



HPRC

Health Promotion Research Centre

14th Annual Health Promotion Conference

**Multidisciplinary Approaches to
Men's Health**

NUI Galway

June 10th and 11th, 2010



Conference Steering Committee:

Mr. Robbie Breen	Assistant Principal Officer, Health Promotion Policy Unit, Department of Health and Children
Ms. Bidy O'Neill	Health Promotion Manager- National Programmes, Health Service Executive
Dr. Paula Carroll	Men's Health Research, Health Promotion Department, Health Service Executive South.
Dr. Noel Richardson	Director, Centre for Men's Health, Institute of Technology Carlow
Mr. Owen Metcalfe	Associate Director, Institute of Public Health in Ireland
Dr. Jacky Jones	Functional Manager for Health Promotion, Health Service Executive West
Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn	Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway
Dr. Margaret Hodgins	Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway
Dr. Claire Connolly	Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway
Dr. Martin Power	Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway

Conference Secretariat:

Dr. Vivienne Batt	Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway
Ms. Christina Costello	Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Health Promotion Research Centre Annual Conference

10th and 11th June, 2010

Thursday June 10th: Conference - Day 1

- 10.30am Conference Registration
- 11am Welcome by Professor Gerard Loftus, College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences, NUI Galway.
Venue: D'arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre
- 11.15am *Working towards common goals & shared strategies for men's health in the 21st Century*
Prof. Alan White, Centre for Men's Health, Leeds Metropolitan University
- Men's health in Ireland – key milestones to date, key challenges ahead*
Dr. Noel Richardson, Centre for Men's Health, Institute of Technology Carlow
Venue: D'arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre
Chair: Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, NUI Galway.
- 12.15pm Panel Discussion / Open Forum
Venue: D'arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre
Chair: Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, NUI Galway.
- 12.45pm **Lunch**
- 1.45pm *"A Sea Change" The Australian Male Health Policy, from pathologies to salutogenesis*
*Prof. John MacDonald, Foundation Chair in Primary Health Care & Director, Men's Health Information and Resource Centre, University of Western Sydney Richmond.
- 2.30pm *Successful examples for working with men in primary care*
Dr. Mark Rowe, GP, Rowe Creavin Medical Practice
Venue: D'arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre
Chair: Ms. Biddy O'Neill, Health Service Executive
- 3.15pm **Parallel Workshops** (coffee available to go)
- *Engaging men in health services (Venue: AC213)*
Mr. Lorcan Brennan, Men's Health Coordinator, Men's Development Network, Waterford & Mr. Barry Lambe, Lecturer, Department of Health, Sport & Exercise Science School of Health Science Waterford Institute of Technology
 - *Engaging men in the community (Venue: AC214)*
Mr Liam Bolger, Men's Development Coordinator, Men's Development Network, Waterford & Mr. Donal Grehan, Galway Men's Group
 - *Men's health, women's work (Venue: AC215)*
Ms. Biddy O'Neill, Functional Manager Health Promotion Programmes, HSE & Mr. Owen Metcalfe, Associate Director, Institute of Public Health in Ireland
- 4:45pm Wine & Canape reception and exhibition of art work by Men's Development Network.

* This speaker is sponsored by NUI Galway's Millennium Fund

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Friday June 11th

Conference Day 2

- 9.15am Feedback from parallel workshops
Venue: D'arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre
- 9.30am *How to successfully engage men on health matters*
Dr. Muiris Houston, Medical Journalist & Health Analyst
Venue: D'arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre
Chair: Dr. Noel Richardson, Institute of Technology Carlow
- 10.00am Examples of good practice in promoting men's health (15 mins each)
 - *Farmers' have hearts* - Mr. Paul Gillen
 - *Carlow Men's Health Project* - Dr. Paula Carroll
 - *SpunOut.ie* - Mr. Ruiari McKiernan
 - *Traveller Men* - Ms. Loretta Holleran*Venue: D'arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre*
Chair: Mr. Owen Metcalfe, Institute of Public Health in Ireland
- 11.00am **Coffee**
- 11.15am Oral Presentations (Parallel)
Chairs: Mr. Colin Fowler, Men's Health Forum in Ireland (Venue: AC213)
Dr. Martin Power, NUI Galway (Venue: AC214)
Dr. Claire Connolly, NUI Galway (Venue: AC215)
- 12.45pm Closing remarks, Minister Mary Harney
Conference Reflections, Professor John MacDonald
Venue: D'arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre
Chair: Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, NUI Galway.
- 1.15pm **Lunch**

Art Exhibition

The Men's Development Network is a developmental and consultative organisation that works on four levels; locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The Men's Development Network is delighted to take this opportunity to share some of the creative work produced by men associated with its organisation. The poems, art and photographs in the exhibition have been produced by men linked with the Network.

The Men's Development Network, through the Men's Development Health Programme, continually highlights the supportive role the creative process can play in men's lives.

The exhibition demonstrates how participating in creative processes, provides men with supports which help them develop a better emotional connection with themselves and the world, by expressing that connection in creative and colourful ways.

Plenary Speaker Biographies



Professor Alan White, a Registered Nurse, is Director of the Centre for Men's Health, Leeds Metropolitan University and Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Men's Health Forum (England & Wales). His research includes the 'Scoping Study on Men's Health' for the Department of Health; the 'Report on the State of Men's Health across 17 European Countries'; and the recent report in conjunction with the NCIN and CRUK on the 'Excess Burden of Cancer in Men in the UK'. Currently he is heading up an international team of academics for the first 'European State of Men's Health Report' for the European Commission. His research also includes work on men's experiences of illness including coronary heart disease, diabetes and prostate cancer; the evaluation of the national pilots for Self Care as part of the NHS WiPP and a study on the Bradford Health of Men initiative. Recently Alan has been working with Headingley stadium in Leeds to establish health checks for the supporters of the Leeds Rhino's, Leeds Carnegie and Yorkshire Cricket and is undertaking an evaluation study of Premier League Health for young men, which is being run through the Football Premier League in England.



Dr Noel Richardson has extensive experience in the area of men's health at a research, policy and advocacy level. He is principal author of the first ever National Policy on Men's Health, which was published in Ireland in January, 2009. He has worked as a senior researcher and policy advisor in men's health at the Department of Health in Ireland since 2002. During that time, he produced a landmark research report in men's health and co-ordinated an extensive nationwide consultation process, both of which informed the development of the National Policy on Men's Health. He completed a doctoral thesis in men's health in 2007 and has a number of peer-reviewed and other publications in men's health. He is director of the Centre for Men's Health at the Institute of Technology Carlow in Ireland, with responsibility for men's health research and training. He has presented at international conferences on men's health and is a respected spokesperson on men's health in Ireland through television, radio and print media. He is chair of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland and a board member of the European Men's Health Forum.



Professor John Macdonald holds the Foundation Chair in Primary Health Care (PHC) and is Director of the Men's Health Information & Resource Centre at University of Western Sydney. He is also Visiting Professor of Community and Public Health, University of BirZeit, Palestine. He endorses the Aboriginal definition of PHC which sees it as working on the immediate health situation in a way which contributes to dealing with the deeper causes of problems. Current research includes inequalities in health and men's health. He has been Men's Health Ambassador preparing the National Male Health Policy (launched May 2010). He sees great value in the PHC approach in that it promotes a system combining access to basic health services for all as well as a *salutogenic* approach, including the promotion of healthy environments (the title of his latest book)

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health



Dr. Mark Rowe is a practising Family Doctor based in Waterford City. He is founder and owner of the Waterford Health Park, a multidisciplinary enhanced primary health care campus based in Waterford City. He graduated from U.C.D. Medical School in 1991 and went on to specialise in family practice and became a qualified member of the Irish College of General Practitioners in 1995 achieving the first place 'Ellerd Eppel' award. He is author of 'The Mens Health Book 'A Guide for the Irish Man' which was published by Blackhall Publishing in 2009 with all royalties going to a Cancer Charity. He is a trainer with the South East G.P. Training Programme. Dr. Rowe has published a number of national guidelines and articles in the Irish College of General Practitioners Journal 'Forum'. He has worked with national media outlets on several occasions promoting men's health issues. He has also given seminars and has acted as guest speaker on the topic of 'Men's Health'. He ran the New York Marathon in 2007 and fundraised for two charities. His current research interest is in the area of 'generative space' which means that by providing inspiring surroundings in the primary healthcare setting you can enhance the esteem and feel good factor of both patients and staff with resultant long term health improvements. Dr. Rowe is a part of worldwide research collaboration on 'Generative space' and is involved in ongoing research with the CARITAS project. The CARITAS Project is a non-profit organisation dedicated to pioneering the next generation of improvements in health and healthcare delivery through innovative design of the healthcare environment.



Lorcan Brennan is the Men's Health Coordinator of the Men's Development Health Programme. Through the MDHP's programmes and initiatives he supports men to create community by moving out of isolation. Central to all the work is supporting men to pay attention to their lives, their families and their communities. All the work supports change in the way men live their lives, the way men are understood and the way services are provided to men. The work informs service delivery with a view to improving men's access to and experience of those services, provides focus for work with men on health in communities and other settings and implements the Community Development aspect of the National Men's Health Policy. The Men's Development Network is the national network for work with men, supporting men living with the consequences of marginalisation. It has many years experience in delivering short training inputs to Community and Voluntary sector. It has expertise in Men's Health, Men's Development, Gender Equality, Gender Conditioning, Domestic Violence, and the effects of disadvantage on the individual and the family. In existence for 15 years, we work with men in development groups in a variety of settings.



Barry Lambe is a lecturer in Physical Activity and Health Promotion in Waterford Institute of Technology. He has previously worked with the Irish College of General Practitioners as a researcher and as a Health Promotion Officer with the Health Service Executive. Barry is currently a tutor for the National GP Exercise Referral Programme and a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health



Liam Bolger is the Men's Development Coordinator with the Men's Development Network now working locally, regionally and nationally to address issues impacting on men's lives in areas of health, domestic violence, community development, traveller men's development, research and one to one counselling. He has facilitated Men's Development Groups, MDN Local and Regional Men's Development and Issue Based Days and the Annual National Men's Development and Training Summer School. He is qualified in Community Education and Project Development and Social, Personal and Health Education. He has thirty years experience in men's development. Liam is the father of three children, a girl and two boys.



Donal Grehan is one of the founding members of the Galway Men's Support Group, which began in 1996. Galway Men's Support Group promotes authentic and healthy manhood through self development, shared experience, creative arts and education. Through his own personal search and his work with Galway Men's Support Group, Donal is keenly aware of the struggles, emptiness and isolation experienced by men and the need for nourishing and supportive communities. He has found in men a deep yearning for meaning and soulful communication, even when material needs are reasonably well satisfied. He has qualifications in education, agricultural and community development.



Biddy O'Neill is the Health Promotion Manager in the HSE with responsibility for National Health Promotion Programmes. Biddy has worked in Health Promotion since 1993, and was the Health Promotion Manager in the former South East for over ten years. From 2003 to 2006 she worked as the Health Promotion Advisor with the Department of Health and Children. Her background is in Nursing, Counselling and Adult Education and she has an MA in Health Promotion.



Owen Metcalfe is the Associate Director and Senior Management Team member with the Institute of Public Health in Ireland. In the Institute he leads on health promotion, youth, elderly and gender targeted programmes. He directs the cross cutting area of health impact assessment and leads on the communications brief. Owen is also the company secretary and takes the lead on governance, finance and human resources issues. Prior to joining the Institute Owen worked as Chief Health Promotion Advisor for the Department of Health and Children. He has also worked as a teacher, trainer and counsellor. He has a Master's Degree in Health Promotion, a degree in Business Studies, a Higher Diploma in Education and a postgraduate counselling qualification. He has been involved in health education and health promotion for twenty years and is widely conversant with public health and health promotion policy, planning and implementation at regional, national and international levels. In his current position Owen has a commitment to personal and organisational development for improving the effectiveness of public health.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health



Muiris Houston graduated in medicine from Trinity College Dublin in 1985. He subsequently completed specialist training in occupational medicine and in general practice. He worked for almost 10 years as a GP principal and occupational physician in Dublin, before moving to rural County Galway in 2000 as part of a career change when he was appointed medical correspondent with The Irish Times. He is a regular health analyst in both Irish and English on TV and radio. He was medical journalist of the year in both 2001 and 2002. His major research interests are narrative medicine and patient safety.



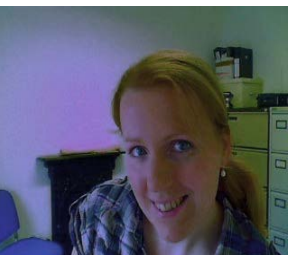
Paul Gillen is married with one daughter and has been living in Galway for 25 years. He works in health promotion services HSE West. He has a master's degree in Sociology and Politics (NUIG) and a master's degree in Exercise and Health Promotion (St. Mary's Strawberry Hill, London). He has been working in the area of health promotion for the past 10 years with a particular focus on physical activity and Men's health. Most of his work on men's health centres on delivering programmes to Fathers, Isolated Men, Rural Farmers, Homeless men, Traveller men, Older men and Asylum Seekers. He is also a keen sports man with an interest in many sports such as rugby, GAA, swimming, weight training, fitness training, hill walking, and is himself a second degree black belt in judo.



Dr Paula Carroll began her research career in 1998. In 2001 she was awarded the Donegan Medal for young scientists by the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland for work contributing to her PhD. In 2004 she was seconded from her lecturing post at Waterford Institute of Technology to research and co-author Ireland's National Men's Health Policy that was published in 2008. She continues to work part time with the HSE to implement the policy. Her research interests include men's health promotion and community development. She is also a trustee of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland.



Ruairí McKiernan is the Founder and Director of the pioneering Galway based SpunOut.ie organisation. SpunOut.ie uses the web to promote action and awareness on health and social issues amongst young people aged 16-25 and reaches over 500,000 users online each year. Ruairí setup the organisation in response to the serious lack of information, supports and opportunities for young people and has led it to becoming a major force for positive change within youth culture as well as picking up major awards along the way.



Loretta Holleran works as a Health Promotion Worker in the Midlands with Traveller Men. Her work is undertaken with a focus on engaging Traveller men and increasing their participation in community development. Loretta has established and is now co-ordinating the Midlands Traveller Men's Health Network. She has also established a number of Traveller Men's groups throughout Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Longford. Loretta graduated from NUI Galway with a B.A in Legal Science, Sociology and Politics. She then completed a Higher Diploma in Youth and Community Work in NUI Maynooth. Loretta is presently completing a Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion in

conjunction with NUIG and the HSE. She worked for a number of years in Finglas, North Dublin, as a Youth Worker specifically for the Traveller Community before taking up her current position.

Plenary Sessions

Presenter: Prof. Alan White, Centre for Men's Health, Leeds Metropolitan University

Title: Working towards common goals and shared strategies for men's health in the 21st Century

With the end of the first decade of the 21st Century comes a good opportunity to reflect back on where we have come from and where we appear to be going with regards to men's health. Though work had been ongoing for some time it was the start of the millennium that saw the real awakening of interest in men's health. Since then progress has occurred rapidly, with men's health policy being formulated in Ireland and Australia, the Men's Health Forum (England & Wales) becoming a strategic partner with the Department of Health and the European Men's Health Forum gaining a voice on many influential European bodies. We also see the First European State of Men's Health report underway for the European Commission. There is also a growth in research on sex and gender in bio-medicine and the development of a new branch of medical research and practice. All this work is augmented by a wave of activity at the grass roots level, with many different initiatives aimed at the health and well-being of men and boys sprouting up across the globe.

These are impressive achievements in such a short period of time. This paper will briefly review these successes to date, and then move onto a consideration of the implications for research, policy and practice in order to explore how we raise the theory base, engage key stakeholders and engage men more effectively in managing their own health needs. To conclude, a reflection will be offered on the challenges to come as we steer this embryonic movement into a fully fledged discipline.

Presenter: Dr. Noel Richardson, Centre for Men's Health, Institute of Technology Carlow

Title: Men's health in Ireland – Key milestones to date, key challenges ahead.

There has been an upsurge of interest and activity around men's health in Ireland in recent years, mirroring an international trend that has established an increased spotlight on men's health more generally. The impetus for this can be traced to an increased awareness of the burden of ill-health experienced by men, particularly as defined by lower life expectancy and higher mortality rates compared to women. Against a backdrop of unprecedented social and economic change, there has also been increased attention on the significant changes and challenges to more traditional male roles and to men's sense of place in Irish society. Central to this has been the dramatic rise in unemployment levels and labour market vulnerability prompted by the global recession.

Nevertheless, the field of men's health in Ireland has been greatly strengthened during the past decade by research and advocacy work and by a variety of grass-roots work in the statutory and community/ voluntary sectors. What has arguably been the most significant development in the relatively short evolution of men's health in Ireland, has been the publication in January 2009 of a national men's health policy. This paper will chart the key milestones that led to the development of the policy and will identify the significant challenges that lie ahead in ensuring that the policy recommendations and actions are implemented in a way that will make a meaningful difference to the health status of men in Ireland in the years ahead.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Presenter: Prof. John MacDonald, Foundation Chair in Primary Health Care & Director, Men's Health Information and Resource Centre, University of Western Sydney Richmond.

Title: "A Sea Change" The Australian Male Health Policy, from pathologies to salutogenesis

The publication in May of the Australian National Male Health Policy, perhaps only the second in the world after Ireland's can be seen as a watershed.

Until this year men's health was seen as either the domain of urology or of a certain kind of sociology. In the first instance, a definitely medical perspective focusing on clinical interventions; in the second, a sociological focus on something called "masculinity", a construct used to explain almost everything in men's health from their lower life expectancy to the fact that there are more services for women than men. We could say two pathology foci: one on physical pathologies, the other on psychological pathologies as encapsulated in statements of received wisdom such as "men don't get in touch with their feelings", "Men don't care for their health", "Masculinity lends itself to violence" and the like.

Until this year we had no national men's health policy but these two streams, especially the second, shaped the programs for men and the orientation of such male services as there were: anger management, Drug and Alcohol etc. We lived in a culture which didn't have a very positive view of men.

That culture is changing. The subtitle of the National Men's Health Policy, launched by the Prime Minister in a man's shed in semi rural Victoria is "Building on the Strengths of Australian Males". Its themes of the social determinants of male health, the concern for disadvantage and the call for health services to become "male-friendly" can be seen to mark a new beginning for male health in Australia. Just as the rest of the world had something to learn from the Irish Men's Health Policy, it is probable that there may be things of interest for a wider audience in the development and promulgation of the Australian Male Health Policy.

John Macdonald is the Foundation Chair in Primary Health Care at the University of Western Sydney, President of the Australasian Men's Health Forum and Director of Men's Health in his own university. He has been closely involved in the development of the national policy.

Presenter: Dr. Mark Rowe, GP, Rowe Creavin Medical Practice

Title: Successful examples for working with men in primary care

We live in the rapidly moving information age with the latest news, traffic, weather and sport only a finger tip or text message away. The same applies to information on health yet, as the saying goes, you can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.

As a family doctor with a special interest in men's health I am aware of the large gap that exists in many cases between Irish men and good health. Indeed this gap is widening all the time with more and more men succumbing to largely preventable illnesses, often with tragic consequences.

Hence the idea for the book, the aim of which is to simply help bridge the gap in knowledge that sometimes exists on the ground, as well as challenge the prevailing attitudes to healthcare among Irish men. As a family doctor practicing in a busy city practice I am well aware of the natural reluctance of many Irish men to access healthcare, except in an emergency. Of course none of the information in this book is designed to replace the one-to-one relationship with your doctor. However I also know from experience that many Irish men don't have a doctor or at least one they know well enough!

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

For the Irish man who takes the time and effort to read any, part, or all of the book I hope it will help give him the confidence to approach his family doctor if and when necessary. The important message is that men can take control of their health and improve it significantly. Prevention is after all much better than cure. As they say, 'a stitch in time saves nine'.

Of course men's health affects all of us and not just men either. For the women who have fathers, brothers, sons, husbands or friends, men's health issues are important for you too. As men we have a responsibility to nurture that gift of good health, to keep ourselves right. This means we need to be willing to change, to accept help, to readjust the speedometer and to get a regular service too!

This book is in many ways the product of the current knowledge, thinking and understanding of men's health issues. In this regard I am grateful for and wish to acknowledge my medical colleagues worldwide whose wisdom, experience and research has brought medicine to where it is today. And still the journey of exploration continues. The one certainty in healthcare is that the only constant is change. This means that new pioneering breakthroughs can become established best practice and supersede and replace existing treatments. But the foundations of good health including a healthy diet and lifestyle with plenty of exercise remain constant. The more things change, the more they stay the same!

As a doctor I can appreciate every day just how wonderful the gift of good health is. All parents have a tremendous opportunity to help nurture their children who will become the men of tomorrow. Leading by example can help children to model their behaviour on ours so healthy habits learned young can be engrained for ever. This applies to exercise, diet and a whole range of physical and mental health and lifestyle issues.

I hope that the Men's Health Book will give men the knowledge, confidence and courage to take control of their own health and not become another statistic. Men owe this to the mothers who reared them, to the partners who take care of and worry about them and to the children who depend on them. But, most importantly of all, men owe it to themselves.

All royalties from the Men's Health Book go to the men's cancer division of the Marie Keating Foundation, who work passionately and tirelessly to promote men's cancer awareness.

Presenter: Dr. Muiris Houston, Medical Journalist and Health Analyst

Title: How to successfully engage men on health matters

The paper will look at a broad range of ideas on how to engage men on health matters. Among the areas covered will be social media, electronic communication, the use of humor, and creating interest by proxy. It will also examine the role of sport and opportunities offered by traditionally male gatherings such as marts. The paper will look at ways of attracting men to healthcare facilities as well as discussing why some men seem to have a "block" when it comes to following health advice. And it will examine whether we have done enough to ask men themselves what would spark their interest in health matters.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Presenter: Mr. Paul Gillen, Health Service Executive

Title: Examples of good practice in promoting men's health - *'Farmers' have hearts'*

Despite the rapid growth within the Irish economy, farmers have remained a disadvantaged group. Cardiovascular disease is a significant problem among men in Ireland. The 'Farmers Have Hearts Project' was developed to bring cardiovascular disease preventative services to men within a disadvantaged farming community. This represents a creative approach to target a population outside the traditional primary care setting, as men do not frequently access health service.

The 'Farmers Have Hearts Project' provides a free heart health promotion at livestock marts. At the first visit the participant sees a nurse, a dietician, a physical activity specialist, and a health promotion practitioner, all providers use motivational interviewing to promote behaviour change. A crucial element is to create an awareness of cardiovascular disease, to promote a pro-active healthy lifestyle, and to promote heart health. The project seeks to identify participants with risk factors. A recall visit is offered to all participants at six months to provide support and to assess the impact of any changes that have been made. The 'Farmers Have Hearts Project' has had a positive impact on those attending over a relatively short period of time.

Presenter: Dr. Paula Carroll, Waterford Institute of Technology

Title: Examples of good practice in promoting men's health - *'Carlow Men's Health Project'*

The health status of men is closely linked to economic opportunity in society. Many men are experiencing marginalisation due to social and economic change as well as unemployment, poor education, poverty and/or poor living conditions. The reintegration of these men into community and social networks is essential in terms of improving their health. By empowering these men to take control of their lives, they may ultimately be able to change the circumstances that contribute to their marginalisation. In keeping with existing government policy, Ireland's National Men's Health Policy has prioritised the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised men in society for targeted action.

In response to health issues impacting on men's lives in Carlow town and county, a number of local service providers have come together to pilot a community based integrated strategy to support vulnerable men to improve their health. One hundred and sixty two men availed of a free community based health check and consultation at venues where men gather (e.g., marts and social welfare office) and participated in a health needs assessment. This assessment informed the development of the strategy (August 2009 – February 2011) that is being independently evaluated using the REAIM framework. Three key strategic areas have been identified for action; 1) Awareness Raising, 2) Communications & Public Relations and 3) Delivery of Short Programmes. The strategy is underpinned by a broad social determinants approach to health. The delivery and evaluation of the strategy is ongoing and it is expected that a key outcome will be a "Toolkit" to support community workers to engage men in their work.

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Presenter: Mr. Ruiari McKiernan, SpunOut.ie

Title: Examples of good practice in promoting men's health - '*SpunOut.ie*'

Youth culture is moving so fast that parents, teachers, politicians and health professionals can hardly keep up. Media, especially the internet, has such a powerful influence on young people's thinking and behaviour that it can sometimes seem overwhelming when it comes to engaging with them. The challenge lies not just in competing against this, but in harnessing the vast potential the internet offers us as agents for positive change. This has to go beyond the inevitable brainwaves of 'setting up a website' or 'getting onto face book' and instead requires a change of approach whereby we understand that the internet is participatory, meaning the users have a say, and as such we need to start listening to them, and more importantly acting on what they say. Young men are one of the most hard to reach groups and yet the worlds of alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography and sport, and increasingly the image industry, seem to capture their attentions very well. Lurking beneath shallow notions of what it means to be a young man today is the reality that young men are vulnerable, sensitive and often confused. They want to be listened to, to be respected and to be involved. We must work with them if we are to understand them and in doing so can forge a powerful alliance for change. SpunOut.ie is taking small steps in demonstrating this change of approach. Young people are our guides, the experts that inform what we do. This focus on meaningful engagement and participation is the key to addressing the issues of the day and realising the vast collective power of working together.

Presenter: Mr. Loretta Holleran, Midlands Traveller Men's Health Network

Title: Examples of good practice in promoting men's health - '*Traveller Men*'

In order to develop effective health promotion and community development with Traveller men their inclusion in the decision making process is crucial. Due to Traveller men's often limited history of engagement, this poses significant challenges for those working with Traveller men. Through this presentation the work underway in the midlands will be highlighted which in 2009 saw research completed into Traveller men's health with Traveller men advising on the process. Other initiatives have been developed with Traveller men and are in the ongoing process of development and these will be the basis for the presentation.

The Traveller Men's Network in the midlands is a capacity building network of Traveller men seeking to increase Traveller men's participation on health related decision making fora. This has recently seen Traveller men nominated onto steering committees targeting sensitive and complex issues such as Traveller conflict and Traveller substance misuse. Health Groups have been convened including events that offer Traveller men a safe space to prioritise their health. Training is being delivered to Traveller men to advance leadership within the community towards developing an increase in male friendly Traveller interventions and projects. Health Information materials are being piloted towards delivery to Traveller men's groups throughout the region. While the barriers that are encountered in the course of the work are significant an outline will be given in relation to our attempts to overcome them.

Parallel Workshops

Facilitators: Mr. Lorcan Brennan, Men's Health Coordinator, Men's Development Network, Waterford
Mr. Barry Lambe, Lecturer, Department of Health, Sport and Exercise Science School of Health Science Waterford Institute of Technology

Title: Engaging men in health services

Location: AC213

Facilitators: Mr Liam Bolger, Men's Development Coordinator, Men's Development Network, Waterford
Mr. Donal Grehan, Galway Men's Group

Title: Engaging men in the community

Location: AC214

Facilitators: Ms. Biddy O'Neill, Functional Manager Health Promotion Programmes, Health Service Executive
Mr. Owen Metcalfe, Associate Director, Institute of Public Health in Ireland

Title: Men's health, women's work

Location: AC215

Oral Communications

Friday 11th June, 2010

A	AC213; Chair – Mr. Colin Fowler
11.15	Jacky Jones <i>Developing a scale to measure trust in health promotion partnerships</i>
11.30	Niamh Dunne <i>Assessing the impact of a health promotion initiative targeted at male postal workers in Ireland</i>
11.45	Marita Hennesey <i>'Get Your Life in Gear' truck driver healthy eating and physical activity programme</i>
12.00	John McNamara <i>Promoting farmers health through an occupational health and safety code of practice in Ireland</i>
12.15	Brian Daly <i>Health screening in the workplace – an industry perspective</i>

B	AC214; Chair – Dr. Claire Connolly
11.15	Kieran Murphy <i>Running a men's health promotion evening: a primary care team response to a perceived local need</i>
11.30	Lisa Kirwan <i>Community based health screen targeting vulnerable men</i>
11.45	Michael Bergin <i>To explore gender issues and mental health care provision in Ireland with particular reference to men</i>
12.00	Nicholas Clarke <i>Outcomes of the Men's Health and Wellbeing Programme</i>
12.15	Aoife Osbourne <i>Health Status of Irish Farmers</i>

C	AC215; Chair – Dr. Martin Power
11.15	Amanda Fitzgerald <i>The role of men in fostering positive health among Irish boys</i>
11.30	Colette Kelly <i>Weight concern and dieting among Irish boys</i>
11.45	Evelyn McGee <i>Men's health</i>
12.00	Finian Murray <i>The role of humour in men's health</i>
12.15	Maria Feeney <i>Rural men and suicide: risks and vulnerabilities</i>

Oral Communications

Presentation Title: Developing a scale to measure trust in health promotion partnerships

Author(s) and Affiliation: Jacky Jones, Health Service Executive West

Partnerships for promoting health have been identified as an important strategy for addressing the health challenges that face society. Trust is one of the most important factors that help partnerships function effectively. In health promotion partnerships, trust is an under-researched and poorly understood phenomenon. This study was designed to identify how trust is conceptualised in health promotion partnerships and to develop a trust measurement tool.

Five focus groups were organised with 36 health promotion partners in order to explore how trust is conceptualised in their partnerships. Participants represented health, community, education, arts, sports and youth sectors. A content analysis was carried out on the transcripts and a 14-item, five-point, scale was developed from the findings. This scale was incorporated into an overall questionnaire on partnership functioning which was posted to 469 partners in 40 health promotion partnerships.

A response rate of 72% was achieved (n=337) for the postal survey. The trust scale was subjected to reliability and validity tests. Principal Components Analysis yielded two components, named positive trust and negative mistrust, explaining 59% of the variance. Coefficients ranged from .845 to .511 with eigen values before rotation of 6.58 and 1.66. Cronbach's alpha was .91. Further research is required to establish whether the scale can be used with other types of partnerships.

Presentation Title: Assessing the impact of a health promotion initiative targeted at male postal workers in Ireland

Author(s) and Affiliation: Niamh Dunne Institute of Technology Carlow/ Centre for Men's Health
Noel Richardson Institute of Technology Carlow/ Centre for Men's Health

The impetus for this study arose from the recently published National Men's Health Policy which highlighted disparities in health outcomes between men and women, a growing problem of workplace absenteeism and presenteeism and the importance of the workplace as a setting in targeting men's health work. This project designed a health promotion initiative targeted at male postal workers in Ireland. A specifically commissioned men's health manual called *Male Minder* was disseminated to all Postal workers in Ireland during Men's Health Week 2009, as the focal point of a wider men's health promotion initiative within An Post. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to evaluate the impact of *Male Minder* and specifically to investigate whether Postal workers were more knowledgeable about health or were influenced to change their health behaviours after receiving the manual. Both baseline and six-month follow up data revealed overwhelmingly positive responses to the booklet. Six months after having received the booklet, the majority of workers still had possession of and continued to refer to the booklet, and the booklet was credited with having been the catalyst for a range of positive health behaviour changes. This initiative is a worthwhile example of best practise in targeting health promotion work at men, as evidenced by it being awarded with a 2010 Aramark Healthcare Innovation Award.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Presentation Title: 'Get Your Life in Gear' truck driver healthy eating and physical activity programme

Author(s) and Affiliation: Sinead Duane, Safefood
Marita Hennesey, Safefood

Get Your Life in Gear was developed to tackle obesity in male truck drivers on the island of Ireland (IOI) using a social marketing approach. It aimed to support truck drivers to eat healthily, lead physically active lives, and attain and maintain a healthy lifestyle. It targeted men in non-traditional working environments, encouraging small manageable lifestyle changes and exploring changes in the immediate environment.

Formative research comprised semi-structured interviews with 14 drivers in a workplace in Northern Ireland (NI) and six focus groups across IOI. Key barriers to change included internal factors such as lack of time and ability, but also external factors including perceived health norms within the profession, lack of services and industry demands.

'Get Your Life in Gear' was piloted in NI, via a workplace and service station, and in ROI via a truck stop, with 79 drivers participating. On completion of a lifestyle questionnaire, drivers completed a free health check and were introduced to the programme. Follow-up health checks took place after 12 weeks.

There are a number of interesting findings from this study which will be discussed. Areas that need further exploration arose from this project; particularly the difficulties engaging with hard to reach male audiences, facilitating environmental change and meaningful and partnerships with employers and service providers.

Presentation Title: Promoting farmers' health through occupational health and safety code of practice in Ireland

Author(s) and Affiliation: Mr John McNamara, Teagasc
Professor James Phelan, University College Dublin
Mr Patrick Griffin, Health and Safety Authority
Mr Anthony Morahan, Health and Safety Authority
Mr Thomas Haheesy, Teagasc

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 in Ireland allows the majority of farmers to meet duties regarding safety and health management by complying with a Code of Practice (COP) and completing a Risk Assessment Document (RAD). A National Initiative commenced in 2005 to develop the COP and RAD and to evaluate strategies to assist farmers to effectively complete and implement the COP/RAD requirements. Evaluations were conducted among farmers who attended a half-day training course on completing the RAD, a FETAC accredited 12.5 hour course on Farm Health and Safety and farmers who completed the RAD without training. Evaluation findings related to farmers' health are presented here. Among farmers surveyed (n=281) who participated and trainers (n=51) who delivered half-day training, 73% and 64%, respectively agreed that the messages delivered on farmer's health (including an interview with a medical doctor on DVD) were either 'excellent' or 'very good'. On-farm interviews with farmers (n=93) who completed the RAD indicated that 30% did not avail of a regular health check while just 1.8% of RAD's examined (n=418) stated a requirement for such a check. Overall, the results indicate that more attention should be given to promoting health among farmers.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Presentation Title: Health screening in the workplace - an industry perspective

Author(s) and Affiliation: Brian Daly, MIOSH, Chief Executive Officer, Constructions Workers Health Trust

A presentation outlining the work of Construction Workers Health Trust.

Currently we provide a health screening service to men and women in the Irish Construction industry. We have three teams of occupational health nurses based in the south, west and east coast.

Screening takes place on building sites during normal working hours.

The presentation will outline how we arrange and conduct screening and what we provide during the one to one session with the worker and the medical tests we carry out. There will also be a small number of statistics on the health of construction workers gathered through the use of a lifestyle questionnaire and our clinical tests.

Presentation Title: Running a men's health promotion evening:
a primary care team response to a perceived local need.

Author(s) and Affiliation: Mary O'Malley, Irish Wheelchair Association
John O'Mahoney, Social Worker, Health Service Executive
Kieran Murphy, Cois Abhann Primary Care Team

As part of the commitment of Cois Abhann Primary Care Team in keeping with the primary care strategy (Primary Care: A New Direction Department of Health and Children, 2001) an assessment of the health needs was undertaken in the Cois Abhann Primary Care Team area (Centered around Glin, Co. Limerick) with the assistance of West Limerick Resources in 2005. Concern with regard to men's health and a perceived lack of provision in this regard in the area emerged as a recurring theme. In 2007 the team thus undertook to run a series of Men's Health Promotion Evenings. The Men's Health Promotion Evenings finally ran in the three villages in May and June 2008. A total of 212 men attended over 3 nights. Each participant rotated through a series of 7 stations where lifestyle and cardiovascular risk factors were considered, advice given on diet and weight, prostate and colonic cancer as well as work life balance. Blood was also taken for Cholesterol, PSA and Blood sugar. A copy of the results was given to each participant and to their registered GP. While the detection of previously unknown risk factors or disease was low the satisfaction rating amongst participants was high suggesting a great enthusiasm amongst men for the provision of these types of services.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Presentation Title: Community based health screen targeting vulnerable men

Author(s) and affiliation: Lisa Kirwan, Waterford Institute of Technology
Paula Carroll, Waterford Institute of Technology
Barry Lambe, Waterford Institute of Technology

It is well documented that Irish men do not access health services as frequently as women and cite multiple barriers to doing so (Richardson, 2004). The aim of this study was to assess the effectiveness of providing male-specific health checks at locations where vulnerable men convene.

Cardiovascular health checks were conducted with men in strategically chosen locations (e.g., Social Welfare Office). During the health check, BMI, total cholesterol and blood pressure were recorded along with related lifestyle patterns. Telephone interviews were conducted one and twelve weeks after screening.

The majority of men (65%) perceived their health to be good or very good, however, 83% were overweight or obese, 61% had high blood pressure, 28% had cholesterol >5mmol/l and only 32% meet the recommended physical activity guidelines. Dietary and physical activity changes were the most frequently cited behavioural changes considered after 1 and 12 weeks. Of those who responded at week one, 46% were advised to attend GP, however only 17% of these had done so. Of those who responded at week twelve, 37% were advised to attend GP, 58% of whom done so. Overall, men reported high satisfaction levels with the screening process. In order to effectively target vulnerable men and promote their health, there is a need to reorient the provision of health services away from traditional locations into the community.

Presentation Title: To explore gender issues and mental health care provision in Ireland with particular reference to men

Author(s) and Affiliation: Michael Bergin, Waterford Institute of Technology
John Wells, Waterford Institute of Technology
Sara Owen, University of Lincoln, UK

Background: Mental health policy in Ireland describes the building of a partnership approach between services providers and users. However, it is criticised for lacking a gendered perspective and being gender neutral. Indeed, gender is considered a critical determinant of mental health and as a social construct is present in almost every aspect of illness. This paper presents results of a study exploring gender issues and mental health care provision for men and women.

Aim: To explore gender issues and mental health care provision in Ireland with particular reference to men.

Method: Using Layder's (1998) adaptive theory and social domains theory as a framework for the study, interviews (n=54) with twenty six service users and twenty eight service providers were conducted within one mental health service in Ireland. Data was analysed through NVivo 8.

Result: Gender awareness issues in relation to integration/segregation of care, minority groups, barriers to care, diagnoses and symptoms, stereotyping, parenting and equity of care were identified.

Conclusion: Results indicate that Irish mental health services need to be more aware and sensitive to the gendered needs of the men and women that engage such services. This involves developing a gender perspective for mental health policy and service provision.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Presentation Title: Outcomes of The Men's Health and Wellbeing Programme

Author(s) and Affiliation: Nicholas Clarke, Institute of Technology Carlow
Ann Flannery, The Larkin Unemployment Centre

The Men's Health and Wellbeing Programme (MHWP) was developed by the Larkin Centre in the Ballybough community within Dublin's North Inner City. The programme was a joint initiative with the HSE and the Glasgow Celtic Foundation. The Ballybough area is marked as a socially disadvantaged area within Dublin city, and, despite significant improvements generally in areas such as education and increased employment in Dublin's inner city over the past twenty years, Ballybough is an area that still suffers multiple social disadvantages.

It is within the broad research and policy context of reports such as SLAN and The National Men's Health policy 2008-2013 that the MHWP was developed by the Larkin Unemployment Centre. The programme aims to address the multiple layers of disadvantage within the inner city community of Ballybough, specifically among men.

The course was based on a timetable of four hours per week for ten weeks. The programme included aspects such as cookery classes, health education classes and soccer/fitness training. Health screening was conducted at the beginning and end of the ten week programme. The programme was evaluated using the RE-AIM framework by the Centre for Men's Health (CMH), IT Carlow.

Results show that the programme was very effective with participants reducing BMI, waist circumference, HDL, LDL, and blood pressure as well as making gains in health awareness and personal development. The MHWP is an excellent example of the potential scope of such a programme – when conducted to the high standards of the Larkin Centre – to contribute significantly to the development of social capital within the target community, while impacting positively on men's health.

Presentation Title: Health Status of Irish Farmers

Author(s) and Affiliation: Aoife Osborne Rural Economy Research Centre, Teagasc, Dr. Catherine Blake, University College Dublin, David Meredith, Rural Economy Research Centre, Teagasc, Pr. James Phelan, University College Dublin, Dr. Caitriona Cunningham, University College Dublin

Aim: To establish farmers' health problems, health service utilisation, participation in leisure time physical activity, and health perceptions.

Methods: A questionnaire survey of farmers was conducted via Teagasc events. To ensure a representative sample, a minimum of 100 farmers from the 6 main National Farm Survey enterprise systems were surveyed.

Results: The 676 respondents were aged between 18-85 years (median=46) and were predominantly male (91% n=613). In the previous year 21% (n=124) of respondents had a significant health problem in the following categories: lung (n=30), hearing (n=19), stomach/bowel (n=16), anxiety (n=15), depression (n=11) diabetes (n=10) and other (n=23). Prevalence of bone, joint or muscle problems in the previous year was 56% (n=368) with 38% (n= 247) reporting back pain. In the previous year 72% of farmers had visited a health profession, most commonly a medical doctor. Only 50% (n=330) of farmers reported participating in leisure time physical activity compared with 81% of the general Irish population. A majority (80%) of farmers considered their health to be 'very good' or 'good'.

Conclusions: Despite numerous health problems farmers encounter they regard their health to be good. Farmer specific health promotion strategies appear warranted. Acknowledgements: Teagasc and Health and Safety Authority for funding

Presentation Title: The role of men in fostering positive health among Irish boys

Author(s) and Affiliation: Amanda Fitzgerald, HPRC, NUI Galway, Colette Kelly, HPRC, NUI Galway
Michal Molcho, HPRC, NUI Galway, Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, HPRC, NUI Galway

The aim of this study was to investigate positive health among boys and its associations with supportive relationships with male family members and friends. We conducted an analysis of boys' data from the 2006 Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study (HBSC); a cross-sectional survey of 10,334 Irish schoolchildren aged 10-18 years. The analysis showed that 15.1% of boys reported frequent physical symptoms such as headache, stomach ache and backache, while 33.2% of boys reported frequent psychological symptoms, such as feeling low, nervous or difficulties sleeping. In addition, 37.5% reported excellent health, 78.7% reported high life satisfaction, and 51.1% reported that they are very happy with their life.

The association of male relationships with positive health outcomes was examined by the use of logistic regression. Relationships with father, elder brother and close male friend were independent and significant predictors of positive health, with higher odd ratios for fathers than those for elder brothers or male friends. Socioeconomic, age, and variations by family structure were also examined. These findings suggest that interpersonal relationships with male family members and friends are supportive of good health in adolescent boys, and therefore should be enhanced and encouraged starting from the younger age groups.

Presentation Title: Weight concern and dieting among Irish boys

Author(s) and Affiliation: Colette Kelly, HPRC, NUI Galway, Amanda Fitzgerald, HPRC, NUI Galway,
Michal Molcho, HPRC, NUI Galway, Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, HPRC, NUI Galway

Dieting is prevalent among adolescents and is associated with a number of risk behaviours such as cigarette smoking and psychosocial risks such as low self-esteem and depressive symptoms. Weight concerns, both perceived underweight and overweight, among boys therefore deserve attention. Weight concerns and motivations for dieting as well as risk and protective factors for dieting are likely to be gender specific and analyses of relevant data need to reflect this.

Weight concern and dieting among boys in Ireland has received little attention to date. This study explored related perceptions and behaviours among boys and associated factors in the family, peer and school environment. Data from the 2006 Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey, which involved 5185 boys aged 10-17 years, were employed.

Boys are significantly more likely than girls to report that they need to put on weight, and this increases over adolescence. Conversely boys are less likely than girls to report that they need to lose weight and this is relatively stable over the adolescent period. The factors that were found to predict weight concerns and dieting behaviour among boys will be discussed in the context of relevant gender-specific health promotion strategies to promote a healthy body weight.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Presentation Title: Men's Health

Author(s) and Affiliation: Evelyn McGee, Institute of Technology Sligo

Men's health is a topic which is increasingly being recognized as an area of key concern for both policy makers and health professionals (White, 2004). According to Doyle (2001) men in Ireland die, on average, nearly 6 years younger than women do.

The aim of this project was to explore men's views and awareness of their health. To determine what men feel are the promoters and barriers to good health and to ascertain how men feel health services can be improved.

Data were collected from males aged 18 years of age and older through the use of both questionnaires and focus groups. These questionnaires were distributed in various settings, including local colleges and sports venues. The results of the questionnaires indicate that 35% of respondents do not visit their doctor on a regular basis. 74% (n=31) of the males have never been screened for any illness. 100% of respondents were not aware of any male support groups.

Focus groups to explore the different environments where work on men's health can be developed are currently being undertaken.

Presentation Title: The role of humour in men's health

Author(s) and Affiliation: Finian Murray, Health Service Executive

Virginia Trooper once said, "It's not what's taught, but what's caught. And if we can get our students' mouths open for laughter, we can slip in a little food for thought."

Men generally see health as women's business. When you manage to get men to attend a course or talk about health, they tend to have their minds made up beforehand that they are not going to enjoy the experience. Taking the lead from publications by Dr Ian Banks such as *The Manual* and *Men at Work*, and from his experience of stand-up comedy, in this article the author tells how he introduced humour into his courses, which made his presentations more enjoyable for the participants.

He quickly found out that when the men were laughing, they were paying attention and picking up the health messages. On the course evaluation sheets in response to the question, "*What did you find most useful about the training and why*"? he found that 'humour' was frequently quoted as the number one answer. He leads on to a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the role of humour in men's health. His conclusion is that done incorrectly, humour can be a disaster but executed correctly, humour lightens the load, eases the burden, releases tension and helps get the message across.

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Men's Health

Presentation Title: Rural men and suicide: risks and vulnerabilities

Author(s) and Affiliation: Maria Feeney, Teagasc Walsh Fellow. School of Sociology, University College Dublin & Rural Economy Research Centre (RERC) Teagasc

This presentation will examine, from a sociological perspective, the risks and vulnerabilities that have predisposed some rural men to suicide. Suicide is a leading cause of death for young men in Ireland (Reach Out, 2005; National Men's Health Policy, 2008-2013) and men continue to be over-represented in suicide statistics. In 2008, 78% of suicides were male. Traditionally suicide was associated with urban lifestyles (Reher, 2001) but evidence suggests that suicide rates are higher in rural areas. Official county level data illustrates higher than average male suicide rates in some rural counties. Moreover, young rural men, have been described as "at risk" and defined as a group that had "lost their way" during the recent socio-economic transition of Irish society. Generalised accounts of why men are vulnerable to suicide abound but little research exists that examines the subjective, social experiences of their explanations for their suicidal behaviour. Drawing on interviews with men who made a suicide attempt this presentation will explore some of the major themes, such as emotional control and the development of deviant behaviour, that have emerged from the data hence allowing us to understand suicide from the perspectives of the men involved.

Poster Communications

- 1** Pearl Casey
An exploration of the attitudes and knowledge of male Irish farmers (20-35), living in Southern Ireland have towards their mental health and community supports
- 2** Majella McCarthy, Institute of Technology Carlow
Establishing best practice in tailoring lifestyle interventions for obese men in the primary care setting
- 3** Michal Molcho, HPRC, NUI Galway, Margaret Hodgins, HPRC, NUI Galway, Margaret M. Barry, HPRC, NUI Galway
Gender differences for key variables in SLAN 2007 survey

Poster Communications Abstracts

Poster Title: An exploration of the attitudes and knowledge of male Irish farmers (20-35), living in Southern Ireland have towards their mental health and community supports

Author(s) and Affiliation: Pearl Casey

The knowledge of rural health needs is limited in comparison to urban environments (Bloom, 2001). The suicide rate among the Irish farming community is twice the national average and it is primarily a young male phenomenon (Nic Daeid, 1997, Fraser et al., 2005). The NEHB (2002) discussed that men have difficulty in talking about emotional problems and tend to suffer in silence and that young men have the most negative attitude towards mental illness. Farmers have a complex interplay of factors that affect their mental health. These factors include: social and geographical isolation, poverty and economic hardship, changes in farming, family problems, relationship sustainability, long and unpredictable work hours, adverse weather, retirement and loss of social contacts (Hughes, 1996). This research aims to explore the attitudes Irish male (high-risk gender), farmers (high-risk occupation) aged 20-35 (high-risk age category) year olds have towards mental health, social supports available in their community, and how they can be empowered to gain control over their own mental health.

The results establish that there is a lack of knowledge and awareness of different mental illnesses, issues or mental health social supports. There is a complex interplay of barriers and factors such as behavioural, personal and environmental that influence their level of help seeking behaviour. The barriers and factors include: stigma associated with mental ill health and rural areas, lack of privacy and confidentiality, loneliness and working long hours, lack of knowledge and awareness of mental health issues and social supports, fear of being judged by peers or other farmers, impact and influence of farming culture, farming norms of behaviour, masculinity, male gender issues, and lack of participation with existing mental health resources.

Poster Title: Establishing best practice in tailoring lifestyle interventions for obese men in the primary care setting

Author(s) and Affiliation: Majella McCarthy, Institute of Technology Carlow

Obesity has emerged as one of the most important medical and public health issues of our time. Obesity levels are higher in men than in women and the rate of increase in obesity over recent times is also higher among men. The aim of this study was to establish best practice guidelines in tailoring lifestyle interventions for obese men in the primary care setting.

The study adopted a mixed methods design involving a telephone questionnaire with a purposive sample (n=67) of men who had previously attended the South-East Nutrition and Dietetic Service (SENDS; Phase 1); semi-structured interviews with a purposively selected sub-sample (n=10) of questionnaire respondents (Phase 2); and two focus groups with primary health care professionals (n=16; Phase 3).

Respondents reported adopting healthier lifestyle and dietary behaviours as a result of attending the SENDS. Having an underlying health problem and being asked by the GP to attend were the main motivators for attending. Indeed, prioritisation of referrals to the SENDS tended to be given to those with what were perceived to be more pressing medical conditions (e.g., diabetes), as distinct from obesity as a sole condition. Lack of resources and capacity within the service were seen as barriers to effectively managing obesity within primary care.

Dietician-led lifestyle interventions can help obese men to achieve and sustain weight loss. However, there is a need for a greater priority to be placed on tackling obesity at a primary care level and to increase the capacity of services targeting obesity.

Poster Title: Gender differences for key variables in SLAN 2007 survey

Author(s) and Affiliation: Michal Molcho, HPRC, NUI Galway, Margaret Hodgins, HPRC, NUI Galway, Margaret M. Barry, HPRC, NUI Galway

The third national Survey of Lifestyle, Attitudes and Nutrition (SLAN) was conducted in 2007, using face-to-face interviews with a representative sample 10,364 adults aged 18 years or over (62% response rate). A sub-study was conducted with younger respondents, aged 18-44 years (n=967), on body size and a detailed physical examination with a sub sample aged 45 and over (n=1,207) involving blood and urine sampling.

The main findings analysed by gender are reported here in a series of graphs, isolating main findings for the full sample or sub sample for male and female respondents. The sample was weighted to closely approximate the Census 2006 figures for gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, region, household size and ethnicity.

Gender differences are presented for the following variables:
general health and quality of life, long term illness, chronic illness, GP, Dentist and alternative practitioner attendance, mental health, physical activity, smoking, alcohol use, self reported and measured BMI, weight management, blood pressure and cholesterol.

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