



NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh



## Health Promotion Research Centre Annual Report, 2012

### Welcome

We are pleased to present the 2012 Annual Report of the Health Promotion Research Centre (HPRC) at the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG). This annual report of the Centre provides a platform from which to showcase HPRC people and projects. The trend towards larger scale, longer term research projects continued in 2012 with HPRC leading on a number of significant studies, and collaborating as a partner in others. We continue to develop our programme of work with WHO Geneva through our **WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promotion Research** led by Professor Margaret Barry. The annual conference was just one of the many dissemination activities undertaken contributing to translating health promotion research into both practice and policy. These activities and others would not be possible without the ongoing support of the HPRC Advisory Board, research funders and research partners. The dynamic and progressive nature of the HPRC is due to the skills, creativity, dedication and commitment of the staff: researchers, administrators and Principal Investigators. This report attests to their commitment to the discipline of Health Promotion and the leadership role of HPRC in the development and dissemination of robust, high quality and innovative research. As Director of the HPRC, my sincere thanks to all involved.



*Dr. Jane Sixsmith*

## 16<sup>th</sup> Health Promotion Annual Conference



*CompHP partners at the Galway meeting, 29th June 2012.*

The focus of the Summer Conference was 'Embracing New Agendas for Health Promotion Action' and considered the competencies required by the workforce for effective practice. The plenary session included: Professor Michael Sparks, University of Canberra, Australia; Professor Sylvie Stachenko, University of Alberta and Professor Stephan Van den Broucke, Université Catholique de Louvain. A plenary panel reported on the findings from a major European initiative 'Developing Competencies and Professional Standards for Health Promotion Capacity Building in Europe' (CompHP).

The CompHP project was led by Professor Barry and coordinated through the HPRC with 24 EU country partners. Based on an extensive consultation with health promotion experts a competency framework was developed with a system of professional standards and accreditation for health promotion practice, education and training in Europe. **Key publications** from the project are available.

The conference is organised each year by the HPRC in collaboration with the Department of Health, Health Service Executive and Association of Health Promotion Ireland. This meeting provides an important national platform for policy makers, practitioners and researchers to discuss and debate contemporary health promotion issues of national and international significance. Our 2013 conference theme is 'Health in All Policies' and will be held on 29th May.

## Spotlight on Research: HBSC



Young people's health behaviours can have both short and long-term implications for health and wellbeing. The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey focuses on understanding young people's health within their social context. HBSC aims to understand how family, school and social relationships influence young people's mental, social and physical health as they move from childhood into young adulthood. This cross-national study runs on a four year cycle and is conducted in collaboration with WHO Europe. An international network of researchers across 43

countries and regions participate in the planning, collection, analyses and dissemination of findings. Influencing policy and practice at a national and international level is a key focus of the work. In Ireland a total of 256 primary and post primary schools took part in the survey in 2010 with 16,060 children completing the questionnaire. Further details and publications on HBSC Ireland are **available on our website**.



*Dr. Nic Gabhainn, Minister Reilly, Dr. Molcho and Dr. Kelly at the launch of the HBSC Ireland 2010 National Report in Hawkins House, Dublin - 16th April 2012.*

## OTHER PROJECTS

- **Mainstreaming Health Promotion: Rapid Review of the Evidence on the Effectiveness of Mental Health Promotion Interventions**
- **Agency and agencies: The dynamics of agency working arrangements in social care**
- **Evaluation of the Longford/Westmeath Positive Parenting Partnership**
- **Evaluation of the Real U intervention in Foróige**
- **Children's Views on Understanding their lives: A participation initiative involving children**

## Profile: Dr. Aleisha Clarke



Dr. Aleisha Clarke is working in the HPRC as a postdoctoral researcher on the “**Bridging the Digital Disconnect**” research project. This programme of research is centred around working with young people and adults to determine how best to use technology to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people. The initiative is part of an international research project which is being led by the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre in Australia. Over the course of three years, online mental health and digital literacy training programmes will be developed for adult gatekeepers who wish to support the mental health of young people aged 12-25 years, including parents, teachers, youth workers, social workers, general practitioners and mental health professionals.



## Spotlight on Research: Translating Health Communications

Communicable diseases remain a significant threat to public health in Europe and although health communication is increasingly being used in efforts to prevent and control communicable diseases little evidence existed about the extent and nature of their use. In 2009 the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control funded a Research Consortium led by the HPRC to conduct a research programme and a range of activities were undertaken. Primary information gathering mapped the use of health communication and identified priorities and supports required for their optimal development. This comprised an e-survey, telephone interviews, a group interview and on-line consultation, with key informants from the 30 EU/EEA Member States. A synthesis of knowledge through reviews of literature was undertaken into topics including; risk communication, social marketing, health literacy and health advocacy.

**More information and published reports from this project are available.**

## POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES IN HEALTH PROMOTION

We have active and dynamic **postgraduate programmes** in Health Promotion as described by one of our current PhD students below.

## Dr. Samir Mahmood



After qualifying for a Master’s degree in Health Promotion in NUIG, I found a new world opened in front of me in the form of the multi-disciplinary approach of Health Promotion to deal with health issues. I decided to pursue a doctoral career in this field to seek answers to my curious questions on the holistic nature of health encompassing the curative and preventive care systems, health inequalities and global health – issues only partially covered in my background education in medicine and public health. Apart from the structured learning and research activities in an excellent resourceful environment, the most enjoyable feature of my course is the invaluable informal discussions with my supervisor, colleagues, visiting researchers and other academics in the Discipline of Health Promotion. It is proving to be a very satisfying and rewarding experience and I highly recommend it.



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## Visits and Visitors

There is a continual exchange of researchers between the HPRC and other academic institutions. Below is a 'snapshot' of some of our 2012 exchanges.

In 2012, Dr. William Pickett from Queen's University in Canada was a visiting scholar at the HPRC and worked with colleagues Drs Molcho, Nic Gabhainn and Kelly. Outcomes included the development of international analyses on: trends in adolescent violence, which was published in Pediatrics and trends in adolescent cannabis use and drinking. Dr. Pickett gave a seminar on pediatric farm injury research in Canada and contributed to studies of the food environment. The Canadian and Irish research teams have a strong ongoing collaboration, and this visit provided a rich environment for intellectual exchange and genuine friendship. A reciprocal visit by Dr. Molcho was undertaken in August to develop her work on **injury and violence**.

Dr. Margaret Hodgins, during her sabbatical, visited the Universities of Plymouth, UK and of Bergen, Norway. Dr. Hodgins met with Professor Duncan Lewis, a member of the British Workplace Behaviour Study and with Professor Stale Einarsen and the Bergen Bullying Research Group. It is planned to develop further research collaborations in the areas of workplace bullying.

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