The Obesity Problem: Insights and analysis from economics, medicine and public health

The Health Economics and Policy Analysis research group at NUI Galway is delighted to announce that it will host a one day conference on obesity on January 17, 2014. Obesity is a complex, interdisciplinary problem that involves genetics, physiology, the environment, psychology, and economics. Economic factors have played a significant role in the development of the obesity crisis and economics offers many insights into various solutions to ameliorate the crisis and to prevent more people from becoming obese. The conference will be of interest to researchers, clinicians and policymakers working in this area.

The keynote speaker at the conference will be Professor John Cawley from Cornell University. Professor Cawley is widely regarded as one of the world’s leading economists on this issue and we are delighted that he has agreed to attend our event. Professor Cawley’s research has covered three major issues: the economic causes of obesity; the economic consequences of obesity; and the economic analysis of interventions to reduce obesity. Professor Cawley will give an overview of his research in this area and will also participate in a roundtable discussion that will focus on policy options to reduce obesity.

The other speakers and the topics they will address will include the following:

- An overview of the extent of the obesity problem in Ireland (Professor Tim O’Brien, NUI Galway)
- Cost-effectiveness of bariatric surgery (Dr. Francis Finucane, University Hospital Galway)
- Socioeconomic inequalities in childhood obesity in Ireland (Brendan Walsh, NUI Galway)
- Exploring individual preferences for obesity treatment and willingness to pay for treatments (Michelle Queally, NUI Galway)
- Obesity in Pregnancy and Gestational Diabetes in Ireland (Professor Fidelma Dunne)
- Economic cost of obesity in Ireland (Dr. Anne Dee, Mid-West HSE)
- The distributional effects of a ‘fat tax’ in Ireland (Professor David Madden, University College Dublin)

Format of the conference:

9.00: Welcome

9.15 – 9.45: Overview of the obesity problem in Ireland (Tim O’Brien)


11.15 – 12.45: Short presentations on ongoing work on obesity in Ireland (Michelle Queally; Brendan Walsh; Francis Finucane; John Cullinan; Fidelma Dunne)

2.00 – 2.20: Economic cost of obesity in Ireland (Anne Dee)

2.20 – 2.50: Distributional effects of a fat tax in Ireland (David Madden)

3.00 – 4.00: Roundtable discussion on interventions to reduce obesity

The conference will be held in the Aula Maxima at NUI Galway. For more details please contact Brendan Kennelly at brendan.kennelly@nuigalway.ie or 091 493094

Registration is free but is required for catering and logistical purposes. To register, please go to http://www.conference.ie/.