



Studies

## Psychosocial, psychiatric and work-related risk factors associated with suicide in Ireland: A Case-control study (SSIS-ACE)

### Study aim

The SSIS-ACE study aims to improve the knowledge base on specific psychosocial, psychiatric and work-related risk factors associated with suicidal behaviour in Ireland and to gain insight into specific protective factors that prevent people from engaging in suicide. In order to identify specific risk factors associated with suicide, two interlinked case-control studies will be conducted, one study comparing suicide cases with General Practice patient controls, and one study comparing suicide cases with ED patient controls who have presented with an act of high risk non-fatal suicidal behaviour.

### Specific objectives

1. To determine specific psychosocial, psychiatric and work-related factors associated with suicide. In order to determine specific factors associated with suicide, we will investigate significant differences between suicide cases and General Practice patient controls, and between suicide cases and ED patient controls who have presented with an act of high risk non-fatal suicidal behaviour.
2. To determine protective factors which prevent people from engaging in suicide. We will examine which positive factors are reported by self-harm patients and the GP practice controls and which are significantly underrepresented among the suicide cases.
3. To investigate consistency of information obtained retrospectively on suicide cases, self-harm patients and the general population using multiple sources.

### Personnel involved

Senior Researchers: Dr Sara Leitao, Dr Celine Larkin and Ms Jacklyn McCarthy, Dr Dorothy Leahy, Dr Martin Davoren  
 Research Officers: Ms Gretta O'Connell, Ms Ailbhe Spillane, Ms Grace O'Regan, Mr Niall McTernan, Ms Emilie Mullins, Mr Tiernan Hourihan  
 Principal Investigator: Prof Ella Arensman  
 Co-supervisors and partners: Dr Birgit Greiner, Ms Eileen Williamson, Prof Ivan Perry, Dr Paul Corcoran, Dr Eve Griffin, Prof Eugene Cassidy, Dr James Kinahan, Dr Carmel McAuliffe, Prof. Colin Bradley, Dr Christina Dillon

### Specific objectives for 2017

- Completion of data analysis in relation to the primary outcomes paper.
- First presentation of primary outcomes of SSIS-ACE at Seminar for Healthcare and Community based professionals.
- Completion of protocol paper and primary outcomes paper for peer review journals.

### Link with the Connecting for Life Strategy

Goal 3: To target approaches to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve mental health among priority groups.  
 Goal 4: To enhance accessibility, consistency and care pathways of services for people vulnerable to suicidal behaviour.  
 Goal 7: To improve surveillance, evaluation and high quality research relating to suicidal behaviour.

## Suicide prevention strategies revisited: 10-year systematic review and Psychosocial interventions following self-harm in adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis

### Study Aim

In 2016, two major reviews which synthesise the evidence around suicide prevention were published. The first, Zalsman et al (2016), reviewed the evidence for suicide prevention initiatives over the past ten years. The second, Hawton et al (2016) reviewed the effectiveness of psychosocial assessment for adults who have engaged in self-harm.

### Personnel Involved

Co-author: Professor Ella Arensman

### Specific objectives for 2017

- Based on the outcomes of both reviews continue to strengthen the evidence base in several areas of suicide prevention such as :
  - Restricting access to lethal means
  - Promoting school-based awareness programmes
  - Exploring further the anti-suicidal effects of clozapine and lithium
  - Promoting effective pharmacological and psychological treatments for depression
  - Continuing to educate physicians.
- Continue to investigate public health approaches such as gatekeeper training, media regulation, internet-based intervention, and helplines, as well as the two health-care approaches of physician education and screening in primary care.
- Promote CBT is an effective intervention among adult patients following self-harm.
- Promote DBT as an effective intervention in reducing the frequency of repeat self-harm in patients with borderline personality disorder.
- Explore further the practice of sending regular postcards to reduce the proportion of patients repeating self-harm, in particular in settings where community psychiatric services are limited.

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 1: To improve the nation's understanding of, and attitudes to, suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing

Goal 2: To support local communities' capacity to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour

Goal 3: To target approaches to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve mental health among priority groups

Goal 5: To ensure safe and high quality services for people vulnerable to suicide

Goal 6: To reduce and restrict access to means of suicidal behaviour

Goal 7: To improve surveillance, evaluation and high quality research relating to suicidal behaviour

## Examination of predictive factors associated with short- and long-term risk of repetition of non-fatal self-harm and suicide among high risk groups

This study is part of the HRB funded 5-year research programme, in particular: Improving Prediction and Risk Assessment of Suicide and Self-Harm (IMPRESS).

### Study aim

The objectives of this study are to examine predictive factors associated with short- and long-term risk of repeated non-fatal self-harm and suicide among 2 high risk groups of self-harm patients.

The design is a prospective cohort study consecutive of self-harm patients of all ages presenting to emergency departments in all 34 hospitals in Ireland, between 2008 and 2015 (approximately 12,000 self-harm presentations per year), allowing for at least 24 months follow-up.

The National Self-Harm Registry covers presentations to all 34 hospitals in Ireland since 2013. Analysis of surveillance data from the Registry has identified a subgroup of self-harm patients with a history of 5 or more previous acts of self-harm (major repeaters) of whom 82% engaged in a repeated act of non-fatal self-harm in the 3 months following an index presentation to hospital due to self-harm. The Registry has also identified a group of self-harm patients who engage in highly lethal acts of self-harm (e.g. attempted hanging and attempted drowning; high risk suicidal behaviour) who are at high risk of subsequent suicide as consistently demonstrated by international research.

In 2016, a survey was conducted among the Data Registration Officers to verify the possibility to obtain additional data items, in particular: current psychiatric diagnosis, previous psychiatric treatment, and previous self-harm. In addition, an amendment was prepared for accessing the proposed additional information on clinical characteristics of self-harm patients in the 12 largest hospitals for the Ethics Committee (CREC).

### Personnel involved

Principal Investigator: Prof Ella Arensman

PhD researcher: Ms Grace O'Regan

Co-supervisors and partners: Dr Dorothy Leahy, Dr Paul Corcoran, Dr Frances Shiely, Dr Eve Griffin, Prof Eugene Cassidy, Prof Nav Kapur, Prof Keith Hawton

### Specific objectives for 2017

- Conduct survival analysis using the core data items of the Registry.
- Conduct survival analysis using additional data items obtained from a smaller number of hospitals.
- Complete paper based on the outcomes of the survival analysis.

### Link with the Connecting for Life Strategy

Goal 4: To enhance accessibility, consistency and care pathways of services for people vulnerable to suicidal behaviour.

Goal 7: To improve surveillance, evaluation and high quality research relating to suicidal behaviour.

## Examination of predictive factors associated with repeated self-harm and suicide among high risk groups: A prospective in-depth interview study

This study is part of the HRB funded 5-year research programme, in particular: Improving Prediction and Risk Assessment of Suicide and Self-Harm (IMPRESS).

### Study aim

The objectives of this study are: 1) to examine psychosocial, psychiatric and work related factors associated with repeated self-harm among major repeaters (i.e. those with 5 or more previous self-harm acts) and patients with high risk suicidal behaviour; 2) to examine the sensitivity and specificity of factors associated with repeated self-harm; 3) to develop a risk assessment procedure for repeated self-harm and suicide for use in a general hospital setting. This study will complement the research into sensitivity and specificity of predictors associated with repeated self-harm conducted in the previous Registry based study.

The recruitment of patients who have engaged in high risk suicidal behaviour, which has started under SSIS-ACE, and in 2016, will be continued in 2017 until February 2018. From August 2016 until December 2018, consecutive patients with a history of 5 or more previous self-harm acts (i.e. major repeaters) will be recruited and invited to participate in a similar baseline and 6-month follow-up interview.

### Personnel involved

PhD researcher: Ms Grace O'Regan.

Principal Investigator: Prof Ella Arensman.

Co-supervisors and partners: Dr Dorothy Leahy, Dr Paul Corcoran, Dr Frances Shiely, Dr Eve Griffin, Prof Eugene Cassidy, Prof Nav Kapur, Prof Keith Hawton .

### Specific objectives for 2017

- To continue data collection on consecutive cases of high risk self-harm patients and major repeaters in four hospitals.
- To conduct baseline and follow-up interviews with high risk self-harm patients and major repeaters.
- To conduct analyses using the baseline interview data
- Complete paper for peer review journal on the baseline data

### Link with the Connecting for Life Strategy

Goal 4: To enhance accessibility, consistency and care pathways of services for people vulnerable to suicidal behaviour.

Goal 7: To improve surveillance, evaluation and high quality research relating to suicidal behaviour.

## Health Research Board (HRB) Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement (ICE)

### Study Aim

This project involves using existing large scale data-sets to address important questions in the area of youth mental health and suicidal behaviour.

### Personnel Involved

Postdoctoral Research Fellow: Dr Elaine McMahon

Lead Principal Investigator: Prof Mary Cannon (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland)

Other Investigators: Dr Paul Corcoran (NSRF; Cork University Maternity Hospital), Dr Helen Keeley (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), Mr Derek Chambers (Inspire Ireland), Dr Mary Clarke (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland), Prof Pat McGorry (Orygen Centre Melbourne), Ms Eileen Williamson

### Background

This research programme addresses the important area of youth mental health. Addressing young people's mental health needs is crucial if they are to fulfil their potential. Key longitudinal studies have revealed that most individuals with a psychiatric disorder have had a diagnosable illness much earlier in life. Therefore, we must develop more robust risk/predictive models by looking in childhood and adolescence for the early signs of mental illness and for patterns of symptoms or risk factors that point towards later mental ill-health or adverse outcomes such as suicide.

### Specific Objectives

1. What is the prevalence of mental health problems and risk behaviours in Irish adolescents and what means of help-seeking do young people in Ireland employ?  
Dr McMahon and colleagues have completed work on a report of the mental health and wellbeing of Irish adolescents: Young lives in Ireland. A school-based study of mental health and suicide prevention). In this study of over 1,000 Irish adolescents, the majority reported positive wellbeing and low levels of risk behaviours. However, 23.7% had anxiety symptoms suggestive of a possible disorder and 13.8% had depressive symptoms suggestive of disorder. Serious suicidal thoughts were reported by 7.0% of the adolescents and 3.6% reported having attempted suicide at some time in their lives. The report also highlighted the effectiveness of universal school-based mental health awareness programmes.
2. Is physical activity protective against the development of depression, anxiety and suicidal behaviour?  
Work examining associations between physical activity and mental health in European adolescents has been completed, based on the data of the Saving and Empowering Young Lives in Europe (SEYLE) study. More frequent physical activity and participation in sport were both found to independently contribute to greater wellbeing and lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms in young people of both sexes (McMahon, E. M., Corcoran, P., O'Regan, G., Keeley, H., Cannon, et al (2016). Physical activity in European adolescents and associations with anxiety, depression and well-being. European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry).
3. Do migrant adolescents in Europe differ from their native peers in terms of emotional and behavioural problems and self-rated health?  
Dr McMahon has led work within the SEYLE international consortium on the topic of the mental and physical health of migrant adolescents. This study identified an elevated risk of suicide attempts and behavioural difficulties among young migrants in Europe. (McMahon, E., Corcoran P., Keeley H., Cannon M., et al. Mental Health difficulties and suicidal behaviours among young migrants - a multicentre study of European adolescents, under review).

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 3: To target approaches to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve mental health among priority groups

Goal 5: To ensure safe and high quality services for people vulnerable to suicide

## European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD)

### Study Aim

The European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD) is an international non-profit organisation based in Leipzig, Germany, with several members and more than 100 regional network partners in Europe, Canada, South America and Australia. The main aim of the European Alliance Against Depression is to improve care and optimise treatment for patients with depressive disorders and to prevent suicidal behaviour. Specific objectives of the EAAD 4-level approach include:

1. Primary care and mental health care GPs will be invited to educational workshops on how to recognise and treat depression and explore suicidal tendency in the primary care setting.
2. General public: Depression awareness campaign. The aim is to improve knowledge about adequate treatments of depression in general and to reduce the stigmatization of the topic "depression" and the affected individuals.
3. Patients, high-risk groups and relatives: "Emergency Cards" will be handed out to high risk groups (first of all young people in adolescent crisis and persons after suicide attempt) guaranteeing direct access to professional help in a suicidal crisis. Partnerships with patient associations will be established and intensified.
4. Community facilitators and stakeholders: Educational workshops will be held with various target groups playing an important role in disseminating knowledge about depressive disorders and suicidal behaviour. Guidelines on media coverage of suicide reporting will be distributed to prevent copycat suicides.

In 2016, the NSRF delivered EAAD GP and mental health care professional trainings to 140 participants. In addition, training programmes were provided to community facilitators including trainee Guidance Counsellors, staff information centres and staff from an IT Company. In 2016, the NSRF contributed to the dissemination of the media guidelines for reporting of suicide on an on-going basis.

The NSRF also developed a website including evidence based information for people bereaved by suicide and information for GPs and Mental Health professionals: [www.suicidesupportandinformation.ie](http://www.suicidesupportandinformation.ie).

Due to funding constraints in 2016, not all EAAD 4 level interventions could be implemented.

The NSRF led a major grant application based on EAAD, with primary focus on mental health and suicide prevention among refugees in European and Low and Middle Income Countries, which was submitted to the EU Horizon 2020 funding programme.

### Personnel Involved

Principal Investigator: Prof Ella Arensman

Other Investigators: Ms Eileen Williamson, Mr Niall McTernan, Prof Ulrich Hegerl, Prof Victor Perez, Dr Elisabeth Kohls.

### Specific objectives for 2017

- The NSRF will continue to roll out the EAAD 4-level intervention programme.
- The NSRF will pursue further funding applications for the EAAD 4-level approach, in particular the EU Horizon 2020 funding programme.

### Link with the Connecting for Life Strategy

Goal 1: To improve the nation's understanding of and attitudes to suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing.

Goal 2: To support local communities' capacity to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour.

Goal 4: To enhance accessibility, consistency and care pathways of services for people vulnerable to suicidal behaviour.

## EU- Marie Curie: Mental Health Training through research network in Europe (MARATONE)

### Study Aim

To identify risk factors for long-term repetition of self-harm and suicide among children, adolescents and young adults presenting to hospital emergency departments in Ireland.

### Personnel Involved

Researcher: Mr Marco Bennardi

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Prof Ella Arensman

Co-supervisors: Ms Eileen Williamson, Dr Elaine McMahon

### Specific objectives for 2017

- A funding application for a follow up project named TANDEM has been prepared and is being updated.
- The objectives of the TANDEM programme are as follows:
  - 1) Examine the extent of excess mortality among people with severe and milder forms of depression, including people with co-morbid mental and physical health problems, from adolescence to old age;
  - 2) Identify modifiable psychological and environmental risk factors of excess mortality over the life time and taking into account how these may vary for people with severe depression and co-morbid mental and physical health problems;
  - 3) Enhance procedures for timely health screening and identify targets for awareness programmes for health professionals in detecting co-morbid physical symptoms and illness among people with severe and milder forms of depression.
- Specific modifiable risk factors will be identified taking into account how these may be different across people with severe depression and co-morbid mental and physical health problems. Results will facilitate health and mental health professionals in providing timely health screenings on a structural basis to those with severe depression and other severe mental disorders. In addition, this would enhance the uptake of lifestyle interventions.

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 4: To enhance accessibility, consistency and care pathways of services for people vulnerable to suicidal behaviour.

Goal 5: To ensure safe and high quality services for people vulnerable to suicide.

Goal 7: To improve surveillance, evaluation and high quality research relating to suicidal behaviour.



## WHO Practice Manual for Establishing and Maintaining Surveillance Systems for Suicide Attempts and Self-Harm

### Study Aim

The NSRF worked with WHO on a Practice Manual for Establishing Surveillance Systems for Suicide Attempts and Self-Harm, based on the National Self-Harm Registry Ireland. This resulted in a collaborative publication with WHO in June 2016. The Practice Manual for Establishing and Maintaining Surveillance Systems for Suicide Attempts and Self-Harm is essential to the practice of public health, to guide prevention, monitor activities and evaluate outcomes of such activities. This manual aims to provide a tool for countries to use in setting up a public health surveillance system for suicide attempts and self-harm cases presenting to general hospitals, based on medical records. The manual is based on the template of the National Self-Harm Registry Ireland, and has considered surveillance systems for suicide attempts and self-harm worldwide.

### Personnel Involved

Principal Investigator: Prof Ella Arensman

Other Investigators: Ms Eileen Williamson, Ms Grace O'Regan, Ms Justina Hurley, Dr Eve Griffin

### Specific objectives for 2017

- The NSRF is currently preparing a proposal to develop an e-learning programme based on the WHO practice manual for Practice Manual for Establishing Surveillance Systems for Suicide Attempts and Self-Harm.
- The NSRF is also working with WHO in developing a document to provide information and guidance to government representatives and policy makers on specific evaluation indicators for the assessment of the quality of the implementation of national suicide prevention programmes, and primary and secondary outcome indicators. The NSRF is envisaging to undertake this work in collaboration with a number of international research centres based in other countries with a track record in this specific area (e.g. UK, Belgium, Germany, US, Australia, New Zealand) in order to combine international expertise.
- In 2016, the NSRF was involved in collaborative activities with other WHO Collaborating Centres, including the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention, Australian Institute for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention, Brisbane, Australia and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research, Methods, Development and Training in Suicide Prevention, National Swedish Stockholm Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention of Mental Ill-Health (NASP). This work will continue in 2017.

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 7: To improve surveillance, evaluation and high quality research relating to suicidal behaviour

## Self-harm among homeless people in Ireland

### Study Aim

Homelessness is a problem of increasing public health concern in Ireland. In December 2016, there were over 7,000 individuals registered as homeless in Ireland, excluding rough sleepers and those who stayed with relatives and friends (the 'hidden' homeless). Homeless people have higher rates of premature mortality, much of which may be attributable to suicide and unintentional injuries, and the homeless population are a priority group for suicide prevention in Ireland. However, little is known about the incidence of self-harm among this group, and the factors associated with repeated self-harm. The purpose of this research was to examine the incidence of self-harm among the homeless population in Ireland, and to explore the factors associated with episodes of self-harm and repeated self-harm in both the homeless and domiciled populations.

The National Self-Harm Registry Ireland has complete coverage of all self-harm presentations to hospital emergency departments in the country. Most individuals are recorded as living at a fixed household residence, but those who are described as being of no fixed abode, or who live at a recognised homeless hostel or equivalent accommodation, are recorded as being homeless.

There were 58,747 presentations of self-harm to hospital emergency departments during the study period, of which 3.9% were among the homeless population. The overall age-standardised incidence rate of self-harm for the homeless population was 5,572 presentations per 100,000 population, compared with 187 presentations per 100,000 population among those who lived at a fixed residence in the same period; an incidence rate ratio of 30:1. Intentional drug overdose was the most common form of self-harm for each group, but there were significant differences in the types of drugs used. Minor tranquillisers were used in 47% of overdose acts among the homeless population compared with 39% among the domiciled population. Homeless people were significantly more likely to use street drugs for overdose, whereas those with a fixed residence were more likely to use paracetamol, NSAIDs or SSRIs.

This is one of the largest studies to date to focus on self-harm among the homeless population, and it is the first study of its kind in Ireland. The strengths of the study include its complete coverage of hospitals in Ireland, and its large sample size which increased statistical power.

### Personnel Involved

Researcher: Dr Peter Barrett

Supervisors: Prof Ella Arensman, Dr Eve Griffin, Dr Paul Corcoran

### Specific Objectives for 2017

- Prepare a paper for a peer review journal based on the report
- Wider dissemination of the research outcomes.

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 3: To target approaches to reduce suicidal behavior and improve mental health among priority groups.

## European Injury Database (IDB): Surveillance of injury-related presentations in Ireland

The European Injury Data Base (IDB) is a data source that contains standardised cross-national information on the external causes of injuries treated in selected emergency departments (EDs) in the EU. As injuries are an important and largely preventable health problem, the IDB provides users with relevant information for public health and consumer safety policies and actions within the EU. The currently available IDB data are produced voluntarily by member states in the framework of temporarily projects co-funded by the EU-Health Programme. This database is hosted by the European Commission to provide central access to the data provided by the participating countries. Currently, a selection of about 100 hospitals across the EU provides around 300,000 cases a year for uploading in the EU-database. The database contains information on accidental injuries such as home accidents, sports and leisure injuries, workplace accidents and road accidents and injuries due to violence and self-harm.

### IDB in Ireland

The National Suicide Research Foundation is the Irish National Data Administrator for the European Injury Database (IDB). As part of the recent JAMIE project (Joint Action for Monitoring Injuries in Europe, 2011-2014) and supported by the current BRIDGE Health project (2015-2018), the NSRF has successfully implemented a pilot data collection (using a minimum dataset) in one large hospital ED for the years 2013 and 2014.

### Study Aim

At present, the project has involved one student from the Masters in Public Health (MPH) programme in UCC. In 2015-16 this student undertook an internship to contribute to the data collection for the IDB system in Ireland and the results from this will form part of their MPH thesis. The thesis focused specifically on examining the profile of injury-related attendances to hospital in Ireland, to examine emerging sub-groups and to examine the involvement of alcohol in injuries presenting to hospital. These findings will also form the basis of a short report. These findings will be disseminated back to relevant stakeholders including hospital staff, the Department of Health and the Irish Health Service Executive. The data collected in 2013 was included in the recent 'Injuries in the European Union' report.

### Personnel involved

Dr Eve Griffin, Dr Paul Corcoran (Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCC), Ms Orla O'Connor (MPH, UCC).

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 6: To reduce and restrict access to means of suicidal behaviour

Goal 7: To improve surveillance, evaluation and high quality research relating to suicidal behaviour

## Individual and area level factors associated with drugs used in intentional overdose

### Primary Study Aim

To provide a comprehensive understanding of factors contributing to non-fatal IDO and subsequent future outcomes.

### Secondary Study Aim

To inform legislation and recommendations for means restriction interventions.

### PhD Scholar

Ms Caroline Daly

### Supervisors

Prof Ella Arensman, Dr Eve Griffin, Prof Ivan Perry

Official advisors: Prof Darren Ashcroft, Dr Roger Webb (University of Manchester).

### Objectives

- To examine the profile of persons engaging in IDO, detailing drugs used, quantifying the contributions of alcohol involvement and multiple drug use.
- To identify the differences between cases of fatal and non-fatal IDO, in terms of profile, drugs taken, alcohol involvement and multiple drug use.
- To examine how the incidence of IDO and drugs used varies geographically, and to determine what area level factors impact drugs taken.
- To examine the patterns of switching within and between methods of self-harm in persons who first presented to hospital following IDO.

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 6: To reduce and restrict access to means of suicidal behaviour

## The societal and individual impact of suicidal behaviour in Ireland: A mixed-methods study

Fatal and non-fatal suicidal behaviour is a multifactorial problem encompassing individual, psychological, social and environmental components. The psychological health effects of suicide bereavement are well understood. However, the physical health consequences of both fatal and non-fatal suicidal behaviour on family members is lacking. There is also a paucity of research exploring the specific support needs of people bereaved by suicide and people experiencing a family members self-harm, regardless of severity.

### Study Aim

The aim of this mixed-methods study is to examine the health effects of fatal and non-fatal suicidal behaviour and how the societal response to suicide, in the form of the inquest process, affects family members physically, psychologically and socially. Semi-structured interviews with family members bereaved by suicide and people who experienced a family member's highly lethal self-harm took place from April 2016 to March 2017. Four superordinate themes were identified from the interviews with suicide-bereaved family members: (1) immediate grief reactions and its consequences; (2) enduring physical, psychological and psychosomatic difficulties; (3) range of support needs required and its influencers; and (4) reconstructing life after deceased's suicide. Analyses of the interviews with people who experienced a family member's highly lethal self-harm is ongoing. A systematic review of the physical and psychosomatic health outcomes of suicide bereavement compared to other modes of death is complete and is under review with BMC Public Health.

### Personnel Involved

PhD Researcher: Ms Ailbhe Spillane, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork  
Supervisors: Prof Ella Arensman, Dr Paul Corcoran and Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar (Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork)

### Objectives for 2017:

- Complete and publish the mixed-methods study on the health effects of suicide bereavement on family members
- Complete and publish the qualitative study on the health effects of high-risk self-harm on family members

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 1: To improve the nation's understanding of, and attitudes to, suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing  
Goal 3: To target approaches to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve mental health among priority groups  
Goal 4: To enhance accessibility, consistency and care pathways of services for people vulnerable to suicidal behaviour

## Cyberbullying and young people: Behaviours, experiences, resolutions (CY:BER)

Cyberbullying can be harmful to the health and wellbeing of young people, and has been associated with risk of self-harm and suicide. Progress in tackling it has been hindered by a lack of consensus about the concept and its definition. It is the right of children and young people to have a say in all matters that affect them, including bullying and discrimination. However, the voice of young people is largely absent from the current discourse, particularly in the Irish context. Efforts to understand and address the issue can be enhanced by empowering young people to express their views and involving them in the research process. Youth participation is encouraged in the literature and promoted in current policy related to children and young people such as Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: A national policy framework for children and young people 2014-2020.

### Study Aim

The aim of the CY:BER study is to better understand cyberbullying from the perspective of young people with a view to informing the development of an intervention to address the issue. In 2016 and the first 6 months of 2017, a youth advisory group (YAG) comprising 16 Transition Year students from 4 schools was established to collaborate with researchers in the design and conduct of a study to explore cyberbullying from the perspective of post-primary school students. 11 focus groups were then conducted across 4 schools with 64 students taking part. Emergent themes were discussed with the YAG to establish the credibility of the findings. Analysis is ongoing. Youth advisors contributed a contemporary perspective to the study that would not otherwise have been accessible to researchers. YAG members were awarded a certificate from the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCC, and the National Suicide Research Foundation for their participation in the study.

### Personnel Involved

PhD Researcher: Ms Rebecca Dennehy, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork

Primary Supervisor: Prof Ella Arensman

Co-supervisors: Dr Paul Corcoran, Ms Mary Cronin, (Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork)

### Specific objectives for 2017

- Completion of data collection and analysis of focus group data
- Preparation of systematic review for peer review journal
- Preparation of paper on the study methodology for peer review journal

### Link with the Connecting for Life Strategy

Goal 1: To improve the nation's understanding of and attitudes to suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing

Goal 2: To support local communities' capacity to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour

Goal 3: To target approaches to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve mental health among priority groups

## Preventing Depression and Improving Awareness through Networking in the EU (PREDI-NU)

### Study Aim

The PREDI-NU consortium consists of 11 EU countries. The main objectives of the PREDI-NU project are 1) to provide internet-based guided self-management protocols for depression in young people and adults with mild forms of depression: the iFightDepression programme and 2) to increase awareness of depression among health professionals and community facilitators working with adolescents and young adults in order to improve early identification of depression and adequate treatment referral for young people with depression.

The iFightDepression programme was developed as an additional resource to the four-level intervention programme of the European Alliance Against Depression.

In 2016, the NSRF delivered GP and mental health care professional trainings on the iFightDepression programme on an on-going basis.

In addition, the NSRF received referrals from GP's and healthcare professionals for access to the programme on an on-going basis.

### Personnel Involved

Principal Investigator: Prof Ella Arensman

Other Investigators: Ms Eileen Williamson, Mr Niall McTernan, Prof Ulrich Hegerl, Prof Victor Perez, Dr Elisabeth Kohls.

### Specific objectives for 2017

- The NSRF will continue to roll out training on the iFightDepression programme and work with GP's and healthcare professionals to facilitate referral.
- The NSRF will explore funding opportunities to further increase the roll out of Train-the-Trainer programmes.

### Link with the Connecting for Life Strategy

Goal 2: To support local communities' capacity to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour.

Goal 3: To target approaches to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve mental health among priority groups.

## Media reporting of suicide and adherence to media guidelines

### Study Aim

This study examines the quality of media reporting of suicide in Ireland and adherence to media guidelines. International research consistently shows evidence for an association between sensationalised media reporting and suicidal behaviour.

### Personnel Involved

Principal Investigator: Professor Ella Arensman

Other Investigators: Mr Niall McTernan, Ms Grace O'Regan, Ms Ailbhe Spillane, Ms Eimear Cusack, Mr Brian Waters, Ms Theresa O'Reilly

### Specific objectives for 2017

- Preparation of a paper based on the outcomes of the study for submission to a peer reviewed journal.
- Preparation of briefing documents for circulation among all relevant stakeholders in government, media and the voluntary sector if and when required.
- Work with statutory and non-statutory agencies, the Press Ombudsman and editors and media organisations to promote the implementation of media guidelines using a pro-active approach.
- Work with regulators and government department as outlined in Connecting for Life to explore ways of restricting access to sites that primarily exist to promote suicide or self-harm.
- Ensure that the dialogue between journalists and representatives from other relevant disciplines is on-going, including arranging a workshop for journalists who are using the media guidelines as routine practice and those who are unfamiliar with them.

### Link with Connecting for Life

Goal 1: To improve the nation's understanding of, and attitudes to, suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing  
Specifically

Goal 1.4: Engage and work collaboratively with the media in relation to media guidelines, tools and training programmes to improve the reporting of suicidal behaviour within broadcast, print and online media.