

# All-Ireland electronic Health Library (AleHL)

## INTRODUCTION

The **All-Ireland electronic Health Library (AleHL)** is a network of interoperable websites across the island of Ireland. Each member site contains a range of knowledge resources related to health and well-being. Different types of resources (such as policy and strategy documents, data (quantitative and qualitative), research reports, details of programmes and interventions, contacts, websites, etc) are included.

The development of the first phase of the library was initiated and funded by Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory (INIsPHO) in the Institute of Public Health in Ireland. It is part of the Observatory's efforts to support effective decision-making by helping people bring together knowledge resources of different types that are distributed across various websites on the island.

Phase 1 of the AleHL includes the following member sites:

- Archive of Irish Health Publications (HSE)
- Healthdata (HSE)
- INIsPHO Library (IPH)
- National Documentation Centre on Drug Use (HRB)
- Wellnet (IfH, EHSSB)

Its catalogue contains over 4,000 knowledge resources from these initial member sites.

## WHAT THE LIBRARY DOES

The AleHL makes it possible to search all the library's knowledge resources from any of its member websites. When you enter one of the member websites you have the option of searching that website alone or choosing to expand your search to include any or all of the other member sites. You can search for keywords or phrases, or refine your search for resources that contain particular National Public Health Language (NPHL) terms. By defining your needs in such terms, you can more easily retrieve just those resources you need.

The AleHL:

- allows the user to retrieve the different types of knowledge resources in an effective and efficient manner.
- provides a rational approach to the management of the knowledge resources on its member sites while reducing duplication.
- facilitates more effective sharing and integration of knowledge.

## HOW IT WORKS

INIsPHO's metadata standards were adopted for use in the library. These incorporate the National Public Health Language (NPHL) and the Public Health Resource Type Encoding Scheme (PHRTES).

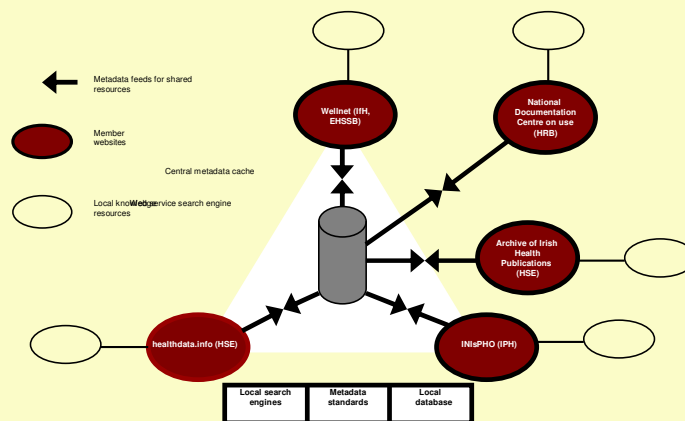


Figure 1. All-Ireland electronic Health Library (AleHL) - a network of interoperable websites

Metadata for shared resources are sent by each member site to a central metadata cache where they are stored and updated. This central metadata cache is searched by an associated web service. A visitor to a member site who wishes to search the AleHL is redirected to this service. Search results, the metadata and links to the knowledge resources required are then sent back to the member site and presented in a standard format. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of this process.

## FURTHER PLANS

In the near future, an All-Ireland Steering Group will be established to develop governance arrangements and editorial policy for the library, and oversee its future development. Some of the new members of the library will include the Department of Health and Children, the remaining Investing for Health websites, and the Public Health Alliance for the island of Ireland.