

IMMIGRATION AND HEALTH

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Background

Immigration is a world-wide phenomenon, involving many millions of people and most countries. In 2006, an estimated 3.5 million people settled as new residents in the 27 EU countries, with the largest increase in immigration evident in Spain and Ireland. In Ireland in 2006, 15% of the population were foreign-born. Yet, there is paucity of research in this area in Ireland. The national profile of immigrants in Ireland reveals that about half of the non-Irish Nationals are from the UK and the rest are from countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa. It is estimated that many of the immigrants originating from the UK are returning emigrants. Of the child population, 6.1% are non-Irish nationals.

Research Aims

This research area aims to explore the health and wellbeing of child immigrants in Ireland. We are exploring the differences in health of immigrants compared to their native peers; differences between first and second generation immigrants and differences between immigrant children in the UK and those not from the UK.

Methods

Using the HBSC data, children who reported that they were born outside of Ireland and children whose parents were born outside of Ireland are defined as immigrants. This group was matched with native children. Matching was by gender, age, socio-economic status and by geographic location.

Progress to Date

Findings to date suggest the immigrant children are similar to their native peers in relation to their health and wellbeing, however, immigrant children reported lower levels of life satisfaction and were more likely to experience social exclusion. Differences were found between UK and non-UK child immigrants. However, international analysis revealed that there are no clear cross-national patterns and the health and behaviour of child immigrants. Further international work is due to commence in 2011.

Dissemination

Molcho M., Kelly K., Nic Gabhainn S. (2010) Deficits in health and wellbeing among immigrant children in Ireland: the explanatory role of social capital. *Translocation: Migration and Social Change*, 6(1).

Molcho, M., Cristini, F., Nic Gabhainn, S., Santinello, M., Moreno, C., Gaspar de Matos, M., Bjarnson, T., Baldassari, D. & Due, P. (2010). Health and well-being among child immigrants in Europe. *Eurohealth*, 16(1), 20-23.