

ANNUAL REVIEW

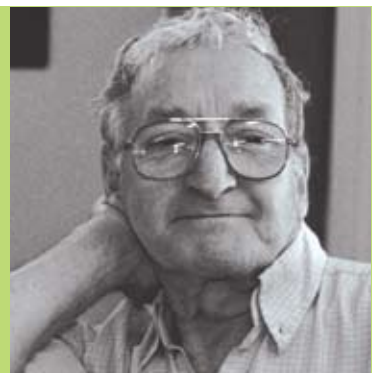
tilda
The Irish Longitudinal
Study on Ageing



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

The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) was launched in November 2006 by the Minister for Health and Children Mary Harney, TD. TILDA, the most ambitious study on ageing ever undertaken in Ireland, will provide comprehensive information on the health, social and economic circumstances of up to 10,000 Irish adults, aged 50 years and over and how these circumstances change over a 10-year period. The study is being undertaken by a cross-institutional, multidisciplinary team of experts from the Dundalk Institute of Technology, the Economic and Social Research Institute, the National University of Ireland Galway, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork and University College Dublin. TILDA's funders are Atlantic Philanthropies and Irish Life.

www.tilda.ie



By 2030, one in five Irish people will be 65 years old or older. The greatest increase will occur in the octogenarian age group. Ageing on this scale is an unprecedented phenomenon in Irish history. In stark contrast to the evident importance of ageing, there is an acute shortage of social, economic and health information on older persons in Ireland. In addition, we need to have a better understanding of the economic, social and health changes that have taken place in Ireland in recent years. The data from TILDA will help to fill this gap and will provide policy-makers in the fields of health, social care, pension planning and biotechnology with a unique knowledge base. TILDA is essential to underpin future planning and to ensure a healthy and happy life span for the people of Ireland.

Ireland differs from other European countries in a number of important ways with regard to ageing. In the first place, its population is much younger than the European average. Ireland will age more slowly and its relatively low old age dependency ratio will persist for some time (OECD 2006). The age at retirement is also comparatively high. Secondly, the Irish State pension system is much less generous than in most advanced European countries and is flat rate rather than income related. This poses problems with regard to adequacy and ensuring a good standard of living in retirement, but it makes the system much more likely to be sustainable than the heavily stressed systems seen in many other countries. Third, in a comparative perspective, old age poverty rates as conventionally measured are relatively high in Ireland (partly as a consequence of the pension system). Ireland is also characterised by a number of other important social and demographic features, such as the very high level of owner occupied dwellings, the low divorce rate and a recent surge in immigration.

Most of these features indicate a relatively benign outlook for ageing in Ireland since they mean ageing is posing problems less immediately in Ireland than elsewhere. They afford us a vital window of opportunity in which to take steps to avoid many of the problems neighbouring countries will encounter sooner and in a more exaggerated form. TILDA will provide the research base on which this planning can be conducted.

To develop an environment for ageing well the study will be invaluable for:

- Policy-makers and public sector service planners
- Voluntary organisations engaged in activities that seek to enhance the social integration of older citizens
- Many private sector companies in the insurance and services industries
- Biotechnology companies
- Bioscience companies

Furthermore the study will deliver quality cutting-edge research consistent with the emerging national initiative towards a “knowledge society” built on innovations in science and technology.



TILDA launch 7 November 2006. From left to right: Dr. Virpi Timonen, TCD; Prof. Rose Anne Kenny, TCD; Prof. Brendan Whelan, ESRI/TCD; Minister for Health Mary Harney, TD; Prof. Charles Normand, TCD; Prof. Ivan Perry, UCC; Prof. Hannah McGee, RCSI; Provost Dr. John Hegarty, TCD.



“Active Ageing & Labour Market Trajectories” 25 June 2007. From left to right: Prof. James Banks, University College London; Prof. Jim Smith, the RAND Corporation; Dr. Amílcar Moreira, TCD; Prof. Rose Anne Kenny, TCD; Prof. Brendan Whelan, ESRI/TCD.

TILDA Aims

The study is aimed at understanding the current status and changing needs of older people, in particular:

- Living standards, quality of life and pensions of people at older ages
- Physical and mental health needs of older people
- Social care needs and social networks of older people
- Health and social needs of families and carers of older people
- Biological and environmental components of “successful ageing”
- Contributions that older people are making to society and the economy
- How each of the key components – health, wealth, happiness – interact so that we can ensure that Ireland meets the needs and choices of its citizens in a personalised and positive environment and with due dignity and respect.
- What direction policies related to older people should take

Major Developments in 2007

The following have been put in place:

- A highly-qualified research team, including a very experienced research director
- Governance structure
- Data protection structure
- The plans for the main study, including in-depth work on instrument development, sample design and fieldwork
- Linkages with cutting-edge Irish research in related areas, including technological research aimed at facilitating independent living, research on cognitive function and research on the measurement of poverty and deprivation in old age
- Substantial contact to establish collaboration with the leading international longitudinal studies of ageing (two presentations at an international meeting on harmonisation of longitudinal studies) and to identify candidates to the international scientific advisory committee
- Collaboration and coordination with the Irish component of the Survey of Health and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)
- Establishment of links with key government stakeholders with the purpose of making the study respond to needs of policy makers

Events

- Conference "Social Policy Home Care for Ageing Populations: International Comparisons of Domiciliary Care Policies for Older People" – March 2007
- TILDA website launch – April 2007
- A symposium celebrating creativity in ageing "The Lived Life: Telling Stories, Telling Truths" – April 2007
- TILDA/ASPEN (Active Social Policies European Network) conference "Active Ageing & Labour Market Trajectories" – June 2007



Participants of the conference "Social Policy Home Care for Ageing Populations: International Comparisons of Domiciliary Care Policies for Older People". From left to right: Dr. Virpi Timonen, TCD; Prof. Robbie Gilligan, TCD; Prof. Hildegard Theobald, Vechta University (Germany); Prof. Caroline Glendinning, University of York; Prof. Andrew Scharlach, University of California at Berkeley; Dr. Tine Rostgaard, Danish Social Research Institute.

Facts about Ageing

The proportion of people in Ireland aged 60 years or older is projected to increase from 15% of the overall population in 2002 to 28% in 2050. *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.*

The greatest increase will be in people over 80 – the "oldest old" – a group that is expected to increase in size by 66% by 2035. *Fahey, 1995.*

In a World Health Organisation healthy life expectancy survey, Ireland was ranked 22nd for males and 23rd for females out of a total of 23 countries surveyed, in terms of time spent in poor health. *World Health Organisation, 2001.*

TILDA Lead Funders

Irish Life

"Irish Life, as anchor sponsor of the study is contributing a total of €4m over a 10 year period. This is the largest corporate gift to a research project ever made in Ireland. TILDA is also the only long-term study of ageing in the world with a commercial sponsor. Irish Life is the biggest provider of pension and related products in Ireland apart from the State. The research under TILDA will provide crucial insights that will help us serve our customers better."

Kevin Murphy, CEO, Irish Life

The
ATLANTIC
Philanthropies



Irish Life



Kevin Murphy, Irish Life



The Atlantic Philanthropies

"Through our work in ageing, we seek to support programmes, organisations and advocacy efforts that enable older adults to be an integral part of society, living healthier, independent lives with dignity, purpose and meaning."

Brian Hofland, Ph.D.,
Programme Director, The Atlantic Philanthropies, 2006 Annual Report

Plans for 2008

March

Launch of pilot study

29th - 30th May

International Conference "Health in Ageing: Achievements and Potential of Longitudinal Research" will provide an assessment of the contribution that longitudinal studies have made to research on ageing, as well as highlighting the potential future directions of such research. The conference aims to broaden the knowledge base and expertise of researchers, clinicians and policy makers on the science of health, ageing and longevity. For more information: http://www.tilda.ie/health_ageing.html

September

Launch of first wave of the study

National Study – Cross-Institutional Team

- Dundalk Institute of Technology www.dkit.ie
- Economic and Social Research Institute www.esri.ie
- National University of Ireland Galway www.nuigalway.ie
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland www.rcsi.ie
- Trinity College Dublin www.tcd.ie
- University College Cork www.ucc.ie
- University College Dublin www.ucd.ie



Prof. Rose Anne Kenny,
TILDA Principal Investigator

Steering Committee

Mr. Rodd Bond, Manager, The Netwell Centre, Dundalk Institute of Technology

Prof. Tom Fahey, Head of the Department of Family Medicine and General Practice, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Prof. Colm Harmon, Director, Geary Institute, University College Dublin

Prof. Hannah McGee, Director, Health Services Research Centre, Department of Psychology, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Prof. Rose Anne Kenny, TILDA Principal Investigator, Department of Medical Gerontology, Trinity College Dublin

Mr. Gerry Loughrey, Corporate Responsibility Manager, Irish Life & Permanent

Prof. Charles Normand, Edward Kennedy Chair, Health Policy & Management, Trinity College Dublin

Prof. Eamon O'Shea, Director of the Centre for Social Gerontology, National University of Ireland Galway

Prof. Ivan Perry, Head, Department of Epidemiology & Public Health, University College Cork

Dr. Virpi Timonen, Director, Social Policy and Ageing Research Centre, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin

Dr. Maryann Valiulis, Director, Centre Gender & Women's Studies, Trinity College Dublin

Prof. Brendan Whelan, TILDA Research Director, Trinity College Dublin



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The
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Irish Life