

2011 Annual Review

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

tilda

Staidéar Fadaimseartha na
hÉireann um Dhul in Aois

The Irish Longitudinal
Study on Ageing

September 12

Introduction

The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) is a large-scale, nationally representative study of people aged 50 and over in Ireland. It is the most ambitious study of ageing ever carried out in Ireland and represents a step-change in terms of data, knowledge and understanding of ageing with which to inform policy and novel research. TILDA is designed to maximise comparability with other well-established international longitudinal studies. More than 8,000 people aged 50 and over accepted the invitation to participate in the first wave of TILDA, and the majority of these also agreed to undertake a comprehensive health assessment.

Launch of the TILDA Glossy Report Fifty Plus in Ireland: 2011

On Monday, 9th of May 2011, Dr. James Reilly, Minister for Health, officially launched the first results from TILDA. Pictured across with Professor Rose Anne Kenny, Principal Investigator of TILDA at the Science Gallery in Trinity College Dublin where a series of presentations were given by TILDA researchers outlining the main findings of the first results.

Professor Kenny also appeared in an Irish Times Editorial that day on the "well being of over 50's" in Ireland.

For more information see: www.tilda.ie/news

Key Findings

- A quarter of the 50 plus age group have been 'emigrants' at some stage in their lives.
- Only 5% of people over 50 in Ireland are non-Irish and almost all of these are British.
- Half provide regular care to grandchildren, one third provide regular practical help with chores such as shopping and many volunteer on a regular basis.
- Depression (29%) and anxiety (39%) are very common – most common between the ages of 50 to 64 and in those 75 years and older. Most people with depression have not been diagnosed by a doctor. TILDA will raise awareness about this amongst doctors.
- Pension coverage is poor particularly in women: two in five women currently in work are not covered by a personal pension. Pension coverage varies considerably by job category, for example, four in five higher professionals are covered compared to only one in three of those in unskilled jobs.

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Some facts;

- Three quarters are overweight or obese, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes are also very common.
- Overall TILDA participants are satisfied with their health (two thirds) and consider that it is excellent, very good or good.
- Women and the oldest adults get more comfort and strength from religion than men or younger adults.



Newsletter

Wave 1

Over 8,500 people took part in the first wave of the study for which we are most grateful. TILDA recruited a stratified clustered sample of 8,178 individual representatives of the community living Irish population aged 50 years and over. Younger spouses and partners were also invited to participate, primarily to provide information regarding family and financial circumstances.

Each participant underwent an extensive face-to-face interview, was left a questionnaire to complete and return and was invited to a health assessment either at a dedicated centre or in the home.

The data is now being prepared for lodgement with the data archive in UCD and a core team of three members were assigned to prepare the data.

The overall response rate to the study was 62.0%. The subsequent participation in the health assessment and the proportion returning the self-completion questionnaire is high, and collection of both is ongoing.



Ipsos Mori interviewers at one of several training sessions held in preparation for Wave 2 of TILDA.

Major developments in 2011

- All the Wave 1 data collection has now been completed.
- Ethical approval for the Wave 2 pilot was granted by the Ethics Committee.
- TILDA awarded the contract for the Wave 2 collection to Ipsos MORI.
- Substantial work was undertaken on the Wave 2 questionnaire. In addition to new questions, it was necessary to alter the Wave 1 questionnaire to implement the feeding-forward of information from Wave 1 and also to design proxy interviews.
- TILDA fieldwork was conducted by Ipsos MORI who have co-ordinated a large team of dedicated interviewers.
- The research nurses and health-centre managers have ensured a constantly high quality of data collection in the Dublin and Cork health centres and at home assessments.
- Abstracts from the topic reports on carers and on pensions have now been submitted to the Department of Health and work on these is progressing.

Conferences and events (2011)



President Mary McAleese speaking at the CARDI Conference, 2 November 2011

Additional Funding Achieved

- The Atlantic Philanthropies have indicated that an additional €2 million of funding will be made available.
- In June 2011 the Health Research Board awarded TILDA €297,750 to study "Frailty and Cognitive impairment in the older population".
- The Health Research Board's call under the Interdisciplinary Capacity Expansion (ICE) programme. The grant of almost €700,000 will allow us to hire three post docs (health economist, psychologist and epidemiologist) to work on mental health.

On 9 May 2011 the Fifty Plus in Ireland report 2011 was launched in the TCD Science Gallery by the Minister for Health, Dr. James Reilly.

The TILDA Scientific Advisory Board members held their annual meeting on 10 and 11 May 2011 in the Neil/Hoey Lecture Hall, Trinity College Dublin.

In August, three people from the US Health and Retirement Survey visited TILDA for two days to discuss a wide range of issues such as the survey design and innovative research areas such as genetics. This was funded by the HRS.

Professor Kenny and Professor Whelan met with Dr. Richard Suzman of the US National Institutes of Ageing to discuss possible NIA funding of TILDA activities.

Professor Kenny attended a conference in Beijing where a large proportion of the world's longitudinal studies on ageing were represented. The aim was to discuss harmonisation of the studies to facilitate internationally comparative research. This was funded by the NIA.

TILDA had a significant presence (five TILDA-related presentations) at CARDI's first international conference on ageing, Ageing Globally – Ageing Locally, at Croke Park, Dublin, on 2 & 3 Nov 2011. Papers were also presented at the annual conference of the Gerontological Society of America and at conferences in Chicago, Vienna and Venice.

On December 1, Professor Kenny made a presentation to the Irish Heart Foundation on TILDA and engaged in discussions on the possible use of TILDA results in IHF health campaigns. These discussions continue.

On December 2, Professor James Banks of the English Longitudinal Study on Ageing (ELSA), visited TILDA, to meet with researchers and to present a seminar. During his visit, the opportunity was taken of having a four-way meeting between the longitudinal studies on ageing in the Republic of Ireland and England and the proposed studies in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Another meeting of the four studies was planned for March 2012.

On December 15 and 16, Professor Barrett represented TILDA at a meeting of the Health and Retirement Survey Monitoring Committee in Washington, DC. A representative from TILDA was invited by the National Institute on Ageing in the U.S. to update this committee on the TILDA project and to explore the possibilities for harmonising future work across the HRS, ELSA, TILDA and other longitudinal studies.

December 2011: Professor Kenny discusses longevity in the Irish Times. A copy of the article can be found on www.tilda.ie/news.

Media coverage

The launch of the results from the home interviews has received extensive media coverage and emphasizes the huge contribution that the 50 plus make to Irish society.

Staying younger for longer

"Researchers are looking for ways to recognise the onset of frailty in time to slow down the process".

Claire O'Connell
Irish Times
26th April 2011

Parents postponing retirement as children move home

"24% of older households have given financial or material gifts, worth €5,000 or more, to their adult children in the past 10 years."

Charlie Weston
Irish Independent
Sept 15th 2011

The rise of the 'granny nannies'

"More adults are being bailed out by ageing parents".

Irish Independent
May 10th 2011

Using grey power to help fuel our recovery

"Keeping older people fit and well is not just of benefit to them – it can help the economy by saving us a fortune in healthcare costs..."

John McKenna
Irish Times
March 29th 2011

Wellbeing of the over 50's

"This study is a valuable and strategic investment for the nation. The Minister for Health must ensure that its first report does not gather dust and that these early findings are acted upon by policy makers".

Editorial - Irish Times
14th May 2011

Under the microscope

"Already details are emerging in the research that Ireland's elderly are more active than in the past, better educated and largely tend to own their own homes".

Paddy Clancy
Irish Times
15th Feb 2011

New discoveries

TILDA'S researchers have already made new discoveries: the TILDA team have discovered:

- a new method to measure irregular heart beats and researchers are developing new technologies using this method.
- that eye measurements are early indicators of people at risk of falls and fractures.

If you wish to have more in depth information please see details of the first wave report on our website – www.tilda.ie

Plans for 2012

- Begin the second wave of the study's data collection.
- Generate interest in collaborative research analysis and work.
- Publish research documents about the study design and early findings.

Funding partners:

The
ATLANTIC
Philanthropies

 **An Roinn Sláinte**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

 **Irish Life**

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