of interest to the sector.

This first issue focuses on introducing the SPHeRE Programme and Network. It gives a snapshot of the type of research undertaken by the scholars on the programme. There is a featured piece on one graduate, who is now working on health policy issues with the Institute of Public Health. Up-coming events which will be of interest are also outlined.

SAVE THE DATE

The first SPHeRE conference will take place on:

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9TH 2015

in RCSI College Hall,
123, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

We look forward to seeing you there!



Mr Enda Connelly, HRB; Prof. Reinhard Busse, European Observatory on Health Systems; Prof. Hannah Mc Gee, RCSI, Prof. Patricia Kearney, UCC; Prof. Anne Hickey, RCSI; Mr. Tony O'Brien, Director General of the HSE and Prof. Steve Thomas, TCD, at the SPHeRE Launch

Introducing the SPHeRE Network

The SPHeRE Programme moves beyond research training to the creation of a network of highly trained researchers who can competently research the current Irish health system, informing policy and implementation initiatives with the aim of improving population health and health service delivery for the people of Ireland. The need for such a networked approach was outlined in 'The Review of Population Health Research and Health Services Research in Ireland' conducted by the HRB in 2011.

The SPHeRE Network is now emerging as a national network that aims to connect research, policy and practice in population health and health services. It brings together those who produce and use re-

search and welcomes members who are interested in developing dialogue between research and health action.

The Network is hosted by University College Cork. For further information on the SPHeRE Network contact Margaret Curtin, Assistant Director for Network Development, e-mail m.curtin@ucc.ie



SCHOLAR PUBLICATIONS

Cahir, C., T. Fahey, C. Teljeur, and K. Bennett. 2014. "[Prescriber variation in potentially inappropriate prescribing in older populations in Ireland.](#)" *BMC Family Practice* 15(1): 59.

Curtin, M., D. Baker, A. Staines, and I. Perry. 2014. "[Are the special educational needs of children in their first year in primary school in Ireland being identified: a cross-sectional study.](#)"

O'Neill, C. B., J. P. O'Neill, C. L. Atoria, S. S. Baxi, M. C. Henman, I. Ganly and E. B. Elkin (2014). "[Treatment complications and survival in advanced laryngeal cancer: A population based analysis.](#)" *The Laryngoscope* DOI: 10.1002/lary.24658

Research Snapshots

Scholars on the SPHeRE Programme are engaged in a wide variety of Population Health and Health Service Research. The following is a snapshot of research currently being conducted.

Supporting suicide and self-harm reduction strategies through effective research

By Irene O'Farrell

Deliberate self-harm is a major public health problem both nationally and globally which results in an estimated 9,000 persons presenting to hospital emergency departments each year in Ireland. In 2002, the direct cost associated with hospital treated self-harm amounted to approximately €20.3 million. However, current costs will be considerably more as the rate of hospital treated self-harm has been increasing in both men and women since 2006.

International research has identified self-harm as being the one of the strongest risk factor for suicide. However, the risk of suicide after self-harm is not well established as relatively few countries have accurate data on self-harm. Given that Ireland is the only country in the world that has a national registry for the population monitoring of hospital treated deliberate self-harm, my research will be the first to establish the risk of suicide and death from external causes after an episode of

hospital treated self-harm at a national level. Moreover, much research to date has focused on examining the association between area-level factors (such as deprivation or social fragmentation) and suicide, while relatively few studies have examined this association in relation to self-harm.

The main objectives of my PhD research are to examine the association between hospital treated self-harm incidence and area level risk factors and to establish the risk of suicide and deaths from other external causes in hospital treated self-harm patients. Reducing suicide and self-harm is an explicit goal of the Irish national strategy on suicide prevention 'Reach Out'; and to do this evidence from appropriate research is needed to inform preventative strategies. The estimation of the risk of suicide after an episode of self-harm needs to be accurate if we are to plan services aimed at reducing the rate of suicide. It is hoped the findings from my



research will enhance our insight into the predictors of suicidal behaviour and therefore help inform preventative strategies.

(Irene O Farrell is in the final year of the former PhD Scholars programme in UCC. She is based in the National Suicide Research Foundation.)

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SCHOLAR PUBLICATIONS

O'Neill, S.M., Kearney, P.M., Kenny, L.C., Henriksen, T.B., Lutomski, J.E., Greene, R.A., Khashan, A.S. "[Caesarean Delivery and Subsequent Pregnancy Interval - A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis](#)" National Institute of Health Sciences Research Bulletin. 2014; 7(1), pp. 15. Link:

Sinnott, S.-J., M. Guinane, H. Whelton, and S. Byrne. 2013. "[Is 50 cent the price of the optimal copayment? - a qualitative study of patient opinions and attitudes in response to a 50 cent charge on prescription drugs in a publicly funded health system in Ireland.](#)" BMC Health Services Research 13(1): 16.

Brennan A, Browne JP, Horgan M. "[A systematic review of health service interventions to improve linkage with or retention in HIV care.](#)" AIDS Care. 2014;26(7):804-12.

A snapshot of scholar research in RCSI

By Lisa Mellon

There have been a number of publications from the RCSI scholars in recent months. RCSI graduate Dr. Laura Currie-Murphy and Yvonne McGowan in May published an article entitled 'Systematic review and meta-analysis of the economic impact of smoking bans in restaurants and bars' in *Addiction*.

Annette Burns and Eithne Sexton recently had a paper accepted to in *the Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, entitled 'Revisiting the dimensionality of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale in an international sample of patients with Ischaemic Heart Disease'.

Dr. Mark Murphy has had two recent publications in the Irish Medical Journal, entitled 'General Practice, Multimorbidity and Evidence Based Policy Making: A Key Challenge', and 'Laboratory test costs: attitudes and awareness among staff in a regional hospital'. Mark also had a recent oral presentation at the Association of Departments of General Practice in Ireland, held in UCC. His talk was entitled 'The asymptomatic general check-up. A survey of GPs in the North West of Ireland'.

Lisa Mellon was awarded her PhD at her recent Viva examination in February. The title of her thesis was 'Time to hospital presentation in acute ischaemic stroke'

(Lisa Mellon is a HRB Scholar Alumni currently employed as a post-doctoral researcher in RCSI)



Alumni Focus

Olga Cleary (nee McDaid)



PhD scholars come from a variety of backgrounds. Moreover the programme is structured in such a manner as to promote interdisciplinary working. As a result scholars are well equipped to work in the health policy and services where it is essential to understand issues from multiple perspectives. The following outlines the career path of one scholar who recently completed the programme.

After working for a number of years in health promotion, in the Irish Cancer Society initially, followed by a position as

Healthy Ageing Programme Coordinator with the National Council on Ageing and Older People, I returned to full-time education to pursue a PhD on the HRB Scholars Programme in Health Services Research in Trinity College Dublin in 2008.

I have a varied academic background holding a postgraduate degree in Geographical Analysis from NUI Maynooth and in Health Promotion from NUI Galway. Undertaking the PhD allowed me to build on my academic background and focus on developing my analytical skills to the high standard required for progressing a career in health policy and research.

Participation on the PhD programme afforded me the opportunity to work on a large nationally representative dataset (The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing), with hands on supervision from three leading academics in the areas of Health

Services Research. The breadth and depth of the topics covered on the programme was exceptional and my learning was enhanced by the high calibre of both the lecturers and scholars on the programme who made it a truly stimulating journey.

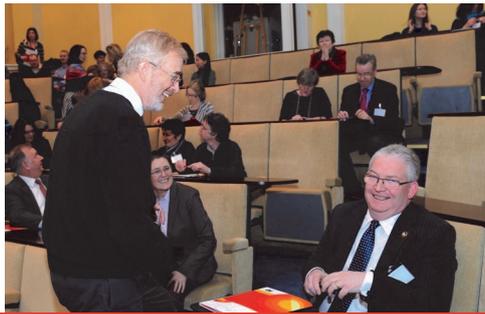
I successfully passed my Viva in 2013 and have been working as a member of the health policy team in the Institute of Public Health for over a year. The broad range of research and policy skills that I developed during my time on the programme are invaluable and serve to ensure a high level of excellence in the quality of the research conducted and evidence-based policy formulation undertaken within my current role in the IPH. A PhD is an inherently individual process. However, the experience can be greatly enhanced by a supportive PhD programme. I'm glad I chose this route and graduating with my PhD in June will be

The SPHeRE Launch

The SPHeRE Programme was officially launched on the 23rd of January this year, with an event in 123, St. Stephen's Green.



Dr. Theresa Maguire, HRB, gives the closing address



Prof. Charles Normand, TCD welcomes Mr. Tony O'Brien, Director General of the Health Service



Keynote speaker Prof. Reinhard Busse, Technical University Berlin and European Observatory on Health Systems



Dr. Rose Galvin, RCSI with HRB scholars Ethine Sexton, Grainne Cousins and Emma Wallace



Prof. Steve Thomas, TCD, Prof. Patricia Kearney, UCC, Prof. Anne Hickey and Prof. Hannah Mc Gee, RCSI, Prof. Ivan Perry, UCC, Prof. Charles Normand, TCD



Dr. Eve O'Toole with SPHeRE scholars Mary Morrissey and Niamh O'Rourke

Upcoming Conferences & Events

[The Health Services Research Network \(HSRN\) Symposium](#), 19 – 20th June, Nottingham Conference Centre

[Health Service Research: Evidence-based practice](#), 1 – 3rd July, Kings College, London

[13th Annual Kaleidoscope International Palliative Care Conference](#): Life and Living at the Heart of Palliative Care, 28th - 29th May 2014 Dublin

[NUI Galway 18th Annual Health Promotion Conference](#): Applying the principles of Health Promotion to population health improvement, Wednesday 11th June, 2014

[Northern Ireland Public Health Annual Scientific Conference](#): Recognising diversity in Public Health, 16th June 2014, Riddel Hall, Stranmillis, Northern Ireland

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

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Barker, C. I. S. and M. D. Snape. 2014. "Pandemic influenza A H1N1 vaccines and narcolepsy: vaccine safety surveillance in action." *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* 14(3): 227-38.

Harrington, J. M., D. L. Dahly, A. P. Fitzgerald, M. S. Gilthorpe, and I. J. Perry. 2014. "Capturing changes in dietary patterns among older adults: a latent class analysis of an ageing Irish cohort." *Public Health Nutrition* FirstView: 1-13

Lutonski, J., M. Murphy, D. Devane, S. Meaney, and R. Greene. 2014. "Private health care coverage and increased risk of obstetric intervention." *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* 14(1): 13.

Walsh, B. and J. Cullinan. 2014. "Decomposing socioeconomic inequalities in childhood obesity: Evidence from Ireland." *Economics & Hum Biol.*