

eBulletin

Supporting research to play a vital role in planning for an ageing population across the island of Ireland.

Our e-bulletin provides up-to-date information on ageing research including seminars, funding opportunities, latest research and innovation. More detailed information is available on our website.

www.cardi.ie

If you have a news story, event or publication relating to ageing please send it to us at info@cardi.ie

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**Contents:**

1. [CARDI Updates](#)
2. [Ageing Research Updates](#)
3. [Ageing Policy Updates](#)
4. [Research and Policy Publications](#)
5. [Events and Seminars](#)
6. [Funding, Awards, Training Opportunities](#)

February 2011**CARDI Updates****Data mining awardees announced**

The awards for CARDI's Data Mining Call have been recently announced. CARDI is delighted that six projects will be supported that analyse existing data from an all-Ireland perspective. The awards cover the areas of multi-morbidity and disability, the impact of the recession, mortality, nutrition, mental health and risk factors in dementia. Full details of the six projects can be found [here](#).

“Ageing globally – Ageing locally” International Conference Call for Abstracts

CARDI will host a major international conference on ageing research on 2 & 3 November 2011 in Dublin. This conference will explore how different countries address the challenges and opportunities of population ageing and why global ageing matters to Ireland. Featuring international and national experts in the ageing research field, it will promote the value and role of ageing-related research specifically for policy and practice. For conference information, including confirmed speakers and the Call for Abstracts details: [CARDI Conference](#).

CARDI Publications

Focus On...Home care

Each month CARDI's Focus On article takes on a topical ageing related issue. The series provides an evidence based analysis of key issues in ageing and ageing research stories making the news. **This month the focus is on home care.** Following the recent media coverage of elder abuse by home care workers, the article looks at two different systems of home care in Ireland, North and South. The full article can be found here: <http://www.cardi.ie/publications/focusonhomecare>.

Forthcoming

End-of-life care standards for people with dementia

Dr. Suzanne Cahill, Trinity College Dublin, recently completed a research project supported by the CARDI grants programme. Research focused on improving the quality of life for people with dementia dying in residential care settings by investigating the experience of elderly spouses and collecting data to inform a draft standard for quality care in end stage dementia long-stay care. A briefing on the research project will be available shortly on www.cardi.ie.

CARDI Online

For all the latest news and publications on ageing research, policy and practice please log onto the CARDI website www.cardi.ie.

Researchers can register at www.cardi.ie to post details including research and interests, and to post updates on their current research projects. Registered users will have their details added to the CARDI Directory of Researchers. They can also bookmark pages on the CARDI website for easy referencing and create their own personal reading list which they can access at any time as well as having the option to receive a daily digest of new content added to the website by email.

Ageing Research Updates

World population ageing

By 2050, the world's population of over 65s will be two and a half times the population of ages 0-4. According to United Nations Population Division estimates for mid-2010, there were 642 million persons aged 0-4 and 523 million aged 65+. Between 2015 and 2020, the numbers of over 65s will exceed children aged 0-4 for the first time. The ageing demographics of the world's population are demonstrated in a series of clocks by the Population Reference Bureau, available [here](#). They show that population ageing is no longer solely the province of developed countries, with sharp increases projected in the numbers of older people in the less developed countries.

New research on end-of-life decisions

End-of-life decisions take about two weeks longer if a patient has not shared his or her wishes with family members, U.S. researchers found. Dr. Douglas B. White of the University of Pittsburgh [found](#) that caregivers who had not had a prior conversation with patients about treatment preferences were less confident about making decisions and it took them 40% longer (33 days as opposed to 21 days) to decide to discontinue life support. The research underlines the value of having prior conversations about end of life with family and friends, as well as the importance of doctors as communicators.

Slowing the ageing process

Scientists are slowly unlocking the secrets of ageing, and some suggest treatments may soon be at hand to slow or even reverse the ageing process. Late last year, a team at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston published a [Nature paper](#) in which they detailed the reversing of the ageing process in mice. Professor David Sinclair at an ageing laboratory at Harvard Medical School has been working on synthetic drugs called "Sirtuin activating compounds" or STACs. Animal studies have indicated STACs can restore the health and life prospects of obese mice and early-stage trials in humans are now underway. However, with the ethical issues involved, Professor Tim Spector of King's College London, who also works on the ageing process, says the focus is not on extending life, but on extending good health.

Brain cooling could aid stroke recovery

Cooling the brain of patients who have suffered a stroke could dramatically improve their recovery. This is according to a newly formed research group from 20 countries across Europe who believe that inducing hypothermia in some patients can boost survival rates and reduce brain damage. The [European Stroke Research Network for Hypothermia](#) believes that inducing hypothermia in some patients can boost survival rates and reduce brain damage. Stroke is the second highest cause of long-term disability across high-income countries and the second leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for just over 508,000 deaths in the EU each year.

Ageing Policy Updates

Landmark Alzheimer's legislation in US

President Obama has signed the [National Alzheimer's Project Act](#) (NAPA) into law, a move applauded by the National Alzheimer's Association. NAPA creates a co-ordinated national strategy to confront Alzheimer's, a disease that will only plague more baby boomers as they age. Given the scale of the Alzheimer epidemic and the growing number of people directly affected every single day, NAPA will provide an essential framework for combating the Alzheimer crisis in the US.

EU states urged to work together on Alzheimer's

A [motion](#) adopted by the European Parliament has urged EU member states to step up co-operation and support to improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease. The motion followed a report presented to MEPs recently which highlights the growing prevalence of the disease and the burden it places on families. The report states that a new case of dementia is diagnosed in Europe every 24 seconds. The number of people affected by the condition across Europe is now estimated at 9.9 million, with Alzheimer's accounting for the majority of these.

Research urged as a growth priority in ROI

The Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation in the Republic of Ireland has issued a [call](#) for continued support for research and innovation as key priorities for maintaining employment and growth. The council also believes that more co-operation between industry and the country's universities is needed. Government proposals, announced in September 2010, are to spend €2.4 billion on science, technology and innovation over the next six years. The council will organise a consultation process in 2011 to establish a co-ordinated approach to the EU's next major round of research funding under its Framework Programme.

End of the default retirement age in the UK

The UK government has [confirmed](#) that the Default Retirement Age (DRA) is to be phased out this year. The move will mean that employers will no longer be allowed to terminate employment just because the person has reached the age of 65.

VHI price increases affecting older people

Advocacy groups for older people in the Republic of Ireland have [bemoaned](#) the decision by the state-owned VHI Insurance to increase prices to such a level that older people will be driven out of the market. Older people have been targeted by price increases of up to 45%, to be introduced at the beginning of February. People insured under the company's Plan B and Plan B Options policies, which are popular among older people, will be hardest hit by the rises. While the average increase for the majority of the health insurer's 1.35 million subscribers will be 15%, people on those two plans will see costs rise by 35-45%.

Rise in suicides among older people

A worrying rise in the numbers of older people committing suicide has been noted in [new figures](#) from the south Kerry coroner. The coroner warned that this trend had been particularly evident since 2005. It follows a warning from the Offaly County Coroner earlier this week that suicide is now "rampant" in rural society. Provisional figures for 2010 (south Kerry) showed eight verdicts of suicide were returned. Three of the dead were people aged 50 to 60. The overall figure is likely to increase as all of the 2010 inquests have yet to be held.

Research and Policy Publications

A good news story about Irish healthcare

Life expectancy for older people in Ireland has been increasing steadily since the 1980s. Despite this, Irish life expectancies for the over 65s lagged seriously behind the EU average as recently as

the mid 1990s. But Irish death rates for the over 65s dropped dramatically between 2000 and 2005, moving Ireland closer to the European average. This is according to new data from the Economic and Social Research Institute, which shows that between 1996 and 1999 death rates in the Republic of Ireland had fallen by just over 5%, between 2000 and 2004 the decrease was over 26%. The publication is available on the ESRI website, www.esri.ie.

“Support. Stay. Save.” – Alzheimer’s Society UK report

A new report from the UK Alzheimer’s society finds that a quarter of a million people with dementia are being let down by care and support that fails to meet their needs. This substandard care will result in 50,000 people being forced into care homes early. For each avoidable month these people spend in care, the state will face a bill of at least £70 million. The report presents clear evidence that home care staff want to be empowered with additional training and support to help them provide quality dementia care. The full publication is available [here](#).

State of health and well-being of Canada's seniors

The Chief Public Health Officer’s annual report on the state of public health in Canada examines the health and well-being of older people. It identifies and assesses the factors that positively or negatively influence healthy aging such as falls and related injuries, mental health, abuse and neglect, social connectedness, healthy living, and care and services. 97% of older people in Canada are satisfied with their lives in general, and 70% say they have at least very good mental health. However, there are considerable health issues to be addressed, such as the fact that half of prescriptions taken by older people are not used properly, and the disparity in health and well-being between low and high income older people. The full annual report is available [here](#).

Link between flexible working and providing informal care

The UK Institute for Social and Economic Research has taken data from nearly 1,600 workplaces to examine the link between flexible working and care provided to dependent adults. The research matches the flexible work arrangements available to each employee with the amount of informal care they give. The findings show that two flexible working arrangements – flexitime and the ability to reduce working hours – can be associated with about 10% more informal care. The full report and findings can be found [here](#).

Better outcomes for older people

New research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that older people want and value low-level support – “that bit of help” - but the benefits of government investment in this are realised over many years, making it harder to prove impact and protect funding in the face of severe pressure on spending. The research provides examples of imaginative, affordable and effective ways of supporting older people’s health, well-being, social engagement and independence. A summary of the findings is available on the Foundation [website](#).

For more research, policy and practice publications please visit: www.cardi.ie/directory

Events and seminars

Third international conference on nursing and midwifery

NUI Galway will host the third International Nursing and Midwifery conference on 4-5 April 2011. A key theme of this conference is research on ageing and care for older people. The over-arching theme of the conference, “Building and Promoting Excellence in Practice”, highlights the importance of strengthening nursing and midwifery practice at the international, national, local and community levels. A call for abstracts and further information is available on the conference website, www.nursingmidwifery.ie.

The built environment for an ageing population

The Edinburgh College of Art will host “An international perspective on the Built Environment for an Ageing Population: Issues in maintaining access to outdoor places” on 16 February. The event, organised by Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors, will examine how we can maintain lifelong access to outdoor places so that they are useable by, and enjoyable for, everyone. For more information and to register, please click [here](#).

Achieving and sustaining digital engagement

A new KT-EQUAL event on 16 February 2011, "Achieving and sustaining digital engagement" has now been advertised on the KT-EQUAL website. Older people are one of the marginalised groups who are tending to get left behind in the digital revolution. This event aims to share the initiatives to

address this and other excellent work that is being taken forward and identify through discussions with older people, professionals, policy implementers and researchers how we can build upon this foundation for the future. Registration for this event can be made [here](#).

Senior Times comes to Belfast

The *Senior Times* website is bringing its over 50s show to Belfast following a huge success at the RDS in Dublin in October of last year. The event will take place on 26 & 27 February and marks the first appearance of the lifestyle event in Northern Ireland. Free tickets can be obtained from www.seniortimes.ie.

The Business of Ageing

In March 2011, the second Business of Ageing Conference will take place in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham in Dublin. The Business of Ageing Partnership was established to alert the business community across Ireland to the very significant business opportunities that exist in the older consumer market. The Business of Ageing Partnership [website](#) has more information.

For more events go to: www.cardi.ie/events

Funding, Awards, Research and Training Opportunities

Research fellow for the National Dementia Strategy

The School of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin is seeking a Research fellow to identify the key priorities to be included in the development of an Irish National Dementia Strategy. This post is funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies and is tenable from 11 April 2011. An information booklet and further details for applying for the fellowship can be found on www.publicjobs.ie.

The Dowager Countess Eleanor Peel Trust

Support will be provided to medical charities to support research specifically aimed at benefiting older people. Suitable medical research areas include Alzheimer's disease; macular disease; prostate cancer; and Parkinson's disease. The closing date is 31 May 2011. For more information, see www.peeltrust.com.

European Foundation for the Study of Diabetes

This will support young scientists to travel and stay at other laboratories in order to learn different scientific techniques. Awards are worth up to €7,000 over a maximum period of three months. www.europeandiabetesfoundation.org/MSD/Albert-Renold/EFSD-MSD-ARenold.html

British Occupational Health Research Foundation

Grants support research or systematic evidence reviews in occupational health, or health related performance at work. www.bohrf.org.uk/. Closing date: 30 Jun 2011.

Please feel free to circulate the information within your organisation as appropriate. If you do not wish to receive this E-bulletin email info@cardi.ie and your details will be removed from our mailing list.

CARDI Staff Team

If you want to explore how to be involved in progressing ageing research or want to find out more about our work please contact our team.

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CARDI Steering Group

CARDI has been developed by leaders from the ageing field across Ireland (North and South).

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