

The University of Limerick to lead a multi-university collaboration on  
'Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity' (CSPPA)

In Ireland, limited physical activity data exist that have been collected from representative samples of children and even fewer data collected where physical activity has been measured with precision<sup>1-5</sup>. The original Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study (CSPPA09-10)<sup>3</sup> sought to address this deficit. This study was the first to provide information on the levels of participation, and enjoyment of, physical activity, physical education and sport. A total of 5,397 children from 53 primary and 70 post-primary schools from the Republic of Ireland participated in CSPPA09-10. In short, only 19% of primary and 12% of post-primary school children met the Department of Health and Children's physical activity recommendations of at least 60 minutes of daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA), with females less likely than males to achieve the recommendations. A decrease in the likelihood of achieving the recommendations was seen with age. From a physical education perspective, 35% of primary pupils and 10% of post-primary pupils received the Department of Education and Skills' recommended minimum minutes of physical education per week.

Action 50 of the National Physical Activity Plan<sup>2</sup> calls for the 'establishment of a systematic, regular and long-term national surveillance system to monitor physical activity levels in each of the NPAP target groups'. This follow-up study to the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study (CSPPA17-18) will help to provide quality surveillance data on the current physical activity levels of Irish children and youth. This data, if aligned to CSPPA09-10, will allow us to establish trends over time; to evaluate progress since 2009-10 and it will provide guidance on intervention design to ensure that every child in Ireland is given the chance to be physically active. Ultimately, it will become a corner stone for judgements in relation to future funding in the area of children and physical activity.

This multi-centre study, led by the University of Limerick, will bring together Ireland's best expertise from the respective fields of physical activity, physical education, sport and coaching studies, epidemiology, public health and statistics. It will replicate and improve on CSPPA09-10, and use the experience of academics within the University of Limerick, University College Cork, Dublin City University and Ulster University to conduct CSPPA17-18. Of great importance is the involvement of Ulster University, as an all-island approach to children and physical activity can now be achieved. The purpose of CSPPA17-18 is to provide research that will:

- Comprehensively assess the participation levels of Irish children in sport, physical education and physical activity using both subjective and objective modalities;
- Determine the factors that enhance or inhibit this involvement,
- Demonstrate the health benefits of participation in regular health-enhancing physical activity for Irish children and youth and
- Provide a direct comparison between CSPPA09-10 and CSPPA17-18.

Data collection started on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and will run until the end of May.

### **Funding Information**

Funding Agency: Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland

Duration: October 2017-October 2018

Award: €288,613

### **Academic Teams**

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  - Prof. Alan Donnelly, Prof. Ann MacPhail, Dr. Ciaran MacDonncha, Dr. Cormac Powell (Research Manager) and Dr. Matthew Herring
2. Dublin City University: Dr. Sarahjane Belton (DCU lead)
  - Dr. Johann Issartel, Dr. Sarah Meegan, Dr. Sarah Kelly, Mr. Enda Whyte, Dr. Siobhan O'Connor and Ms. Christina Duff.
3. University College Cork: Dr. Wesley O'Brien (UCC lead)
  - Dr. Janis Harrington, Dr. Fiona Chambers, Dr. João Costa and Ms Orlagh Farmer
4. Ulster University: Prof. Marie Murphy (UU lead)
  - Ms Sinead Connelly and Ms Anne Johnston

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### **References**

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