



NEWSLETTER 2018

Dear TILDA Participant,

Welcome to the 2018 TILDA Newsletter. In this issue, we highlight research findings from our recently published Wave 4 report, which examines changes in health and wellbeing from 2009 to 2016. A consistent research finding is the positive effects that social engagement, supportive friendships, volunteering, and membership of organisations have on health and wellbeing. You can find a full copy of the report in the Publications on our website www.tilda.ie.

As we bring 2018 and Wave 5 to a close, I would like to sincerely thank you all for the time that you have devoted to TILDA both this year and since we started data collection in 2009; almost ten years ago. Your continued commitment to the study is enabling us to understand what it means to age well. Understanding the ageing process across social, economic and health domains, enables us to develop and improve prevention and therapeutic interventions for better health and to inform policy and practice. Together we are working toward our goal of making Ireland one of the best places in the world to grow older, live independently and enjoy a good quality of life.

On behalf of the TILDA team, I thank you most sincerely for your continued and valuable contribution.



Principal Investigator

WAVE 5 AND WAVE 6 UPDATE

The Wave 5
data collection is
almost complete.
To date, over

WAVE 4 REPORT WELLBEING AND HEALTH IN IRELAND'S OVER 50s: 2009-2016

TILDA's latest research report (Wave 4) was launched on 28th November. Pictured at the launch L-R: Professor Steve Thomas, Director of the Centre for Health Policy and Management; Professor Rose Anne Kenny; Dr Darrin Morrissey, CEO Health Research Board; Dr. Christine McGarrigle, TILDA Social Epidemiology Research Fellow.

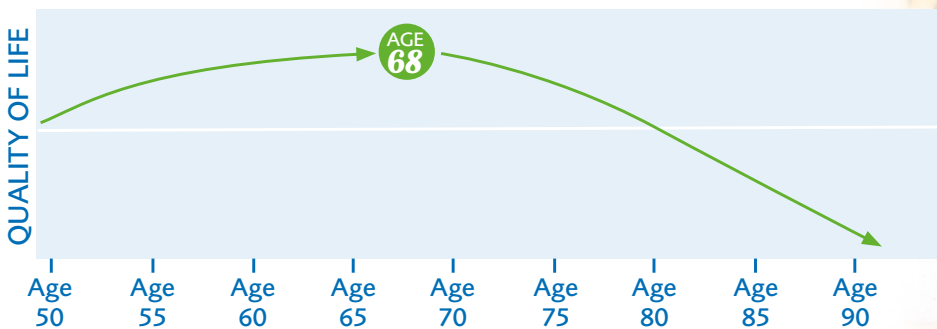


PEOPLE IN IRELAND EXPERIENCE A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is recognised as an important measure of wellbeing as people get older. It reflects not just the physical aspects of health but the overall wellbeing of an individual. TILDA research has found that people in Ireland experience a good quality of life.

Quality of life doesn't decline with age, but instead increases to a peak at age 68 and then starts to gradually decline.

People 80 years of age enjoy a similar quality of life as people aged 50.

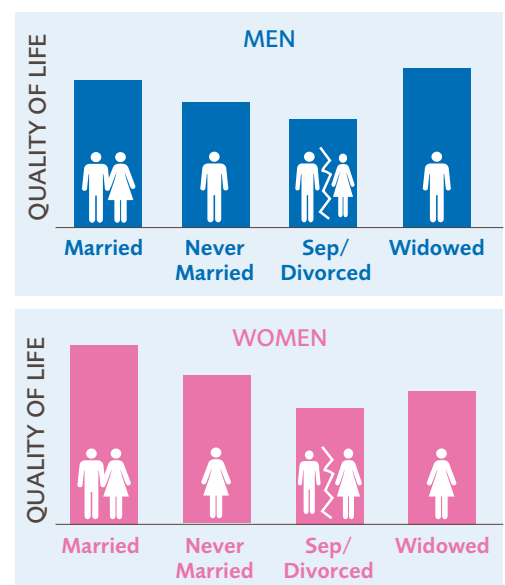


Increased social integration, through maintaining a larger social network and positive supportive relationships with friends, is associated with higher quality of life.

Quality of life decreases with increasing number of chronic health conditions. Chronic conditions include: hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, angina, heart attack, heart failure, transient ischaemic attack (mini-stroke), stroke, arthritis, lung disease and osteoporosis. Social support structures and social interaction are recognised as being important for older people with disability and declining functional ability and health.

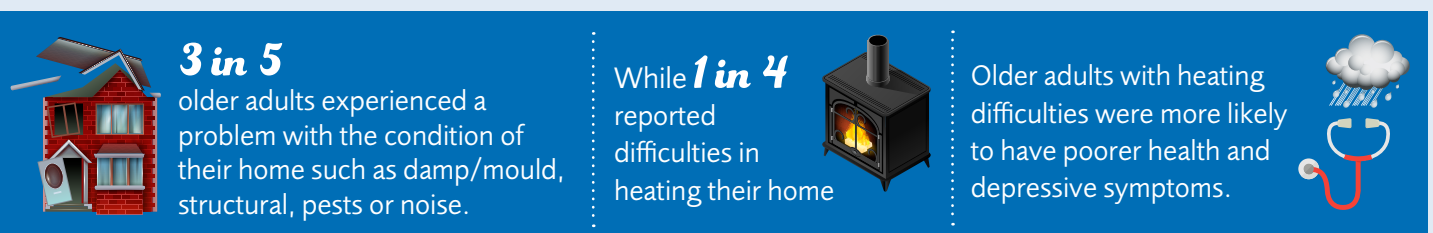
TILDA research shows that quality of life was higher in those who were married, and lowest in those individuals who were separated or divorced, for both men and women. In men who were widowed, quality of life was similar to those who were married, however in widowed women, quality of life was lower and similar to women who were separated or divorced.

Policies promoting social participation and engagement could significantly improve health outcomes, enhance health and active ageing, and maintain quality of life.



POOR LIVING CONDITIONS AFFECT OLDER ADULTS ABILITY TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

Life satisfaction of older people has been shown to be impacted by the conditions of their home. As people age, they may experience lower functional abilities and poorer health which can lead to the home becoming unsuitable for their needs. The majority of older persons want to age in their own home, therefore modifications to homes become increasingly necessary to ensure suitability as care needs increase.



Independent living is important for the quality of life but can only be possible where homes are suitable for the changing needs of an ageing population. Problematic housing conditions, and low neighbourhood social cohesion are significant issues for many older adults in Ireland

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS INCREASE AS WE GET OLDER

The most common conditions among older adults in Ireland are:



This is equivalent to almost **500,000** older adults across each condition.

Arthritis and pain are commonly disabling for older adults while conditions such as hypertension are linked to cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Awareness of the proportion of adults suffering from these conditions and the increasing burden of disease is important for planning of care needs in the future, as well as improving treatment and management for older adults by Wave 4..

Falling is also an important public health issue with 1 in 2 older adults reporting at least one fall. This is equivalent to **660,000** adults in Ireland of this age.

HEALTH BEHAVIOURS

There were some improvements evident in health behaviours across the waves. Most notably, there was a reduction in the proportion of current smokers (driven largely by females aged 50-64 years), and very low numbers commenced smoking for the first time. Ireland has been progressive in introducing measures to try to reduce smoking, in particular being the first country to introduce a workplace smoking ban.

Older adults do not get enough physical activity. At Wave 4, only 52% achieved the recommended 150 minutes per week, down from 62% at Wave 1. 150 minutes per week, or 30 minutes a day, provides many physical and psychological health benefits. Brisk walking is one of the simplest forms of moderate intensity exercise and, remember, you don't have to do it all at once. Build up to 30 minutes per day by being active for 10 minute bouts a number of times per day.



FRAILITY IS A COMMON CONDITION IN IRELAND

Frailty is described as a distinctive health state related to the ageing process in which multiple body systems gradually lose their in-built reserves. Older adults living with frailty are at an increased risk of unpredictable deterioration in their health following minor stress events such as an:



Frailty is a major risk factor for falls, fear of falling and disability among older adults.



People living with frailty are more likely to experience declines in mental health including lower levels of cognitive function and higher levels of depressive symptoms.

Frailty is not inevitable and can be avoided, delayed and reversed with timely and appropriate interventions such as:



VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION ARE IMPORTANT FOR SUCCESSFUL AGEING



1 in 5 older adults in Ireland volunteer weekly



OVER HALF

have volunteered at least once over a 2 year period

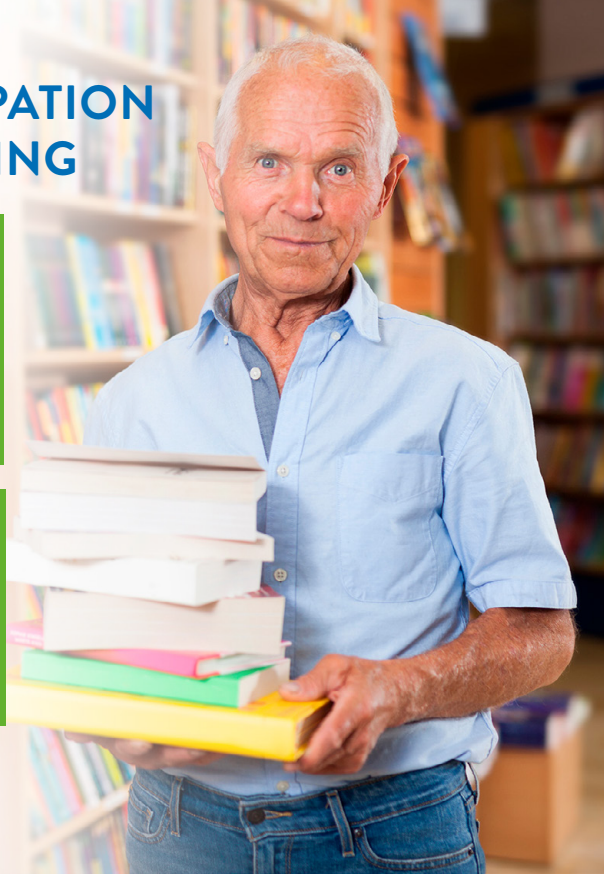
3 in 4 older adults participate in active and social leisure activities each week



1 in 2 participate in organised groups such as sports groups, book clubs, or charitable organisations.



Volunteering and participation in both active and social leisure activities and organised groups are associated with better quality of life and fewer depressive symptoms.



PUBLIC LECTURE ON 'HOW TO AGE WELL'

As part of Positive Ageing Week, a week of events organised by Age Action with support from Bank of Ireland, Professor Kenny delivered a public lecture in Trinity College Dublin on the 3rd October. A recording of the talk, entitled "How to Age Well: Evidence from TILDA", is available on YouTube at - <https://youtu.be/z8U7NDYBo88>. TILDA will host a public lecture for Positive Ageing Week 2019 between September 30th to October 4th. Details will be on the TILDA website and advertised in association with Age Action



We are improving the 'Participants' section on our website and will be providing you with more information on the study and our research findings. Check in over the next few months to see our improvements. <https://tilda.tcd.ie/participants/>
We welcome your suggestions, so please do send us an e-mail tilda@tcd.ie

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 want to make sure that you will not miss out on participating in the next wave of TILDA. We also welcome any comments you may have on the study.

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TILDA IS SUPPORTED BY:

