

Newsletter

Towards making Ireland the best place in the world to grow old

Nov 13

Dear Tilda Participant

This is the third in a series of newsletters which aim to keep TILDA participants up to date with TILDA's progress. In this issue we will focus on some of the ongoing research findings from TILDA and tell you about the plans for Wave 3.

Wave 2 Completed!

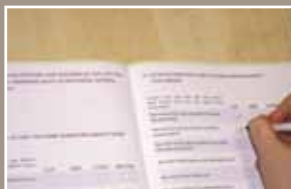
Over the course of 2012, 90 per cent of people who took part in the first wave of the study participated in Wave 2. We are extremely grateful to you for your continued participation in the study. In January 2014 we will launch our summary report on Wave 2, "A Changing Ireland: Financial Circumstances and Health and Well-Being in Over 50s in Ireland". In this report, which will be available on our website, we will document how the lives of our participants have changed over the period 2010-2013. This was a period of considerable social and economic change in Ireland, with continuing austerity, emigration and policy change.

Wave 3 Plans

In 2014, we will begin to visit you again as part of the third wave of the study. Similar to before, an interviewer will visit you in your home. When the interviewer visits, they will ask questions about things we believe to be important in the lives of people aged 50 and over. They will also give you a self-completion questionnaire to fill out in your own time. This time there will also be a follow-up health assessment (either in your home or at the TILDA health centre), which is described in greater detail on page 3.



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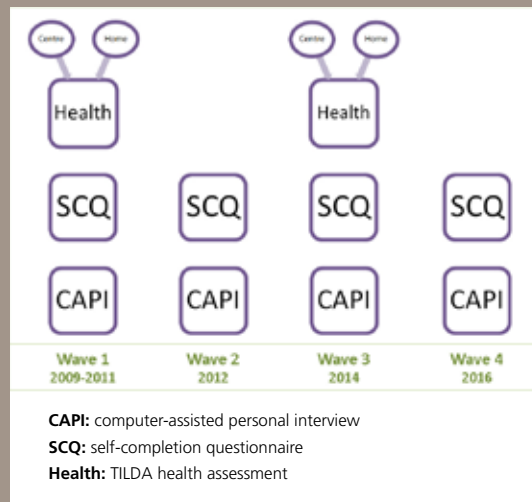


SCQ



Health Assessment

TILDA Data Collection Progress



Influencing Policy

The ultimate aim of the TILDA study is to make Ireland the best place in the world in which to grow old. We are therefore actively working with policymakers to suggest ways in which policy in relation to health and social care, pensions, incomes and working lives may be improved.



Two important government publications have used data from TILDA to inform their work - the cross-departmental

strategy on the nation's health, *Healthy Ireland - A Framework for Improved Health and Well-Being*, and the *National Positive Ageing Strategy*.

TILDA building capacity and providing jobs

The TILDA team has grown over tenfold since the study commenced. We are a multidisciplinary team of over 35 staff and postgraduate students. During our data collection waves we employ interviewers and additional nurses bringing our TILDA team to almost 150 people. We collaborate with ageing researchers across Ireland, Europe, Australia, USA, India, China, Brazil and Korea building capacity in ageing research. We cannot do any of this great work without your support and participation so from the TILDA team, a big thank you!

Thank You

The study would not be possible without your participation. On behalf of TILDA and the countless citizens who are already benefiting from the knowledge generated by the TILDA study, I thank you most sincerely for your valuable contribution.

Rose Anne Kenny

Prof. Rose Anne Kenny
Principal Investigator

Newsletter

Recent Findings

Here we highlight the findings from recent research by TILDA staff. Further details on all TILDA publications are available from www.tcd.ie/tilda/publications.



Supplementary Pensions and the Income of Ireland's Retirees

Men are more likely to have supplementary pensions (i.e., an occupational pension or private pension) than women, as are those who have higher levels of education and were employed in the public service.

How to ensure a good quality of life into older age?

Strong social networks, participation in various types of active social relationships, volunteering, and weekly attendance at religious services are all associated with a higher quality of life in older age.

Polypharmacy

One in five of those over 50 years regularly take five or more medications (this is known as 'polypharmacy'). While polypharmacy may be necessary to properly manage certain diseases, it can also expose patients to risks of drug interactions and adverse drug reactions. In addition, polypharmacy has been highlighted as a major determinant of poor medication adherence.

Eye Health

Identifying older people at risk of cognitive decline and developing interventions to prevent cognitive decline are public health priorities. Cognitive decline is the deterioration in functions such as thinking, remembering, attention, reasoning and planning. The eye is often regarded as the 'window to the brain'. TILDA researchers have found an association between eye health and cognitive performance in the over 50s. Macular pigment plays a protective role and is like having internal sunglasses which block harmful light that can damage the eye

over time. In general, people in the study with lower macular pigment had slightly lower cognitive scores and poorer memory. However, there was no relationship between macular pigment and verbal fluency, word recall, visual reasoning, or picture memory. Macular pigment is influenced by diet, which opens up possibilities for further research using future waves of TILDA data.

Sandwich Generation

TILDA researchers have examined the contribution of the 'sandwich generation', i.e., women with both living parents and dependent children. They found that women in the sandwich generation play an important role in supporting both their parents and children, both financially and non-financially. For example, one-third of sandwich generation women look after their grandchildren for an average of 34 hours per month.

Adverse Childhood Events

Across the world, studies have shown that those who experience adverse childhood events (e.g., poor health, physical or sexual abuse, poverty) have a higher disease risk later in life. Using TILDA, our researchers have found that participants who had 3 or more adverse childhood events were nearly twice as likely to have cardiovascular disease later in life as those who experienced no childhood adversity.

Frailty

A major theme of TILDA research is frailty, its causes and consequences. Frailty is an age-related condition that reduces the ability of the individual to respond to stressors such as falls, infections or surgery. TILDA has been used to inform the international debate on how frailty is identified. For example, TILDA researchers have demonstrated that the 'timed up and go' test that is part of the TILDA health assessment is a good indicator of frailty. TILDA researchers have also examined the association between frailty and cognitive decline. Further research is planned to determine whether frailty causes cognitive decline, or whether cognitive decline leads to frailty.

TILDA features in the Journal of the American Geriatric Society!

In May 2013, a special issue of the Journal of the American Geriatric Society was devoted entirely to TILDA. TILDA researchers described the study, outlined the health assessment component of the study and discussed some findings in relation to physical and mental health, cognitive function and quality of life. The articles are available at www.tcd.ie/tilda/publications.



TILDA Health Assessment

Wave 3 of data collection will once again include a health assessment conducted either at your home or at our dedicated Health Assessment Centre. We had previously operated two Centres, one in Dublin and one in Cork, however we found that most of you preferred to travel to Dublin for your assessment, so this time around we are operating one Centre on the Trinity campus in Dublin.

The health assessment conducted at the Centre will take two to three hours and will be conducted by our team of nurses. If you choose to have your health assessment in your home, a modified version of the Centre assessment will be conducted, again by a TILDA nurse.

As it has been four years since your last health assessment, we have made a short film of the health assessment to remind you what to expect. The film was shot by students from Trinity and features a number of volunteer actors and TILDA nurses. To watch the film please go the Participant section of our website (see image below), click on What Is Involved? and then Health Assessment. <http://www.tcd.ie/tilda/participants/whats-involved/health-assessment/index.php>



The Health Assessment consists of five main stations assessing **1. Cognition**, **2. Vision**, **3. Gait**, **4. Cardiovascular Function**, and a range of **5. Other Measurements**. We will have a number of new measurements in this health assessment, some of which feature in the film.



International Links

TILDA is part of an international 'family' of longitudinal studies of ageing. These studies collect similar information to TILDA which allows for international comparisons. TILDA is leading the way in developing the 'health assessment' component of these studies. For example, Northern Ireland is about to begin its own longitudinal study of ageing (NICOLA) in 2014, and its health assessment is modeled closely on the TILDA health assessment. In November 2013, a delegation from the Korean Longitudinal Study of Ageing (KLoSA) visited TILDA to learn about how our study works and the wealth of data we collect.



GLOBAL LONGITUDINAL STUDIES ON AGEING: MAP KEY

HRS: Health and Retirement Study (U.S.A.)
CLSA: Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging
MHAS: Mexican Health and Aging Study
ELSI-Brasil: Brazilian Longitudinal Study of Health, Ageing and Well Being
TILDA: The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing
ELSA: English Longitudinal Study of Ageing
SHARE: Survey of Health and Retirement in Europe

NICOLA: Northern Ireland Cohort Longitudinal Study of Ageing
THLS: The Scottish Longitudinal Study of Ageing
CHARLS: China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study
LASI: The Longitudinal Ageing Study in India
KLoSA: Korean Longitudinal Study of Ageing
ALSA: The Australian Longitudinal Study of Ageing

KEY EVENTS

TILDA at the European Parliament

Emer Costello MEP invited TILDA to present the study and its findings to the EU Parliament in October. The seminar, entitled "Living happier and healthier in the age of longevity: how longitudinal studies on ageing inform policy for Healthy Life Years. Insights from TILDA", focussed on how TILDA is characterising the older citizen and exploring the ageing process and the determinants of successful ageing in order to plan appropriate health, social and economic policies.

Emer Costello published a piece in the Parliament Magazine about the seminar highlighting how the ageing population presents Europe with opportunities; you can read further details of our visit and find a link to Emer's report on our website <http://www.tcd.ie/tilda/news-events/>.



British and Irish Longitudinal Studies on Ageing Meeting

The first annual meeting of the British and Irish Longitudinal Studies on Ageing took place at Trinity College Dublin on October 31st and November 1st 2013. Representatives of TILDA, ELSA (the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing), NICOLA (the Northern Ireland Cohort for Longitudinal Study of Ageing) and the planned Scottish Longitudinal Study of Ageing, as well as guest speakers, presented research and discussed methodological issues arising from the longitudinal studies. Further details are available on our website <http://www.tcd.ie/tilda/news-events/>

Keep in Touch!

If you have changed address, or will be away from the address that we have on record for you for a period of time, please let us know by writing, calling or emailing us. We can then inform your local interviewer and you will not miss out on participating in Wave 3 of the TILDA study. We would also welcome any comments you may have on the study!



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