



Public Health News

in Ireland

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The newsletter of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland
www.publichealth.ie

Welcome to the newsletter of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland.

This newsletter highlights key developments across the island and links with the UK and Europe. As always we would welcome any feedback you may have and are always happy to discuss any of our work with you directly.

Inside this Issue

This edition of the newsletter looks firstly at Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and highlights resources and networking opportunities from the 8th International HIA conference hosted by the Institute in October at Dublin Castle. All presentations from the conference can be found at www.publichealth.ie.

New publications and tools relating to partnership working are then presented along with details of other key developments and resources relating to the Institute's work, including a new policy centre. Finally future events, including seminars and launches are listed.

Health Impact Assessment

Networks

HIA Forum

The Institute will host the second meeting of the HIA Forum on 4th March. The Forum brings together individuals who have attended the Institute's comprehensive HIA training course and provides an opportunity to discuss experiences in progressing HIA and develop skills and thinking in the subject area. Further information will be sent to course participants in the New Year. Information on the HIA Forum may be sourced at <http://www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=127&docID=790>.

The Right to Health

The right to health demands health policies are formulated in a participatory way giving particular attention to vulnerable, marginal and disadvantaged groups along with those living in poverty. At the HIA conference Professor Paul Hunt, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, outlined the crucial importance of health impact assessments in relation to the right to health. The latest UN report, Impact Assessments, Poverty and Human Rights: A Case Study Using the Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health outlines six practical steps by which the right to health can be integrated into existing impact assessment. The report may be downloaded at www.humanrightsimpact.org/fileadmin/hria_resources/unesco_hria_paper.pdf.

Supporting Cities to implement HIA

Phase IV of the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities Programme supports cities to implement HIA. As the lead city Belfast organises the Health Impact Assessment Sub-Network which brings together cities around Europe to develop practical tools to support HIA. Further information and tools may be found at www.belfasthealthycities.com/?pageid=18.

International Association for Impact Assessment

The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) brings together researchers, practitioners and users of different impact assessments. Details on the IAIA can be found at <http://www.iaia.org/modx/>.

HIA Ireland Network

The Institute co-ordinates the HIA Ireland Network. This all-island group meets twice a year to review current position and issues in relation to HIA. The group recently prepared a response to the pilot Integrated Impact Assessment in Northern Ireland and met with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to discuss this. Details on membership of the network can be found at www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=127&docID=719.

Examples and case studies on HIA

The London Plan

The London Health Commission has adopted HIA to achieve 'healthier policy for a world city'. Mayoral strategies are routinely assessed for health impacts to ensure policies address the health inequalities that are very prevalent in London. The Commission is currently conducting a HIA on the London Plan which will include proposals for the Olympic Games sites. This can be found at www.londonhealth.gov.uk

Regional Waste Plans

The Welsh Health Impact Support Unit has recently released the Draft Strategic HIA of the Regional Waste Plans in Wales and responses to the public consultation session will be incorporated in the final version. The consultation alongside other HIA work being conducted in Wales can be found at www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/news.cfm?orgid+522&contentid+7790

The Effectiveness of HIA

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies led a European project looking at the Effectiveness of Health Impact Assessment. The final report was launched at the conference along with case study examples from Lithuania, the Netherlands and Northern Ireland demonstrating the effectiveness of HIA. The final publication can be found at www.who.int/bookorders/anglais/detart1.jsp?sesslan=1&codlan=1&codcol=34&codcch=72

The Health Effects of Air Pollution

The Institute for Occupational Medicine based in the UK, recently launched the Centre for Health Impact Assessment. The Centre leads the health effects of air pollution for the EU's Clear Air for Europe (CAFÉ) project and has a particular interest into how HIA fits into the cost-benefit analysis of policies. Examples of work and current HIAs can be found at www.iom-world.org/news_archive/iom_chia.php.

Resources for HIA

Health Impact Reviews

The Institute of Public Health has developed a series of health impact reviews to assist those conducting HIAs in particular areas. Three reviews are currently available reviewing employment, transport and the built environment and a fourth review will be published soon covering education and health. All reviews are available at www.publichealth.ie.

A Guide to the Health Impact Assessment of Transport Initiatives

This useful guide has been prepared by the Scottish HIA Network. It aims to assist those involved in assessing the potential health impacts of transport initiatives by providing accessible and reliable information. The guide can be found at www.healthscotland.com/documents/2124.aspx.

The Politics of Healthy Policies

Marleen Bekker, from the Institute of Healthy Policy and Management, presented her research findings on the relationship between HIA and public policy at the HIA conference. The research was based on four Dutch HIA case studies and formed the basis of a publication 'the politics of health policies' which can be found at www.eburon.nl/products.php?category_id=0&s_tit=1&s_sds=1&s_fds=1&search_category_id=0&search_string=politics+o+healthy+policies.

HIA in Municipal and Regional Physical Planning

The Swedish National Institute of Public Health (SNIPH) has developed HIA methodology and tested it using a number of case study examples including how HIA can be applied in municipal and regional physical planning. Details of these can be found at www.fhi.se/templates/Page_6723.aspx.

A Mental Well-being Impact Assessment

A toolkit has been developed to identify how a proposed policy, programme or project will impact on mental well-being and what can be done to ensure it has the most positive impact. This was used successfully at the conference and can be downloaded from www.northwest.csip.org/uk/mwia.

Health Impact Assessment in Urban Settings

The New South Wales Public Health Bulletin looks at Health Impact Assessment in Urban Settings. It reviews the contribution HIA can make to sustainable urban growth and includes nineteen articles with nine HIA case study examples. The bulletin can be found at www.publish.csiro.au/nid/226/issue/4093.htm.

Partnership Working

The Benefits of Partnerships

The Research and Development Office for Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland funded the Institute to undertake research into partnerships between 2003 and 2006, as part of their New Targeting Social Need programme. The aim of the research was to identify the impacts of multisectoral partnerships, how they can be measured, and what contribution they make to tackling inequalities in health.

The following three publications present the findings from this research;

- Partnerships: a literature review
- Partnerships: the benefits
- Partnerships: community involvement and perceptions of health inequalities

The publications will be available from the Institute's website, www.publichealth.ie from 6th December.

Partnership Evaluation Tool (PET)

Based on in-depth research with the Health Action Zones and Investing for Health Partnerships in Northern Ireland, the Institute has developed a conceptual model linking the collaborative efforts of partnerships to benefits which impact upon the determinants of health, and a set of indicators for use in assessing progress. The indicators make up the PET, which has been developed as a web-based resource to help multisectoral partnerships monitor their development, assess emerging benefits and identify areas for further work. The tool will be available free from 6th December on www.partnershiptool.ie for any partnership to use to support its own assessment and development.

Other Key Developments and Resources

New Public Health Policy Centre

The aim of the Institute's new Public Health Policy Centre is to strengthen and expand the Institute's existing role in influencing public policy to improve health. The Centre's work will focus on health inequalities and the social determinants of health along with North/South policy analyses, becoming a key source of accessible and relevant information on policy issues affecting health on the island of Ireland.

The Centre is currently involved in

- publishing policy briefings on *Fuel Poverty and Health* and *Child Poverty and Health*
- developing a report *Understanding Health Inequalities : A Social Determinants Approach*
- developing a *policy scan* and a *Cross-Border Anti-Exclusion Action Plan* in partnership with the North West Women's Network and
- contributing to an EU-funded project to develop a *Health Inequalities Strategy for the CAWT area*.

Details of this work will shortly be available on the Institute's website.

Fuel Poverty and Health

Fuel poverty and health is the focus of an all-island policy briefing developed by the Institute. The briefing covers key aspects of fuel poverty such as excess winter mortality, fuel prices and different policy approaches, North and South. New challenges in tackling poverty are explored including the impact of fluctuating fuel prices and demographic factors such as population ageing and the climate change agenda. The briefing will be available to download from www.publichealth.ie in December 2007.

DETERMINE

DETERMINE is a 3 year project co-ordinated by EuroHealthNet which brings together a Consortium of 26 European countries, to apply evidence based approaches across policy sectors in the EU and its member states. The Consortium will analyse and apply the most relevant and important knowledge on socioeconomic determinants (SED) of health inequalities, introduce innovative pilot projects, and develop and implement awareness and capacity building programmes. Further information on the project will soon be available at: www.health-inequalities.eu/. The Institute is playing a lead role in work package 5 which sets out to explore the experiences and the value of applying action on the SED of health inequalities at both EU and Member State level.

Launch of All-Ireland Health Data Inventory

The All-Ireland Health Data Inventory was developed by Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory and launched in November 2007. This unique inventory describes over 150 selected data sources from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It can be accessed at www.inispho.org/index.asp. If you have resources you wish to add to the inventory please contact

info@inispho.org.

Health Inequalities Indicators across the island

In December Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory is launching a set of comparative indicators of life expectancy, mortality experience, admissions and disease rates at county or local government district across the island. These are based on the indicators from the Northern Ireland Health Inequalities Monitoring System and will be available at www.inispho.org/.

Corporate Responsibility and Health

The Institute and Business in the Community (BIC) brought together business leaders and health experts in October 2007 in a round table discussion on the role of the private sector in tackling public health issues.

Public health experts have long recognised that business has a major impact on communities, the environment, the marketplace and the workplace. This event was an opportunity for employers to learn from public health professionals and managers about the potential for their business practices to influence health and about health as a resource for business. A short summary of the event is available at www.publichealth.ie.

Events

The Benefits of Partnerships and the Partnership Evaluation Tool

The three publications listed above on the benefits of partnership working along with the partnership evaluation tool (PET) will be launched at the Crowne Plaza, Dundalk, on 6th December 2007, from 10.30am to 1.00pm. To register for this event please contact Sharon.Brennan@publichealth.ie.

A Comparison of injury mortality across Ireland and Britain

Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory is hosting a seminar on Friday 14th December 2007, from 2-4pm at the Radisson SAS Royal Hotel, Dublin. The seminar will introduce the Injury Observatory for Britain and Ireland (IOBI) and present a comparative analysis of injury mortality in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Britain. Further details at www.inispho.org. To register please contact Ulrike.Klein@publichealth.ie.

If you would like to add your name to our mailing list for this newsletter or if you do not wish to receive future issues please let us know at info@publichealth.ie.

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland

5th Floor Forestview
Bishop's Square Purdy's Lane
Redmond's Hill Belfast
Dublin 2 BT8 7ZX

PHONE: +353 (0)1 478 6300 PHONE: +44 (0)28 90 648494
EMAIL: info@publichealth.ie EMAIL: info@publichealth.ie