Directory of Disability Research in Ireland

1996 - 1998

National Rehabilitation Board

NRB March 1999
Foreword

NRB is pleased to publish this 1996-1998 Directory of Disability Research and hopes that it will prove useful to those engaged in disability research and to those interested in finding out what research is being undertaken in the field.

In the creation of this Directory we invited the submission of details on research which the researchers in question felt would be relevant for inclusion. The projects documented in the Directory are based on information supplied to NRB. If readers would like more information on, or clarification of, the nature, extent and thoroughness of a particular piece of research they should contact the researcher(s) directly.

The research listed here is not exhaustive and we would welcome notification of other relevant research for inclusion in future Directories. Details should be forwarded to:

NRB Research Department, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Tel. 01-6080400
Fax. 01-6609935
Email: research@nrb.iol.ie
Website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb

Finally, NRB would like to thank all the researchers who contributed projects to this Directory and to encourage the continuation of research which is of benefit to people with disabilities.
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Computer Integrated Assistive Technology Systems for Disabled People

Researcher(s): Allen, Robert

Institute: Central Remedial Clinic, Vernon Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3. Tel: 01-8332206; Email: tdrc@crc.ie

Abstract: This thesis proposes a new approach to the way people with disabilities are assessed, supplied and supported in their use of Assistive Technologies. Since devices are used to help in many ways, and since special customised technology is expensive, the thesis advocates that all the needs of the person be identified at assessment and that an integrated solution be produced, based on common commercial technologies. The proposals are intended to produce a more powerful, more person-centred and more cost effective solution that is easier to adapt as needs change, and that is simpler to support for users living some distance from specialist centres.

Research Methods: Retrospective; Empirical

Keywords: Assistive Technology; Assistive Technology Education; Holistic Assessments; Integrated Technology; M3S; Smart Homes; Support Systems; Team Assessments

Geographical Area: International, but predominantly Europe and Ireland

Starting Date: September 1996

Completion Date: September 1998

Funding Agency: Research Trust, Central Remedial Clinic

Publications/Progress Report:

- Ph. D. thesis (Computer Applications), Dublin City University
- Allen, B., Modular Computer Training Packs Nos. 1-7, In-house training and regional support material, 1997
TIDE PROJECT - TACIS 1229

Researcher(s): Audiodata Medichip GmbH; National Council for the Blind; Index Braille Printing Co.

Institute: Audiodata Medichip GmbH, Kriegstr, 13-15 D-68794 Oberhausen-Rhsn, Germany. Tel: +49-7254-5050

Abstract: TACIS (Tactile Acoustic Computer Interaction System) is a universal Speech/Tone/Braille Tactile graphics computer tool featuring hardcopy for the visually impaired. This computer tool gave visually impaired persons access to graphics, diagrams and maps. This system was used to access a database and map information of a large area of Dublin city in tactile and audible form.

Research Methods: User trials

Keywords: Computer Tool; Visual Impairment

Geographical Area: Germany; Sweden; Ireland

Starting Date: February 1994

Completion Date: October 1997

Funding Agency: TIDE Project, Tacis 1229

Publications/Progress Report: Final report - October 1997

'The Balance of Care' - A Study of Carers' Needs in Co. Clare

Researcher(s): Barron, Brigid; Ironside, Judith; McMahon, Mary

Institute: Caring for Carers, Barefield, Ennis, Co. Clare. Tel: 065-21313; Email: bbarron.ennis@tinet.ie

Abstract: The aims of the research were to identify the needs of carers in Co. Clare, to identify available resources to meet those needs, and to make recommendations.

Research Methods: Workshops; Interviews; Questionnaire; Meetings with service providers; Action research

Keywords: Carers; Needs of Carers

Geographical Area: Co. Clare

Starting Date: 1995

Completion Date: May 1997

Funding Agency: Mid-Western Health Board

Publications/Progress Report:

- 'The Balance of Care' - A Study of Carers' Needs in Co. Clare, July 1997
An Evaluation of the Effects of Peripheral Muscle Function, Respiratory Muscle Function, Dyspnea Ratings and Exercise Capacity on Quality of Life in Cystic Fibrosis

Researcher(s): Barry, S.C.; Gallagher, Dr. C.G.; McKone, E.F.

Institute: Department of Physiotherapy, Department of Respiratory Medicine, St. Vincent’s Hospital, Elm Park, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-2694533

Abstract: This project involves measuring lower limb, upper limb and respiratory muscle strength in cystic fibrosis patients of varying disease severity and correlating these values with quality of life scores and dyspnea ratings. Quality of life will be measured by the SF-36 Health Status Questionnaire and the St. George’s Respiratory Questionnaire while dyspnea will be measured by the Baseline Dyspnea Index.

Research Methods: Measurement questionnaires/index

Keywords: Cystic Fibrosis; Dyspnea; Peripheral Muscle Strength; Physical Disability; Quality of Life; Respiratory Muscle Strength

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: July 1998

Completion Date: 2000-2001

Funding Agency: Nil at present

Publications/Progress Report:
- Barry, S.C., Ph. D. (Medical Science) thesis on completion

The Reliability and Validity of the SF-36 Health Status Measure and the St. George’s Hospital Respiratory Questionnaire as Measures of Quality of Life in Cystic Fibrosis

Researcher(s): Barry, S.C.; Gallagher, Dr. C.G.; McKone, E.F.

Institute: Department of Physiotherapy and Department of Respiratory Medicine, St. Vincent’s Hospital, Elm Park, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-2694533

Abstract: For this project 40 patients will be recruited from the Adult Cystic Fibrosis Unit at St. Vincent’s Hospital. The project will involve self-administration of the SF-36 and the St. George’s Respiratory Questionnaire. In conjunction with this pulmonary functions, oxygen saturations, carbon dioxide retention, body mass index, height and sputum bacteriology will be measured. The aim of this study is to assess the reliability and validity of both these questionnaires in a cystic fibrosis population of varying disease severity. Test-retest and internal consistency reliability will be measured. Validity will be measured by comparative analysis with the known markers of disease severity.

Research Methods: Measurement questionnaires; Reliability and validity measurements

Keywords: Cystic Fibrosis; Quality of Life

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: July 1998

Completion Date: 2000-2001

Funding Agency: Nil at present

Publications/Progress Report:
- Barry, S.C., Ph. D. (Medical Science) thesis on completion
Survey on Wheelchair Accessibility in Clonmel Town

Researcher(s): Bennett, John
Institute: Tipperary Centre for Independent Living, Cabra Road, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Tel: 0504-24236
Abstract: The primary objective of this survey was to assess wheelchair accessibility in Clonmel town in order to create a benchmark for measuring improvement in future years. The survey was not intended to be a guide to accessible premises in the town. It is hoped that this survey will set a precedent for further surveys of this kind in order to build a wider picture of accessibility nation-wide.

Research Methods: Training of surveyors; Survey of buildings for wheelchair access using evaluation sheets
Keywords: Access; Wheelchair Access
Geographical Area: Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
Starting Date: 1997
Completion Date: April 1998
Funding Agency: Variety of funders including the South Tipperary Local Voluntary Youth Council
Publications/Progress Report:
- Survey on Wheelchair Accessibility in Clonmel Town - A South Tipperary Local Voluntary Youth Initiative, 1997

Report on a Survey of Persons with Significant Disabilities in North Tipperary

Researcher(s): Bennett, John; Graham, Richard
Institute: Tipperary Centre for Independent Living, Cabra Road, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Tel: 0504-24236
Abstract: The project has 3 main purposes:
(1) To discover what obstacles people with significant disabilities in Tipperary North Riding perceive as impeding their ability and opportunities of leading normal, and therefore reasonably independent, lives
(2) To place these in order of priority, and as being typical of mainly rural areas and to investigate these findings
(3) To submit proposals to the Management Committee of the Centre for Independent Living, North Tipperary for either helping to overcome these obstacles from ‘in house’ resources, or for lobbying government, at local or at national level, to provide the necessary funding, resources or legislation in order to meet the collective needs, borne out by proven and reliable research.

Research Methods: Selection of target; Postal interview
Keywords: Concerns of People with Significant Disabilities; Demographic Profile; Significant Disabilities
Geographical Area: North Tipperary
Starting Date: September 1995
Completion Date: 1996
Funding Agency: Variety of funders including:
- Combat Poverty Agency
- FÁS
Publications/Progress Report:
Quality of Life and Economic Impact of End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)

Researchers: Blake, Catherine

Institute: UCD School of Physiotherapy (in collaboration with UCD Department of Medicine and Therapeutics), Mater Hospital, Eccles Street, Dublin 7.

Tel: 01-8304533; Email: c.blake@ucd.ie

Abstract: Kidney failure has an immense effect on all functions of the body, resulting in physical and psychosocial disadvantage for the sufferer. The aim of this study is to:

1. Define the population demographics of a cross section of kidney transplant recipients and dialysis patients,
2. Evaluate the impact of ESRD on quality of life, employment status and income generation capacity,
3. Identify factors interfering with quality of life and factors limiting employment,
4. Assess the prevalence of musculoskeletal dysfunction in the study group,
5. Objectively measure musculoskeletal impairment and associated disability with a view to therapeutic intervention.

Research Methods: Survey followed by clinical evaluation of physical performance and musculoskeletal limitation

Keywords: Demographic Profile; Economic Impact; Musculoskeletal Disease; Personal Economics; Quality of Life; Rehabilitation; Renal Disease; Unemployment; Work Capacity

Geographical Area: Nephrology centres in Dublin and Waterford

Starting Date: August 1997

Completion Date: December 1999

Funding Agency: NRB Research Scholarship (1997)

Publications/Progress Report:
- Ph. D. (Medicine) thesis, UCD, on completion
- Preliminary data presented to Irish Nephrological Society, June 1998

Employer Resource Initiative - Evaluation of Pilot Projects

Researchers: Bonner, J.A. (Project 1), Business Studies, RTC, Letterkenny; Nexus Research Co-Operative (Projects 2 and 3), Fumbally Lane, Fumbally Court, Dublin 8

Institute: National Rehabilitation Board, 25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6080400. Email: research@nrb.ie; also NRB, Mullingar (044-40219) and NRB, Sligo (071-62809)

Abstract: The Employer Resource Initiative (ERI) was set up to test and evaluate a small number of employer-based training and employment initiatives for people with disabilities involving employers centrally in the process. The ERI comprises 3 distinct pilot projects: (1) Employer-based training - conducted in the North-West; (2) Fares-to-Work Scheme - nationwide; and (3) JOBNET - a supported employment partnership - in Co. Louth.

Research Methods: Evaluation and action research methods

Keywords: Employment; Employer-Based Training; Local Partnership; Pilot Projects; Supported Employment; Supported Work; Training; Transport

Geographical Area: NRB Midlands/North-East Regions; NRB North-West Region

Starting Date: 1995

Completion Date: 1997

Funding Agency: NRB with assistance from the European Social Fund under the Innovatory Actions Programme (Art. 6)

Publications/Progress Report:
- Publication of evaluation reports due in Spring 1999

NRB Research Department

March 1999
A Study of the Effects of Schizophrenia on Carers

Researcher(s): Brady, Anne

Institute: Schizophrenia Ireland, 38 Blessington Street, Dublin 7.
Tel: 01-8601620; Email: schizi@iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/lucia

Abstract: The present study was designed to investigate the effects of schizophrenia on carers. The effects of variables associated with caring on the psychological well-being of the primary carer were explored. These variables included demands on carers' financial resources, working arrangement of the carers, relationships between family members and friends, carers' acceptance of schizophrenia and carers' experience of shame associated with the illness. The General Health Questionnaire-28 (GHQ-28) and a questionnaire designed for the study were administered to 29 primary carers of people with schizophrenia (23 women and 6 men). It was hypothesised that there would be a relationship between the variables associated with caring and GHQ-28 scores. Variables found to be positively correlated with the psychological well-being of the primary carer were: relationships of family members with friends; the frequency with which the carers reject the diagnosis of schizophrenia and feel ashamed because of the illness. There was a negative correlation between GHQ-28 scores and the frequency with which carers feel comfortable talking about schizophrenia in general conversation. Membership of a support group was found to be protective of psychological health. The results are discussed in the context of previous research. The implications for counselling psychology are outlined. These included the provision of information and support for families of people with schizophrenia, the inclusion of families in case management, the education of the public, and further research on the effects of schizophrenia on carers.

Research Methods: Questionnaire; Data analysis

Keywords: Carers; Schizophrenia

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: October 1995

Completion Date: August 1996

Funding Agency: Schizophrenia Ireland

Publications/Progress Report: Unpublished report

Compliance with Neuroleptics among Patients with Schizophrenia in a Consecutive Series of Admissions to a Catchment Area Service; Prevalence and Clinical Correlates

Researcher(s): Browne, Stephen; Gervin, Maurice; Kamali, Moayyad; Kelly, Lisa; Larkin, Conall; O'Callaghan, Eadbhard

Institute: St. John of God Adult Psychiatric Services, Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2833766

Abstract: The aim of this study was to access the prevalence and clinical correlates of non/partial compliance in a series of admissions with schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorder. Over 12 months all re-admissions to a catchment area psychiatric service were accessed. Diagnoses were established by the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM IV(SCID), symptomatology was evaluated with the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS). Patients' attitude and subjective responses to medication were ascertained with the Drug Attitude Inventory (DAI) and insight was evaluated with Birchwood's Insight Scale (IS). Compliance with medication was accessed using a structured clinical interview and augmented by the collateral information from nurses and families.

Research Methods: Structured clinical interview; Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale; Drug Attitude Inventory (DAI); Birchwood's Insight Scale (IS)

Keywords: Compliance with Neuroleptics; Schizophrenia; Schizoaffective Disorder

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: July 1996

Completion Date: September 1997

Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
Prevalence of Epilepsy

Researcher(s): Burke, Maureen; Keating, Yvonne; O'Farrell-Martin, Deirdre

Institute: Brainwave Irish Epilepsy Association, 249 Crumlin Road, Dublin 4.
Tel: 01-4557500; Email: brainwve@iol.ie

Abstract: The Brainwave Community Employment project in Dublin has carried out research into the service provision offered to people with epilepsy by regional Health Boards. The team wanted to ascertain the numbers of people with epilepsy in each region, the number of neurologists, psychologists and other staff working with people with epilepsy and any other services provided on a regional basis. They also wanted to find out the level of awareness the Health Boards had of the services provided by Brainwave.

Research Methods: Questionnaire

Keywords: Epilepsy; Health Boards; Prevalence

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: 1997
Completion Date: December 1998
Funding Agency: Community Employment Project
Publications/Progress Report:
- 'Epilepsy Services in the Health Boards' in Epilepsy News, Issue 2, June 1997

Quality of Life in Chronic Childhood Illness

Researcher(s): Burke, Úna

Institute: Department of Psychology, Trinity College, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6082715; Email: uburke@tcd.ie; Website: http://www.tcd.ie/Psychology

Abstract: This study examines and evaluates Quality of Life (QoL) for children with 4 chronic/serious health conditions: asthma, diabetes, cystic fibrosis and cancer. Assessment is child focused, and is compared with that of normally healthy school children who are matched for age, sex and socio-economic variables. The impact of the illness on the family is also assessed and the influence of this impact on the child’s QoL is addressed.

Research Methods: Quantitative exploration

Keywords: Children; Chronic Illness; Family Functioning; Impact on Family; Quality of Life; Self-Esteem

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: 1994

Completion Date: 1999

Funding Agency: Central Remedial Clinic (Dr. Ciarán Barry Research Scholarship)

Publications/Progress Report: Ph. D. (Psychology) thesis on completion
Continuing Professional Education: Attitudes and Experiences of Psychiatric Nurses

Researcher(s): Butcher, Gerard

Institute: St. John of God Hospital, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2881781

Abstract: The issue of continuing professional education (CPE) is becoming increasingly important in the field of nursing, with recent proposals in the United Kingdom and Ireland testifying to the importance of the need for further research in this area. The object of this study is to attempt to discover the attitudes and experiences of psychiatric nurses with regard to continuing professional education. Psychiatric nurse staff from 3 hospitals in the Dublin area formed the subject group of this study. The results of this research will provide information as to future directions in continuing education in psychiatric nursing.

Research Methods: Questionnaire

Keywords: Continuing Professional Education; Psychiatric Nurses

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: June 1997

Completion Date: February 1999

Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

Publications/Progress Report:
* M. Sc. (Practice of Education) thesis on completion, University of Surrey

An Investigation of Leisure Use amongst Teenage Pupils attending Mainstream and Special Educational Schools

Researcher(s): Buttimer, John

Institute: Research Department, COPE Foundation, Bonnington House, Montenotte, Cork. Tel: 021-507131 Ext. 342; Email: tienne@cope-foundation.ie

Abstract: This is a survey of the recreational and leisure usage of teenage pupils over 16 years who attend a special school for pupils with mild learning disability or a local mainstream secondary school. The aim of the study is to determine in what types of leisure interests this cohort engage, with what frequency, and with whom. Results should identify strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils. This information can then be used to design and implement programmes which may be school, home or community based. It may also be possible to identify pupils with specific interests and either match them with other pupils of similar interests in the school or with specific groups, societies or clubs in the community.

Research Methods: Survey

Keywords: Adolescents; Learning Disability; Leisure; Recreation

Geographical Area: Cork city

Starting Date: October 1998

Completion Date: September 1999

Funding Agency: COPE Foundation

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
The Needs of Adult Users of a Service for Persons with Learning Disabilities: The Perceptions of Needs related to Adult Users of a Service for Persons with Learning Disabilities as Identified by Service Users and Parents and Guardians

**Researcher(s):** Byrne, Gerard

**Institute:** Carmona Services, Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, 111 Upper Glenageary Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2852900

**Abstract:** The purpose of this small-scale research study was to obtain and examine the perceptions of needs of a selected group of adult users of a service for persons with learning disabilities as identified by the group themselves and their parents/guardians. The areas chosen for investigation were work/employment, accommodation/living arrangements, friendships/relationships, and leisure/recreation.

**Research Methods:** Combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology; Semi-structured one-to-one interviews using a questionnaire

**Keywords:** Adults; Learning Disability; Needs of Service Users

**Geographical Area:** South East Dublin

**Starting Date:** September 1997

**Completion Date:** April 1998

**Funding Agency:** Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

**Publications/Progress Report:** M. Sc. (Econ) thesis, 1998

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An Evaluation of a Group Programme for Siblings of Children with Severe/Profound Learning and/or Multiple Disabilities

**Researcher(s):** Byrne, Triona; Fitzsimons, Elaine

**Institute:** St. John of God, Dummore House, 111 Upper Glenageary Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2852900

**Abstract:** This study evaluated a discussion group (4 x 1 hour) for 5 children aged between 8-12 years, who each have a brother with severe, profound and/or multiple disabilities, currently attending Carmona Services. The aim of the group programme was to provide siblings with an opportunity to share and work through any positive feelings and/or concerns in regard to their unique family situation, in a supportive and positive group environment. A pre-post test design was used to access sibling self-reported problems and concerns, parental rating of sibling interaction, and child and parent qualitative evaluation of the group programme. The results were examined in relation to methodological issues, implications for service planning and future research to meet the needs of children with learning disabled brothers and sisters.

**Research Methods:** Pre-post test design using the sibling behaviour scale (Schaeffer and Edgerton); Qualitative analysis

**Keywords:** Children; Impact on Siblings; Learning Disability; Multiple Disability; Siblings of Children with Disabilities

**Geographical Area:** South Dublin

**Starting Date:** June 1997

**Completion Date:** September 1997

**Funding Agency:** Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

**Publications/Progress Report:**
Accessing Third Level Education in Ireland: A Handbook for Students with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties

Researcher(s): Callaghan, Patricia

Institute: AHEAD, Newman House, 86 St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-4752386; Email: ahead@iol.ie; Website: http://www.ahead.ie

Abstract: To provide a handbook for (prospective) students with disabilities on academic, financial and social matters relating to third level education in order to support people with disabilities exercise their right to choose between education and training.

Research Methods: Qualitative

Keywords: Access; Higher Education; Learning Disability; Students

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: 1996

Completion Date: December 1998

Funding Agency: • European Commission through HORIZON
• Higher Education Authority


Pilot Survey on the Participation of Students with Disabilities in SOCRATES

Researcher(s): Callaghan, Patricia

Institute: AHEAD, Newman House, 86 St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-4752386; Email: ahead@iol.ie; Website: http://www.ahead.ie

Abstract: The aim of this research was to study and document the experience of individual students applying to and participating in a mobility programme of SOCRATES. The project made it possible for a given number of students with disabilities to participate in an 'exchange' and facilitated this through financial, administrative and personal support.

Research Methods: Quantitative; Qualitative

Keywords: Student Exchange Issues

Geographical Area: Exchange between Ireland and other EU countries

Starting Date: 1996

Completion Date: 1998

Funding Agency: • European Commission through HORIZON
• Higher Education Authority

Publications/Progress Report:
• Report to the European Commission, DG XXII, on the findings of the AHEAD pilot study on the participation of students with disabilities in SOCRATES 1996-1998, AHEAD, May 1998
including students with disabilities in careers advisory service

researchers: callaghan, patricia; mcgrath, caroline

institute: ahead, newman house, 86 st. stephen's green, dublin 2. tel: 01-4752386; email: ahead@iol.ie; website: http://www.ahead.ie

abstract: a guide for institutions of higher education in ireland designed to assist third level career advisors in ensuring that students and graduates with disabilities have equal access, not only to career and employment opportunities in ireland but also to the careers service in individual institutions.

research methods: qualitative

keywords: careers advisory service; students

geographical area: ireland

starting date: 1996

completion date: november 1997

funding agency:
- european commission through horizon
- higher education authority

publications/progress report:
- callaghan, p.; mcgrath, c., including students with disabilities in careers advisory services: a guide for institutions of higher education in ireland, ahead, november 1997

evaluation of a holistic model of supported employment

researchers: carey, jill; flanagan, niamh; kenneally, catherine

institute: step enterprises, 30 carmanhall road, sandyford industrial estate, dublin 18. tel: 01-2952379

abstract: this paper reports on the evaluation of a holistic model of supported employment in the republic of ireland. the evaluation considers the impact of supported employment on a group of 23 adult men and women with learning difficulties, dual diagnosis and/or challenging behaviour. impact is assessed in terms of job characteristics, community participation, leisure involvement and choice making of participants. the attitudes and concerns of parents and employers with regard to supported employment are also considered. data is drawn from questionnaires and interviews conducted prior to commencement of supported employment and again 3 months after commencement.

research methods: documentary research; quantitative survey; group evaluation

keywords: adults; employment; holistic model; learning disability; job coach; quality of life; supported employment

geographical area: dublin

starting date: january 1996

completion date: december 1997

funding agency:
- eu horizon
- step enterprises

publications/progress report:
- carey, j.; flanagan, n., 'the case study; report on the community and supported employment initiative', report to horizon funding authority, step enterprises, dublin, 1998
- carey, j.; flanagan, n.; kenneally, c., 'evaluation of a holistic model of supported employment' in vision 2000 conference proceedings, sunbeam house, bray, 1997
The Child with Cerebral Palsy in Co. Meath 1980/1995

Researcher(s): Carey, Jodi
Institute: North-Eastern Health Board, Special Care Unit, Athlumney, Navan, Co. Meath.
Tel: 046-71647
Abstract: This study provides an overview of cerebral palsy and compares the services in Co. Meath in 1980 with those in 1995.
Research Methods: Literature review; Questionnaire
Keywords: Cerebral Palsy; Children; Physical Disability; Services
Geographical Area: Co. Meath
Starting Date: January 1996
Completion Date: July 1996
Funding Agency: N/A
Publications/Progress Report: In part fulfilment of Diploma in Nurse Management

Personal Self-Concept and the Role of Counselling Support Networks in Mainstreamed Schooling: A Comparative Analysis of Canada and the Republic of Ireland

Researcher(s): Carroll, Sandra
Institute: Department of Higher Education and Research, Trinity College, College Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6081723; Email: carrolsca@tcd.ie
Abstract: This research project sets out to identify problems of a psychological and social nature that pertain to the integration of children with learning disabilities and the role of guidance and counselling in facilitating that transition. The aim is to find out to what extent social and emotional adjustment to disability reflect parental and personal attitudes and to examine the differences, if any, in the levels of support services in Ireland and Canada. The thesis will conclude with the development of a counselling model incorporating the needs of special children.
Research Methods: Qualitative research: interviews
Keywords: Children; Counselling; Guidance; Learning Disability; Special Needs
Geographical Area: Dublin (Ireland); Edmonton (Canada)
Starting Date: September 1998
Completion Date: July 1999
Funding Agency: Canadian Travel Scholarship support through Trinity College
Publications/Progress Report:
- M. Ed. (Guidance and Counselling Specification) thesis, TCD, on completion
Environmentally-Induced Hearing Loss

Researcher(s): Cass, J.; Kinsella, Prof. R.; O’Healai, R.; Pitt, Theresa

Institute: University College Dublin Graduate School Of Business Studies, Centre for Insurance Studies, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-7068963

Abstract: This aim of this research is to produce normative and population data for hearing in the Irish workforce (adults aged 15-55 years) and to evaluate the environmental impact upon hearing.

Research Methods: Randomised sample of working adults (n=1500) will be tested to evaluate hearing and ear-function; Detailed questionnaire on related lifestyle/health matters

Keywords: Adults; Factors Affecting Hearing; Hearing; Workforce

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: 1997

Completion Date: 1999

Funding Agency: • Department of Defence
• Insurance Corporation of Ireland
• Construction Industry Federation
• IBEC

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

IMPACT (Increasing the IMPACT of Assistive Technology)

Researcher(s): Clarkin, Nadia; Cullen, Kevin; Dolphin, Ciarán

Institute: Work Research Centre, 22 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6683988; Email: wrc@wrc-research.ie

Abstract: WRC is a partner in this project. The project is researching and developing training material (paper-based and multimedia courseware) about assistive technology aimed at pre-service and in-service training of health and social service personnel (GPs, social workers, home helps etc.). The aim is to raise awareness amongst these groups and enable them to act as intermediaries who will spot unmet needs for assistive technology during the normal course of their work and take appropriate action (give information or advice, make a referral, etc.).

Research Methods: Interviews; Desk research; Evaluation

Keywords: Assistive Technology; Courseware; Health and Social Services

Geographical Area: Ireland, UK, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland

Starting Date: January 1998

Completion Date: June 1999

Funding Agency: European Commission

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

NRB Research Department

March 1999
**PROMISE (Promoting an Information Society (IS) for Everyone - Dissemination and Demonstrations of Best Practice in IS Applications for Older People and Disabled People in Europe)**

Researcher(s): Clarkin, Nadia; Cullen, Kevin; Dolphin, Ciarán

Institute: Work Research Centre, 22 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6683988; Email: wrc@wrc-research.ie

Abstract: This project was lead by the Work Research Centre and also involved the European Disability Forum, Eurolink and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health in Finland. It aimed to support the inclusion of the concerns of disabled people and older people in the Information Society programmes in each of the EU Member States. To do this the project prepared resource material (book of case studies of good practice and a set of key actions that should be taken in each country), engaged in direct dialogue with relevant ministries and organisations of disabled people and older people in the various countries (via a European colloquium and ongoing contacts) and dissemination through post and the Web.

Research Methods: Case studies; Desk research

Keywords: Information Society; Older People

Geographical Area: All 15 EU countries

Starting Date: January 1997

Completion Date: September 1998

Funding Agency: European Commission

Publications/Progress Report:

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**An Investigation into the Use of Access Auditing and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in the Evaluation of Access for People with Disabilities**

Researcher(s): Codd, Susan

Institute: School of Food Science and Environmental Health, DIT, Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1. Tel: 01-4023000; Email: scodd@dit.ie

Abstract: This study will combine the results of access audits and information technology to store and display accessibility data. Using a GIS computer package (MAPINFO) a system will be developed and then tested on a pilot study area (Rathmines Road). The audit was devised from Part M of the Building Regulations 1997.

Research Methods: Literature review; Access audits; Surveys

Keywords: Access; Access Audit; Building Regulations; Geographical Information System (GIS); Mapping

Geographical Area: Pilot Study Area: Rathmines

Starting Date: November 1997

Completion Date: October 1999

Funding Agency:
- NRB Research Scholarship (1997)
- Dublin Institute of Technology

Publications/Progress Report: M. Sc. (Built Environment) thesis, D.I.T., on completion of research

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NRB Research Department

March 1999
A Study of Access and its Provision for People with Disabilities in Wexford Town

Researcher(s): Codd, Susan
Institute: College of Catering, DIT, Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1.
Tel: 01-4023000; Email: scodd@dit.ie
Abstract: An investigation into the effectiveness of Part 'M' of the Building Regulations. Twenty (20) buildings which were built pre'92 and 20 post '92 buildings were audited to see if Part 'M' has made an impact. It was found that pre '92 buildings (i.e. Part M) were more accessible. The results were mapped using a geographical information system computer package.
Research Methods: Surveys; Literature review; Access audits
Keywords: Access; Access Audit; Building Regulations; Geographical Information System (GIS); Mapping; Part M
Geographical Area: Wexford Town
Starting Date: November 1996
Completion Date: April 1997
Funding Agency: Dublin Institute of Technology
Publications/Progress Report:
• B. Sc. thesis (Environmental Health)
• 'Access all Areas' published in 1997 EHOA yearbook, pp. 34-35

Access to Mainstream Classrooms

Researcher(s): Colgan, Anne
Institute: Disability Federation of Ireland, 2 Sandyford Office Park, Dublin 18.
Tel: 01-2959344; Email: dfi@iol.ie; Website: http://ireland.iol.ie/~dfi
Abstract: A review of the current practice and policy towards enabling students with special educational needs to have access to the local mainstream school.
Research Methods: Semi-structured interviews; Questionnaire to agencies in field of special education; Education literature review
Keywords: Access; Education; Mainstream; Special Educational Needs
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: September 1997
Completion Date: March 1998
Funding Agency: Disability Federation of Ireland
An Evaluation of Posture and Muscle Flexibility in Adults with Cystic Fibrosis

Researcher(s): Concannon, Deirdre; Gallagher, Dr. C.G.; Jensma, Marjan

Institute: National Adult Cystic Fibrosis Unit and Physiotherapy Department, St. Vincent’s Hospital, Elm Park, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-2694533

Abstract: Observing patients attending the National Adult Cystic Fibrosis Unit a high incidence of kyphotic posture and hamstring tightness has been recognised. Previous studies of the cystic fibrosis (CF) population have concentrated on radiological evidence of kyphosis. This study intends to compare the spinal posture, hamstring muscle flexibility and physical activity levels of an adult CF population with those of a control group. The relationships between posture, muscle flexibility and physical activity will also be evaluated. If there is a relationship between these variables this may have implications for the lack of emphasis which is currently placed on flexibility exercises in the routine management of CF.

Research Methods: Participant observation

Keywords: Adults; Cystic Fibrosis; Muscle Flexibility; Physical Activity; Physical Disability; Posture

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: January 1998

Completion Date: December 1998

Funding Agency: St. Vincent’s Hospital

Publications/Progress Report:
- Summary of pilot study, completed in May 1998, was presented as a poster at the North American Cystic Fibrosis Conference in October 1998
- Proceedings of Conference will be published as a supplement to Paediatric Pulmonology

The Association between Disability and Stress and Strain in Caregivers of People with Head Injury

Researcher(s): Connolly, Deirdre

Institute: School of Occupational Therapy (Trinity College), Rochestown Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2852677; Email: connoldm@tcd.ie

Abstract: This study was carried out to investigate the levels of stress and strain on the primary caregiver from disabilities that arise from head injury. The disabilities examined were motor, cognitive, behavioural, speech and language and perceptual. Each disability was examined separately for its association with stress and strain on an Irish population of caregivers.

Research Methods: Quantitative study using mailed questionnaires

Keywords: Carers; Head Injury; Stress

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: May 1997

Completion Date: November 1997

Funding Agency: Self-funded

Publications/Progress Report:
- M. Sc. (Community Health) thesis, TCD
- Article submitted to British Journal of Occupational Therapy
Epilepsy and Learning Disability: Measures of Psychosocial Functioning and Behaviour Disturbance

Researchers: Coughlan, Barry J.
Institute: Brothers of Charity Day Services, Bawnmore, Limerick. Tel: 061-412288

Abstract: The present study investigated psychosocial functioning and behaviour disturbance in a sample of residential adults with 'active' epilepsy. These clients were compared with a matched control group of clients with no history of epilepsy. Measures used were the Adaptive Behaviour Scale - Residential and Community and the Psychosocial Behaviour Scale. Non-significant differences emerged between those with epilepsy and learning disability and no history of epilepsy, in terms of both psychosocial functioning and behaviour disturbance. Clients with more frequent seizures compared to those with a lower seizure frequency rate did not have significantly lower levels of psychosocial functioning or higher levels of behaviour disturbance - such results being mixed in terms of findings to-date. Implications for management and future research are discussed.

Research Methods: Administration of ABS-RC: 2 and PBS psychometric rating scales

Keywords: Adults; Behaviour Disturbance; Epilepsy; Learning Disability; Psychosocial Functioning; Seizure Frequency

Geographical Area: Mid-Western Region (Limerick and Clare)
Starting Date: January 1996
Completion Date: May 1996
Funding Agency: Self-funded

Publications/Progress Report:
- Coughlan, B. J., (in preparation) 'Epilepsy and learning disability: Measures of psychosocial functioning and behaviour disturbance' in Mental Health Care

Epilepsy, Learning Disability and Anti-Convulsant Drug Status

Researchers: Coughlan, Barry J.
Institute: Brothers of Charity Day Services, Bawnmore, Limerick. Tel: 061-412288

Abstract: A study examining anti-convulsant drug status was undertaken in a sample of residential adults with learning disability and epilepsy. In the present study, charts of 37 long-term residential clients were reviewed and administration of anti-convulsant medication was examined in relation to level of learning disability and seizure frequency. Findings show 15 clients were administered polypharmacy while 22 were administered monopharmacy. No significant differences were found between drug status (monopharmacy/polypharmacy) and level of learning disability. Significant differences were found however between the frequency of seizures and drug status, as clients with more frequent seizures were being prescribed polypharmacy rather than monopharmacy. The present findings suggest that level of learning disability cannot be said to depend on either drug status or seizure frequency, a result in accordance with previous research undertaken.

Research Methods: Examination of case files/seizure charts/drug Kardex

Keywords: Adults; Anti-Convulsant Medication; Epilepsy; Learning Disability; Monopharmacy; Polypharmacy; Seizure Frequency

Geographical Area: Mid-Western Region (Limerick and Clare)
Starting Date: January 1996
Completion Date: May 1996
Funding Agency: Self-funded

Publications/Progress Report:
- Coughlan, B. J., 'Epilepsy, learning disability and anti-convulsant drug status' in Mental Health Care, Vol. 1,(1), pp. 25-28
Prescribing for Clients with Learning Disability: Residential and Community Perspectives

Researcher(s): Coughlan, Barry J.
Institute: Brothers of Charity Day Services, Bawnmore, Limerick. Tel: 061-412288
Abstract: Historically there has been concern over the rates of prescribing for clients with learning disability, in particular those in residential care. Some of the common problems arising are polypharmacy, over-prescription, irrational prescription practice and inadequate reviews resulting in unnecessary prolonged drug treatment. The present study reviewed all drugs currently administered to clients in both residential and community facilities within the Mid-Western Region. It involved a total of 204 clients with varying levels of learning disability. Present findings indicate that 25% of residential clients were administered monopharmacy compared to 45% of community clients. Both polypharmacy (32%) and copharmacy (50%) rates were higher in residential than community facilities (27% each respectively). Implications for research and management are discussed.

Research Methods: Critical reviews of case files and drug kardex
Keywords: Copharmacy; Learning Disability; Medication; Monopharmacy; Prescribing Practice; Residential and Community Clients
Geographical Area: Mid-Western Region (Limerick and Clare)
Starting Date: January 1996
Completion Date: May 1997
Funding Agency: Self-funded
Publications/Progress Report:
• Coughlan, B. J., (in preparation) 'Historical and theoretical perspectives on the use of medication for clients with learning disability' in Mental Health Care

Investigation into the Benefits of the Use of Interferential Therapy in the Treatment of Hamstring Muscle Contracture in a Cerebral Palsy Population

Researcher(s): Cowman, John
Institute: Central Remedial Clinic, Vernon Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3. Tel: 01-8332206; Email: tdetc@crc.ie
Abstract: This investigation compared the results of 2 methods of treatment used in the reduction of contractures in children and adolescents; 30 subjects were included in the study, divided into 3 groups - control, passive stretching, and IFT stimulation.

Research Methods: Experimental design
Keywords: Cerebral Palsy; Interferential Stimulation; Physical Disability; Stretching; Treatment
Geographical Area: Eastern Health Board
Starting Date: 1996
Completion Date: 1998
Funding Agency: Central Remedial Clinic
Publications/Progress Report:
• M. Sc. (Physiotherapy) thesis, Trinity College Dublin
The Interactions of People with a Profound Learning Disability: A Pilot Study

Researcher(s): Cowman, Dr. Seamus; Griffiths, Colin

Institute: The Daughters of Charity, St. Vincent's Centre, Navan Road, Dublin 7.
Tel: 01-8385527; (Contact Email: coling@iol.ie)

Abstract: The purpose of the study was to ascertain in which situations people with a profound intellectual disability are most likely to interact and also to test the data collection tools.

Research Methods: Descriptive observational study; Qualitative study using semi-structured interviews

Keywords: Engagement; Interaction; Learning Disability

Geographical Area: N/A

Starting Date: January 1996

Completion Date: January 1997

Funding Agency: • Daughters of Charity
• Johnson and Johnson

Publications/Progress Report:
• Completed report to the Faculty of Nursing, R.C.S.I.
• Brief report in preparation

Training and Employment for People with Severe Intellectual Disabilities in Ireland

Researcher(s): Coyne, Captain Terence H.

Tel: 01-6288161

Abstract: This research examines the training and employment of people with severe intellectual disabilities in Ireland. Successive Irish Governments have recognised the particular situation that exists in respect of the provision of services for people with disabilities and have implemented several initiatives to promote their equality within the general population. This research indicates that there are apparently no such initiatives in respect of people with severe intellectual disabilities despite the growing evidence which proves that people with severe intellectual disabilities can be trained and gainfully employed in real work environments provided adequate supports are made available. It further concludes that service providers are concerned that the services they are providing adequately meet neither the developmental needs of the people with severe intellectual disabilities nor the needs of potential employers of this population.

Research Methods: Comprehensive postal questionnaire

Keywords: Employment; Severe Intellectual Disability; Training

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: January 1998

Completion Date: March 1998

Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

Publications/Progress Report: B. Sc. (Management) thesis, TCD
An Analysis of the Management by Projects Approach in the Implementation of Service Plans for People with Disabilities in the Midland Health Board

Researcher(s): Crehan-Roche, Breda

Institute: The Bridge Project Management Unit, Midland Health Board, Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Tel: 0506-46778; Email: breda.crehanroche@mhb.ie

Abstract: The objective of this research is to complete an analysis of the management by projects approach in the implementation of service plans for people with disabilities in the Midland Health Board area. In order to achieve this objective, it is proposed to take a macrocosmic view of project management in healthcare and to then look at the microcosmic view which will focus on the management of change through projects in a specific care group, i.e. disability. The purpose of this study is to establish whether it is possible to apply a management by projects approach to a specific care group and to a service plan.

Research Methods: Identification and prioritisation of projects; Setting up of project teams; Developing a model for service agreements utilising the management by projects approach

Keywords: Health and Social Gain; Project Management; Project Team; Service Plans; Voluntary and Statutory Sector

Geographical Area: Midland Region: Counties Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath

Starting Date: January 1998

Completion Date: November 1999

Funding Agency: Midland Health Board

Publications/Progress Report: M.B.S. in Project Management thesis on completion, UL
An Analysis of Diagnosis Related Groups and their Applicability to Learning Disability Services

Researcher(s): Crehan-Roche, Breda

Institute: The Galway Association, The Halls, Quay Street, Galway. Tel: 091-567291

Abstract: This dissertation looks at Diagnosis Related Groups - the current 'market leader' in case-mix approaches (and their applicability in the area of learning disability). The DRG system rewards and encourages efficient hospitals and discourages inefficient hospitals or wasteful practices. Problems have been identified with DRGs which need to be addressed, and there are ongoing developments in other case-mix approaches. With the advent of service agreements for the voluntary sector, where to-date the majority of services for people with a learning disability have been provided, it is an opportune time for the introduction of a DRG case-mix type approach to this setting. To establish whether this is possible, a pilot study of Child Education and Development Centres (C.E.D.C.s) in the Galway Association for Mentally Handicapped was undertaken. The findings of this study indicate that it is possible to apply case-mix to learning disability services, provided that funds are not allocated on the basis of level of handicap 'Intelligence Quotient', alone. DRGs as they are currently constructed are not entirely appropriate. However, using this principle a case-mix for C.E.D.C.s has been developed, called Service User Groups (SUGs), which allows flexibility in meeting needs, enables funds to be in line with the likely overall costs for an individual, and ensures the provision of efficient and effective services.

Research Methods: Interviews with staff; Literature reviews, national and international, on DRGs; Research re: costings-services for people with an intellectual disability - Ireland, UK, Wales, US; Financial reports

Keywords: Costs; Diagnosis Related Groups (DRG's); Learning Disability, Quality of Service; Service User Groups (SUG's)

Geographical Area: Co. Galway

Starting Date: August 1995

Completion Date: April 1996

Funding Agency: The Galway Association for Mentally Handicapped

Publications/Progress Report: M. Sc. (Econ) thesis, April 1996, University of Wales

INCLUDE (Inclusion of Disabled People and Elderly People in Telematics)

Researcher(s): Cullen, Kevin

Institute: Work Research Centre, 22 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6683988; Email: wrc@wrc-research.ie

Abstract: The Work Research Centre is a partner in this project. The aim is to provide a support service to all of the R&D projects in the European Union's Telematics Applications Programme in order to help them to address the accessibility and other requirements of disabled people and older people. The project is engaging in various promotional and support activities and has developed an extensive website of relevant information (www.stekes.fi/include).

Research Methods: Surveys; Desk research

Keywords: Access; Older People; Telematics

Geographical Area: All 15 EU countries

Starting Date: January 1996

Completion Date: December 1999

Funding Agency: European Commission

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
\textbf{ACCENT (Accessibility in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Procurement)}

\textbf{Researcher(s)}: Cullen, Kevin; Dolphin, Ciarán

\textbf{Institute}: Work Research Centre, 22 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6683988; Email: wrc@wrc-research.ie

\textbf{Abstract}: The Work Research Centre is a partner in this project. The project is researching existing regulations and practice in the public procurement of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Europe and developing guidelines for procurers to include accessibility (for disabled people and older people) as one of the criteria in the evaluation of tenders.

\textbf{Research Methods}: Case studies; Desk research

\textbf{Keywords}: Access; Information and Communications Technology; Older People; Public Procurement

\textbf{Geographical Area}: All of the EU; special focus on Nordic countries (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland) and Ireland

\textbf{Starting Date}: January 1998

\textbf{Completion Date}: September 1998

\textbf{Funding Agency}: European Commission

\textbf{Publications/Progress Report}:
- How Accessibility could be Included in the ICT Procurement Processes and IT Strategies of Public Sector Organisations, May 1998

\textbf{Physical and Sensory Disability : Database Pilot Project}

\textbf{Researcher(s)}: Culleton, Mary (MHB); Doherty, Louise (NWHB); Fox, Mary (NEHB); and others

\textbf{Institute}:
- Midland Health Board, Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly Tel: 0506-21868
- North Eastern Health Board, Dublin Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth. Tel: 042-29230
- North Western Health Board, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim Tel: 072-55123

\textbf{Abstract}: This project was undertaken jointly by 3 Health Boards to commence the development of a database. It included designing an appropriate form, ascertaining the views of service users and service providers and resulted in making recommendations for the development of a national database for this client group.

\textbf{Research Methods}: Questionnaire; Interview and focus groups; Workshops; Qualitative and quantitative analysis

\textbf{Keywords}: Database; Physical Disability; Sensory Disability

\textbf{Geographical Area}:
- Midland Health Board
- North Eastern Health Board
- North Western Health Board

\textbf{Starting Date}: May 1996

\textbf{Completion Date}: January 1998

\textbf{Funding Agency}: Department of Health and Children

\textbf{Publications/Progress Report}:
- Interim Report to Department of Health, August 1997
- Final Report to Department of Health, January 1998
- Analysis of Findings (each Health Board), January 1998
A Genetic Study of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Researcher(s): Daly, Gráinne; Fitzgerald, Prof. Michael; Gill, Michael; Heron, Sally
Institute: Department of Psychiatry, Trinity College Dublin. Tel: 01-6082241
Research Methods: Clinical research interview; Cheek swab or blood sample for genetic studies
Keywords: ADHD-Dopamine Transporter; Genetics
Geographical Area: Eastern Health Board
Starting Date: 1996
Completion Date: 2000
Funding Agency: • Health Research Board
• Children’s Fund, Our Lady’s Hospital for Sick Children
Publications/Progress Report:
• Gill, M., Daly, G., Hawi, Z., Heron, S., Fitzgerald, M., ‘Confirmation of association between ADHD and dopamine transporter’, in Polymorphism Molecular Psychiatry, 2, pp.311-313, 1997
• Daly, G., Hawi, Z., Fitzgerald, M. Gill, M., (1999), ‘Preferential transmission of parental alleles at DAT1, DBH, and DRD5 to children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder’ in Molecular Psychiatry (due for publication in March 1999)

A Family Study of Multiplex Families with Autism

Researcher(s): Davis, Ken; Fitzgerald, Prof. Michael; Galvin, Patricia; Lawlor, Prof. Brian A.; Matthews, Pat
Institute: • St. Patrick’s Hospital, James Street, Dublin 8. Tel: 01-6775423
• Irish Society for Autism, 16 Lower O’Connell Street, Dublin 1. Tel: 01-8744684
• Mount Sinai Hospital, New York. Tel: 00-1-718-367-5727
Abstract: This involved family visits and one or more days of diagnostic assessments. Blood was sent to USA for genetic analysis.
Research Methods: Diagnosis and molecular genetic analysis
Keywords: Autism; Genetics
Geographical Area: Ireland
Starting Date: 1995
Completion Date: 1998
Funding Agency: Mount Sinai Hospital, New York
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
Management of the Collapsing Spine for Patients with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD)

Researcher(s): Davitt, Aidan; Jeffers, Bettina; McManus, Frank; Rice, John J.
Institute: Central Remedial Clinic, Vernon Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3.
Tel: 01-8332206; Email: tdcrc@crc.ie

Abstract: Instrumented fusion of the collapsing spine gained widespread acceptance for patients with DMD but controversy still exists on the issue of extending the surgical fusion to sacrum in these patients. This retrospective study reviews the long-term outcome of a group of patients with spinal deformity associated with DMD who were managed with long spinal fusion to L5 and ongoing wheelchair seating attention. Nineteen (19) consecutive patients were reviewed and 15 patients attended for clinical and radiological assessment at a mean of 28 months post operatively. At long-term follow-up (mean 28 months post operatively) 15 patients continued to sit in a well-balanced position. Surgical fusion of the spine to L5 combined with ongoing attention to seating is associated with good long-term functional results in these patients.

Research Methods: Retrospective; Empirical
Keywords: Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy; Spinal Fusion; Wheelchair Seating
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: 1995
Completion Date: 1996
Funding Agency: Central Remedial Clinic
Publications/Progress Report:
- Accepted for publication in the Irish Journal of Medical Services, Autumn 1998-Summer 1999

Attitudes to People with Intellectual Disabilities Living in the Community

Researcher(s): Denny, Margaret
Institute: Brothers of Charity Services, South Eastern Region, Belmont Park, Waterford.
Tel: 051-832211

Abstract: This is a comparative study, using a micro-neighbourhood design and random sampling procedure. The general aim of the research is to generate a series of subjective accounts of the attitudes, perceptions and experiences of the community (Waterford wards). More specifically it will aim to find out whether neighbourhood attitudes are influenced by contact with a person with intellectual disability. It will yield data that will be of value in developing future services.

Research Methods: Structured questionnaire with problem psychometric properties; Quantitative research
Keywords: Attitudes of Neighbourhood; Community; Deinstitutionalisation; Intellectual Disability; Normalisation
Geographical Area: Waterford
Starting Date: September 1997
Completion Date: June 1999
Funding Agency: Brothers of Charity Services
Publications/Progress Report:
- Masters in Philosophy (Applied Psychology) thesis, University College Cork, on completion
An Evaluation of an Adventure Sports Programme: The Effect of a 10 Week Sports Programme on the Self-Esteem and Quality of Life for Young People with Learning Disability

Researcher(s): Desmond, Fiona; Doyle, Katherine
Institute: St. Augustine's School, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
Tel: 01-2881771
Abstract: The aim of this study is to evaluate an adventure sports programme carried out with a group of young people with mild learning difficulties over a 10 week period. The study evaluated the effect the programme had on self-esteem and locus of control of participants, using the Big Stem Scale devised by Maines and Robinson. Participating in sports and recreation has been shown to enhance the self-esteem of young people with learning difficulties. The findings will be used to plan for further sports activities and to examine the implications throughout the St. John of God Services.

Research Methods: Pre-post evaluation; Self-esteem inventory; Survey
Keywords: Adventure Sports; Benefit of Sport; Mild Learning Disability; Quality of Life; Self-Esteem; Sports
Geographical Area: South Dublin
Starting Date: February 1998
Completion Date: October 1998
Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

Siblings' Perspective of Family Members' Coping Styles in the Presence of a Family Member's Learning Disability: A Repertory Grid Study

Researcher(s): Dinneen, Catherine
Institute: Research Department, COPE Foundation, Bonnington House, Montenotte, Cork. Tel: 021-507131 Ext.: 342; Email: tierne@cope-foundation.ie
Abstract: The aim of this study was to explore siblings' perspectives of personal and family coping styles when a family member has a learning disability. Kelly's (1955) Repertory Grid technique was employed to elicit the siblings' constructs in relation to family members' coping styles. This methodology elicited an insight into family coping styles as perceived by siblings of learning disabled clients. An Adolescent Coping Scale (Frydenberg and Lewis, 1993) has yet to be completed by all participating siblings. This Scale offers a means of exploring how the siblings cope with stress in a wider range of situations and examines whether their construals of family coping styles as measured by the Repertory Grid are comparable with those measured by the Adolescent Coping Scale. It is expected that patterns will emerge from the Repertory Grid Data which will highlight ameliorating factors within family members coping style.

Research Methods: Measurement and assessment instruments - Adolescent Coping Scale and Repertory Grid Technique
Keywords: Adolescent Coping Scale; Coping; Learning Disability; Repertory Grid; Siblings
Geographical Area: Cork city and county
Starting Date: June 1998
Completion Date: February 1999
Funding Agency: COPE Foundation
Publications/Progress Report: PSI Diploma (Clinical Psychology) report on completion
A Follow-Up Study of 100 Persons with Autism

Researcher(s): Doherty, Karen; Fitzgerald, Prof. Michael; Matthews, Pat

Institute: Irish Society for Autism, 16 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1.
Tel: 01-8744684

Abstract: The study focuses on psychosocial factors and service evaluation, including issues such as impact on family and residential care.

Research Methods: Semi-structured interview at person's home plus key worker interview

Keywords: Autism; Follow-Up; Service Evaluation

Geographical Area: Eastern Health Board

Starting Date: 1997
Completion Date: 1998

Funding Agency:
- Irish Society for Autism
- Department of Health and Children


What's in a Name?

Researcher(s): Doran, Jennifer; Ni Chualain, Cliona

Institute: National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland, 5 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6766035; Email: dcarroll@namhi.iol.ie

Abstract: The research aimed to find an acceptable alternative to the use of the term 'Mental Handicap' with a view to recommending an alternative term that respects the value, dignity and abilities of all people. It also investigated the possibility of an alternative title for the National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland (NAMHI).

Research Methods: Postal survey; Data analysis

Keywords: Alternative Term; Mental Handicap; Terminology

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: October 1997
Completion Date: March 1998

Funding Agency: National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland

Publications/Progress Report: Unpublished report
Audit of an Exercise Class for Psychiatric Patients in a General Hospital Setting - Lessons Learned

Researcher(s): Doyle, Norma

Institute: Department of Physiotherapy, St. Vincent's Hospital, Elm Park, Dublin 4.
Tel: 01-2094354

Abstract: The aim of this pilot study was to collect information on the fitness levels of 24 psychiatric patients attending an exercise class in the Psychiatric Unit of a major teaching hospital in Dublin. The diagnostic groups included depression and eating disorders. Patients were assessed for Cardiovascular, Local Muscle Endurance and Flexibility status using validated tests. The results of the pre-training fitness assessment of this group were as follows - Cardiovascular status: 82% poor; Local Muscle Endurance: 52% average/poor; Flexibility: 48% average/poor. Early discharge from hospital and erratic attendance made retesting impossible. However, a patient feedback form completed by a group of 8 class participants reported both physical and psychological benefits such as improved energy levels, feeling of well being and improved mood. It is evident that the role of exercise in the treatment of psychiatric patients requires more research. The use of standardised psychiatric rating scales to assess the effect of exercise on the depressive symptoms/self-esteem/quality of life in this group of patients is recommended. Further research into the benefits of exercise in the specialised subsets e.g. Anorexia Nervosa is warranted.

Research Methods: Three components of fitness were assessed using validated tests - YMCA step test, curl-up test, sit and reach test. The use of various psychiatric rating scales (e.g. depression index, self-esteem, body image satisfaction) has since been identified as a requisite for further studies. A patient database was established and is ongoing.

Keywords: Depression; Eating Disorders; Exercise; Mental Health Difficulty; Psychiatric Patients; Psychological and Physiological Benefits

Geographical Area: In-patients/day patients attending the Psychiatric Unit of St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin

Starting Date: July 1996
Completion Date: December 1996
Funding Agency: Nil

Publications/Progress Report:
• Exhibited as Poster Presentation at Annual Conference of Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists, September 1998
The Attitudes of Mental Health Professionals to Self-Help in general: GROW in particular

Researchers: Dunne, Dr. Liz; Fitzpatrick, Aine; O'Mahony, Mary

Institute: Department of Applied Psychology, University College Cork.
Tel: 021-902504

Abstract: Psychiatrists, psychologists, G.P.'s, social workers, counsellors and nurses were given a questionnaire based on their knowledge of, and attitude to, self-help and GROW in particular. Over 50% responded and of these 96% valued the support of self-help. There was a perceived need for more information and some expressed reluctance to refer vulnerable people to organisations with no visible training standards.

Research Methods: Questionnaires

Keywords: Attitudes of Professionals; Mental Health; Self-Help

Geographical Area: Southern and Mid-Western Health Board Regions

Starting Date: 1996
Completion Date: 1998
Funding Agency: Health Research Board

Publications/Progress Report:
• Various journals, GROW News, presented at World Mental Health Federation, Helsinki

A New Role for Community Child Mental Health Services

Researchers: Egan, Bridget

Institute: St. John of God Services, Lucena Clinic, 59 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6.
Tel: 01-4923596

Abstract: The role of a Community Child Mental Health Service (CCMHS) cannot and probably does not need to satisfy all the psychiatric needs of its catchment area. It can, however, develop a role in helping those agencies with severe children and within whose systems children may show emotional and behavioural disturbance. There is also recognition that not all families want or can avail of specialist services. Consequently, those dealing with children in the context within which the behaviour occurs have to be able to obtain more specialised consultation such as the CCMHS can offer or refer on to treatment when required. This project focuses on ways a CCMHS can adapt treatment in a way that responds to changing community needs.

Research Methods: A comprehensive mental health programme in school involving students and parents; Pre and post evaluation were used

Keywords: Children; Community Child Mental Health Clinic; Mental Health Difficulty; Primary Prevention

Geographical Area: Population of catchment area is 7,000

Starting Date: September 1996
Completion Date: June 1997
Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

Publications/Progress Report:
• Paper has been accepted for publication in Clinical Psychology Forum

NRB Research Department
March 1999
"What Do I Have To Come Here For? - I'm Not Mad!": Children's Experience of Child Guidance and the Development of Child-Focused Preparatory Information

Researcher(s): Egan, Bridget; Reid, Peter; Ross, Dr. Niamh
Institute: Lucena Clinic, Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, Sessa House, Vevay Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow. Tel: 01-2866886
Abstract: The aim of the present study was to pilot a novel methodology in order to gain insights into the perceptions and experience of children attending Lucena Clinic for the first time. It is ultimately envisioned that this qualitative data will be used to develop preparatory literature for children attending Lucena Clinic. Findings also raise service delivery issues of relevance to professionals working with children.
Research Methods: Qualitative: Critical incident technique
Keywords: Children; Child-Focused Preparatory Information; Child Guidance; Preparatory Strategies
Geographical Area: Dublin
Starting Date: April 1998
Completion Date: December 1998
Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

Pottery Production Technology Research

Researcher(s): Ellender, Johnathon; O'Brien, Tony
Institute: Shannon Community Workshops Ltd., R70, Industrial Estate, Shannon, Co. Clare. Tel: 061-364202
Abstract: This project consists of technical research into pottery making devices that enable a person with a moderate mental handicap to sustain a sheltered workshop position with an annual subsidy of £1100 per job.
Research Methods: Engineering workshop; Evaluation of developments
Keywords: Learning Disability; Pottery Production Technology
Geographical Area: Shannon, Co. Clare
Starting Date: October 1998
Completion Date: June 1999
Funding Agency: Shannon Community Workshops Ltd.
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
A Study of Parents’ and Teachers’ Perception of Learning Difficulties in Boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Researcher(s): Finn, Tania

Institute: Muscular Dystrophy Ireland, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-8721501; Email: info@mdi.ie; Website: http://wwwmdi.ie

Abstract: The objective of the project was to analyse the situation in relation to integrated education in an area of the country where special education for children with physical disabilities is not an option. It aims to identify provisions being made in mainstream schools, to identify those areas where provision is lacking and to identify possible means of addressing the situation. The results suggest that there are several issues which need to be addressed in the provision of integrated education. Such issues include transport, equipment, information, and support staff.

Research Methods: Questionnaire; Parental Interviews; Teacher Interviews

Keywords: Children; Education; Integrated Education; Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy; Physical Disability

Geographical Area: North-East of Ireland

Starting Date: September 1995

Completion Date: September 1996

Funding Agency: Muscular Dystrophy Ireland

Publications/Progress Report: Unpublished report
The Role of Singing in the Treatment of Breath-Affecting Disability

Researcher(s): Finnegan-Newell, Patricia

Institute: Conservatory of Music and Drama, Dublin Institute of Technology, Adelaide Road, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-4023000

Abstract: • Collection of information on physiological and psychological aspects of the problem
• Case studies
• Illustrated exercise schedule

Research Methods: Questionnaires; Interviews

Keywords: Breath-Affecting Disability; Singing

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: September 1996

Completion Date: June 1997

Funding Agency: Dublin Institute of Technology

Publications/Progress Report: Diploma in Music Teaching report

Lifestyle Changes following the Resettlement of People with Intellectual Disabilities

Researcher(s): Fleming, J. Mitchel

Institute: Daughter of Charity Services, St. Vincent's Centre, Navan Road, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-8383881

Abstract: In this study a total sample of 320 females with intellectual disabilities were assessed on 7 lifestyle indicators. Assessments were conducted before, and 1 and 2 years after resettlement. Indicators monitored were adaptive behaviour, opportunities, choice and autonomy, income and possessions, disturbed behaviour, health, and relationships. Bias existed in subject selection. Children and adults who moved to community based residences experienced substantial gains. Little or no benefits accrued to those who remained in large residential centres. Fewer than expected benefits were experienced by those who moved to small residential centres. Regression analyses were used to investigate the influence personal characteristics and environmental variables had on lifestyle changes of people in different types of accommodation. Findings indicate that outcome differences could not be accounted for by selection bias.

Research Methods: Quantitative longitudinal study; Multiple regression; Change score analysis

Keywords: Intellectual Disability; Quality of Life; Relocation

Geographical Area: Dublin city and county

Starting Date: March 1988

Completion Date: October 1996

Funding Agency: Daughters of Charity Services

Publications/Progress Report: • Ph. D. Trinity College Dublin, 1996
• Frontline (ISSN 0791-1270), September 1998
Brain Injury in Ireland: A Survey

Researcher(s): Gallagher, Maureen; Philips, Jeanne-Marie

Institute: Headway Ireland, Unit 2, Stewart Hall, Parnell Street, Dublin 1.
Tel: 01-8729222; Email: headwave@aonad.iol.ie

Abstract: This is a national survey of individuals with acquired brain injury and their carers. The cause of injury, the services availed of and the services required are investigated. Also being investigated are the effects of the brain injury on the social, vocational and personal lives of those living with brain injury.

Research Methods: Questionnaire; Postal survey

Keywords: Acquired Brain Injury; Brain Injury; Carers; Head Injury; Services

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: March 1998
Completion Date: January 1999

Funding Agency: Eastern Health Board

Publications/Progress Report: Results under analysis at present

Psychosocial Factors in the Rehabilitation of Amputees

Researcher(s): Gallagher, Pamela; MacLachlan, Dr. Malcolm

Institute: Department of Psychology, Trinity College, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6082715; Email: gallaghpg@tcd.ie; Website: http://www.tcd.ie/psychology

Abstract: As no appropriate psychosocial assessment tool exists for the adjustment to an artificial limb, the primary aim was to develop an instrument to be used to better understand the adjustment to a prosthesis and to identify the factors related to prosthetic use. Insights from focus group discussions were used to develop the 'The Prosthesis Adjustment Questionnaire' which was subsequently posted to people attending a limb fitting clinic. The results will assist in the identification of those factors promoting successful rehabilitation and adjustment to wearing a prosthetic limb. Furthermore, the results will provide the guidelines necessary for developing interventions for those who encounter problems in the future.

Research Methods: Focus groups; Questionnaire design; Cross-sectional studies; Interventions; Qualitative and quantitative analysis

Keywords: Adjustment; Limb Deficiency; Physical Disability; Prostheses; Psychosocial Intervention; Rehabilitation

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: October 1996
Completion Date: October 1999

Funding Agency: NRB Research Scholarship (1996)

Publications/Progress Report:
- Ph. D. (Psychology) thesis on completion, Trinity College Dublin

NRB Research Department March 1999
An Accessible Measure of Self-Esteem: The Repertory Grid Technique

Researcher(s): Garahy, Una

Institute: Rehabilitation Studies, University College Dublin, Graduate School of Business, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-7068865; Email: socvocre@blackrock.ucd.ie; Website: http://www.ucd.ie/gsb/welcome.html

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to find an accessible instrument for measuring self-esteem in adults with general learning difficulties. The many complexities involved in the measurement of self-esteem were addressed. Battle’s Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory was considered for this purpose. The findings of a pilot study revealed that Battle’s Self-Esteem Inventory was problematic for adults with learning difficulties. The repertory grid technique was then developed, validated and used to measure self-esteem on this population. It was also found to be an attractive alternative for use with the general public.

Research Methods: Questionnaire; Repertory grid

Keywords: Adults; Learning Difficulty; Repertory Grid; Self-Esteem

Geographical Area: Co. Wexford

Starting Date: March 1995

Completion Date: June 1996

Funding Agency: Self-funded

Publications/Progress Report: M. Sc. (Rehabilitation Management) thesis, UCD

Status of People (18 years +) with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

Researcher(s): Gardiner, Maura

Institute: Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (Dublin Branch), Coolock Development Centre, Bunratty Drive, Dublin 17. Tel: 01-8485227

Abstract: The Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, a voluntary group, wished to research the situation of older people with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (226 in Dublin), in particular the financial consequences for individuals and their families. This built on a pilot study undertaken by the Association in 1994. The study was based on questionnaire and personal interviews. A researcher was assisted by someone with a nursing background and who was familiar with this disability in undertaking the field visits. The results will be used to review current service provision and to highlight areas of need.

Research Methods: Questionnaire; Home-based interviews

Keywords: Adults; Financial Consequences; Hydrocephalus; Spina Bifida

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: 1997

Completion Date: October 1998

Funding Agency: Combat Poverty Agency

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
Affective APOE Genotype and Onset and Rate of Progression in Older People with Down Syndrome

Researcher(s): Gill, Michael; Lawlor, Prof. Brian A.
Institute: Trinity Health Sciences, Department of Psychiatry and Genetics, Trinity College Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6081476; Email: psychl@indigo.ie
Abstract: The purpose of this project is to ascertain whether APOE is a genetic risk factor for the onset and progression of Alzheimer's disease in Down Syndrome.
Research Methods: Molecular genetic techniques; Longitudinal assessment
Keywords: Alzheimer's Disease; APOE; Down Syndrome; Older People
Geographical Area: Ireland
Starting Date: September 1995
Completion Date: January 1999
Funding Agency: Welcome Trust, London
Publications/Progress Report:

Clinical Audit of Dental Treatment under General Anaesthesia for Handicapped Patients

Researcher(s): Graham, Fiona; Holland, Tim
Institute: Department of Preventive and Paediatric Dentistry, University Dental School and Hospital, Wilton, Cork. Tel: 021-545100; Email: oral_health@ucc.ie
Abstract: The study involves the examination of 10 years of clinical records of mentally ill and/or physically disabled patients who received dental treatment under general anaesthesia in a purpose built unit in the Cork University Hospital. Details such as patient background, past dental treatment, and treatment carried out have been recorded.
Research Methods: Retrospective audit of patient records
Keywords: Dental Treatment; General Anaesthesia; Mental Health Difficulty; Physical Disability; Special Needs
Geographical Area: Southern Health Board
Starting Date: June 1997
Completion Date: December 1998
Funding Agency: Department of Preventative and Paediatric Dentistry
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
The Effect of Different Settings on the Interaction of People with a Profound Intellectual Disability

Researcher(s): Griffiths, Colin; O'Halloran, Siobhán
Institute: The Daughters of Charity, St. Vincent's Centre, Navan Road, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-8385527
Abstract: A comparison of the interaction rates of 8 randomly-selected adults with a profound learning disability across 7 different settings.
Research Methods: Descriptive observational study
Keywords: Adults; Engagement; Interaction; Learning Disability; Setting
Geographical Area: N/A
Starting Date: September 1998
Completion Date: May 1999
Funding Agency: Daughters of Charity
Publications/Progress Report: M. Sc. (Nursing), TCD, thesis on completion

Sibling/Friend Support Group

Researcher(s): Halliday, Anne
Institute: St. John of God Services, St. Raphael's, Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Tel: 01-6288161
Abstract: This project was undertaken due to parent concern about siblings who were being teased/bullied because of their brother or sister who has a learning disability. These parents were also concerned that the siblings are unable to explain learning disability to their friends. The objectives of this study are:
• To help the children to identify differentness in people
• To help the children to explain learning disability
• To teach children how to cope effectively with teasing/bullying
• To build 'natural supports' for siblings by involving their friends in the study.
The study involved 8 two-hour sessions with 6 siblings and 6 friends (ages 6-12). Teaching strategies included games, brainstorming, discussing, charting ideas, role-play, video recording of role play and evaluation of video recordings. A pre-post evaluation model was used for evaluation by parents of siblings and friends and by all children. The study also included weekly evaluations carried out by parents and children and 2 follow-up evaluative sessions at 3 and 6-month intervals.
Research Methods: Pre-post evaluation model; Structured interviews; Survey
Keywords: Bullying; Children; Learning Disability; Sibling Support; Siblings; Teasing
Geographical Area: St. Raphael's, Celbridge
Starting Date: May 1998
Completion Date: February 1999
Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
Adapted Forms of Conductive Education: The Burren View and Rosedale Experience - A Report

Researcher(s): Harkin, Dr. Justin G.
Institute: Independent Research and Consultancy Services, 4 College House, The Pines, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. Tel: 0905-45076; Email: justinharkin@tinet.ie
Abstract: A review of parents and staff perceptions of the educational philosophy and provision of Burren View Child Development Centre and Rosedale Special School - educational centres serving pupils from 3 to 18 years with severe and profound intellectual and physical disabilities in Galway.
Research Methods: Semi-structured interviews
Keywords: Children; Conductive Education; Intellectual Disability; Learning Disability; Physical Disability; Sensory Disability; Special Education
Geographical Area: Galway
Starting Date: March 1998
Completion Date: December 1998
Funding Agency: Brothers of Charity, Galway
Publications/Progress Report: Report presented to Brothers of Charity, Galway


Researcher(s): Harkin, Dr. Justin G.
Institute: Independent Research and Consultancy Services, 4 College House, The Pines, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. Tel: 0905-45076; Email: justinharkin@tinet.ie
Abstract: Scoil Chiaráin provides educational services to pupils with mild to moderate learning difficulties/disabilities in the North Dublin area. Eighteen (18) months into a 5 year strategic planning initiative ("Scoil Chiaráin 2,000"), Scoil Chiaráin’s Board of Management chose to facilitate a whole-school review of related initiatives. Pupils, parents and staff were given an opportunity to share their perceptions of Scoil Chiaráin’s recent journey and to highlight and prioritise areas for attention by the Board and school community during the forthcoming school year. This report from the review details the background to the Scoil Chiaráin 2,000 initiative, provides the school communities’ profile of their school as of May 1998 and shares the insights of the author vis-à-vis the future direction of Scoil Chiaráin 2,000.
Research Methods: Semi-structured interviews; Group discussions
Keywords: Development Planning; Mild Learning Disability; Moderate Learning Disability; Special Education; Strategic Planning; Whole School Initiative
Geographical Area: North Dublin
Starting Date: May 1998
Completion Date: September 1998
Funding Agency: Scoil Chiaráin Board of Management
Publications/Progress Report: Report presented to Scoil Chiaráin’s Board of Management

NRB Research Department March 1999
Leisure in the Lifestyles of Adults with Severe and Profound Intellectual Disabilities - A Social Survey

Researcher(s): Harkin, Dr. Justin G.
Institute: Independent Research and Consultancy Services, 4 College House, The Pines, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. Tel: 0905-45076; Email: justinharkin@tinet.ie
Abstract: A sociological study into the meaning and place of leisure in the lives of 189 adults with severe and profound intellectual disabilities associated with 1 service provider in the Dublin area.
Research Methods: Structured questionnaires; Informal interviews
Keywords: Adults; Intellectual Disability; Leisure; Lifestyles
Geographical Area: Dublin-West
Starting Date: November 1991
Completion Date: October 1997
Funding Agency: • N.U.I. Maynooth
• Stewart’s Hospital, Palmerstown
• Self-funded

Syllable Analysis: Its Application to Analysis and Remediation of Unintelligible Speech

Researcher(s): Hickey, Jennifer
Institute: Department of Clinical Speech and Language Studies, 184 Pearse Street, Trinity College Dublin. Tel: 01-6081496
Abstract: An assessment tool based on syllable analysis, using principles of Government Phonology, was developed. It was used to assess the phonological development of 1 normally developing child over 9 months, to compare him to peers and to assess 10 children with unintelligible speech. Intervention programmes were developed for the latter group and progress was reviewed using the tool after 3 months and 6 months of intervention. Substantial progress towards intelligibility was achieved. The concept of the ‘empty nucleus’ was supported.
Research Methods: Multiple case studies
Keywords: Children; Government Phonology; Phonological Disorder; Speech; Syllable Analysis; Unintelligible Speech
Geographical Area: Not applicable
Starting Date: October 1995
Completion Date: October 1997
Funding Agency: Self-funded
Publications/Progress Report:
• Results presented at Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists’ conference ‘Phonological disorder and articulation disorder’, September 1997
• Results presented at the 24th I.A.L.P. congress, Amsterdam, August 1998
• Work in preparation for publication
A Comprehensive Surveillance Study on Children (Birth to Sixteen Years of Age) with Down Syndrome in the Eastern Health Board

Researcher(s): Hoey, Prof. Hilary; Murphy, Joan; O'Neill, Siobhán; Philip, Dr. Magued
Institute: Department of Paediatrics, University of Dublin, Trinity College at the National Children's Hospital, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Tel: 01-4142181

Abstract: Down Syndrome is the most common cause of congenital malformation and development disability and is associated with significant morbidity in Ireland. The purpose of the study is to identify the major treatable medical and developmental disorders in children and adolescents with Down Syndrome from birth to 16 years inclusive in the Eastern Health Board. The assessment will comprise of an interview, questionnaire, complete physical examination of the child including a hearing screening test and thyroid function. Descriptive analysis will be carried out to enable the construction of guidelines to improve medical management and lead to early detection, and prevention of secondary handicaps.

Research Methods: Surveillance study to screen children with Down Syndrome from birth to 16 years in the EHB. It involves a questionnaire to parents, interview, physical examination and descriptive analysis.

Keywords: Children; Down Syndrome; Guidelines; Thyroid Function Test
Geographical Area: Eastern Health Board
Starting Date: March 1998
Completion Date: November 1999
Funding Agency: Down Syndrome Ireland
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

Recovery from Physical Disability following Stroke: A One-Year Follow-Up Study

Researcher(s): Horgan, N. Frances
Institute: • Department of Physiotherapy, University of Dublin, Trinity College. Tel: 01-6082110 (Contact Email: nfhorgan@tinet.ie)
• School of Physiotherapy, St. James Hospital, James Street, Dublin 8. Tel: 01-4537941 (Ext. 2503)
• Physiotherapy Department, Meath Hospital, Heytesbury Street, Dublin 8. Tel: 01-4536555

Abstract: The aim of this research is to conduct a longitudinal study of stroke recovery over an extended time period (over a 1 year period) with the purpose of documenting the course of recovery of stroke survivors and describing characteristic patterns. The description of the natural history of stroke recovery would provide a basis for the evaluation of the timing, nature and effect of therapeutic intervention. This would have important implications for the planning, evaluation and development of stroke rehabilitation programmes

Research Methods: Longitudinal prospective and descriptive
Keywords: Follow-Up; Physical Disability; Recovery; Rehabilitation; Stroke
Geographical Area: Dublin
Starting Date: October 1996
Completion Date: September 1999
Funding Agency: • NRB Research Scholarship (1997)
• Trinity Foundation, University of Dublin, Trinity College
Publications/Progress Report: Ph. D. thesis on completion
Disabled People of Clare Information Project

Researcher(s): Howard, Fiona
Institute: Disabled People of Clare, Unit 1, Clonroad Business Park, Ennis, Co. Clare.
Tel: 065-43488/43955
Abstract: This project will gather information on all entitlements for people with disabilities and make it accessible in all formats. The information will be available to people with disabilities, to voluntary and state organisations and also to research and educational bodies.
Research Methods: Interviews; Secondary research
Keywords: Entitlements
Geographical Area: Co. Clare
Starting Date: January 1998
Completion Date: 2000
Funding Agency: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Publications/Progress Report: A number of interim documents have been produced

Music as a Force of Empowerment for Marginalised Children

Researcher(s): Keane, Siobhan
Institute: St. Patrick’s College of Education, Dublin City University, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-8376191; Email: skeane@indigo.ie
Abstract: The aim of this action research is to assess and develop musical activities as a force for the empowerment of children from marginalised backgrounds, including people with disabilities.
Research Methods: Action research
Keywords: Children; Empowerment; Equality; Marginalisation
Geographical Area: Inner city (North) Dublin
Starting Date: October 1996
Completion Date: September 2000
Funding Agency: NRB Research Scholarship (1996)
Publications/Progress Report: M. Ed. thesis on completion

NRB Research Department
March 1999
Learning Disability: Carers Research Project

Researcher(s): Kinsella, Leo
Institute: North Eastern Health Board, Regional Office, Services to People with Disabilities, Dublin Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth. Tel: 042-29230

Abstract: To evaluate from a carer's point of view, the accessibility, quality and effectiveness of the services provided for people with learning disabilities with a view to improving the services.

Research Methods: Survey; Interviews with clients

Keywords: Carers; Learning Disability; Services

Geographical Area: North-Eastern Region (Cavan, Louth, Meath, Monaghan)

Starting Date: March 1996
Completion Date: December 1996

Funding Agency: North Eastern Health Board

Publications/Progress Report:
- A Carer's View, August 1996 (the study report)
- Real Lives, March 1997 (a service response)

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Personal Adaptive Mobility Aid - PAM-AID

Researcher(s): Lacey, Gerard; MacNamara, Shane; and others in EU project
Institute: Department of Computer Science, Trinity College, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6081765; Email: gerard.lacey@cs.tcd.ie; shane.macnamara@cs.tcd.ie; Website: http://www.cs.tcd.ie/PAMAID

Abstract: As blind people get older, infirmity prevents the safe use of common mobility aids such as long canes and guide dogs. Often this can mean they are confined to bed for their own safety. The resulting sedentary lifestyle results in a rapid deterioration of their physical and mental health. As over 65% of blind people are over 70 years old the number of people involved is significant. This research project aims to develop a robot mobility aid which will guide the frail blind while at the same time giving them physical support as they walk. The mobility aid will improve users personal autonomy by removing the need for complete dependence on carers. Currently it operates both under users' control and unsupervised. It provides users with navigational and physical support by avoiding obstacles and providing warnings about risks near the robot.

Research Methods: Rapid prototypes have been constructed and field tested. User surveys have been conducted by NCBI and the University of Hertfordshire

Keywords: Mobility Aid; Older People; Robot; Sensors; Shared Control; Visual Impairment

Geographical Area: Ireland; United Kingdom; Sweden; Greece

Starting Date: January 1995
Completion Date: July 1999

Funding Agency:
- Department of Computer Science, Trinity College Dublin
- NRB Research Scholarship (1995)
- Telematics Applications Programme

Publications/Progress Report:
- Ph. D. thesis on completion
- Lacey, G. and Dawson-Howe, Kenneth M., Personal Adaptive Mobility Aid (PAM-AID) for the Infirm and Elderly Blind, AAAI Fall Symposium, Boston, USA, November 1996
**To what extent do the Psychiatric Services in Ireland cater for the Needs of Families who have a Member with Schizophrenia?**

**Researcher(s):** Langan, Anne Marie

**Institute:** Schizophrenia Ireland, 38 Blessington Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-8601620; Email: schizi@iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/lucia

**Abstract:** This study identifies the extent to which the psychiatric services in Ireland, cater for the needs of families who have a member suffering from Schizophrenia. A semi-structured interview was the tool used to collect data for the purpose of this descriptive research. Subjects were selected by convenience sampling from support groups run by ‘The Schizophrenia Association of Ireland’. All subjects were from an urban background. Analysis of subjective reports indicated that families with a member suffering from schizophrenia have a good knowledge of the illness and appropriate management strategies that should be employed. However, for the majority of subjects this knowledge has been attained from a voluntary organisation or from individual study of literature about the illness. Health professionals working in the psychiatric services do not appear to play a major role in educating families about schizophrenia. This study also indicates that the community services presently in existence, to assist families in coping with schizophrenia, are grossly inadequate. Unfortunately, the results of this study are not statistically significant or generalizable to the total population of schizophrenia sufferers in Ireland. However the results may have implications for the further study of assistive services required by families who have a member suffering from schizophrenia.

**Research Methods:** Descriptive; Semi-structured interview

**Keywords:** Psychiatric Services; Schizophrenia

**Geographical Area:** Dublin

**Starting Date:** 1996

**Completion Date:** 1996

**Funding Agency:** Schizophrenia Ireland

**Publications/Progress Report:** None to-date

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**A Study of the Experiences of Young People Living with a Disability**

**Researcher(s):** Lawler, Fiona

**Institute:** Cerebral Palsy Ireland (C.P.I.), Marino School and Clinic, Church Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow. Tel: 01-2867543

**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to examine the experiences and opportunities of young people living with a disability. Twenty (20) participants were included, with an age range from 14-24 years. Cerebral Palsy was the most common type of disability. The research analysed some of the social, vocational and emotional experiences encountered by the group, and also looked at particular aspects of their life satisfaction. The findings showed that there was an overall positive response in the social and emotional areas. Conversely, there was a high level of negative experiences expressed when the vocational section was analysed. This was due mainly to the lack of job opportunities. Regarding life satisfaction, the group were moderately happy. Particular areas identified where respondents expressed a need for greater life satisfaction opportunities were:-(a) facilities to make more friends and (b) a chance to have more fun in their free time.

**Research Methods:** Qualitative research using structured interviews

**Keywords:** Cerebral Palsy; Emotional Experiences; Life Satisfaction; Physical Disability; Social Experiences; Social Inclusion; Vocational Experiences

**Geographical Area:** Dublin; Co. Wicklow

**Starting Date:** December 1996

**Completion Date:** August 1997

**Funding Agency:** Combat Poverty Agency

**Publications/Progress Report:** • M. Soc. Sc. thesis, UCD
• Report submitted also to Cerebral Palsy Ireland and the Combat Poverty Agency

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NRB Research Department March 1999
Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Training and Employment/NCBI
Employment Support Unit

Researcher(s): Lawler, Fiona

Institute: The National Council for the Blind, P. V. Doyle House, Whitworth Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-8307033; Email: horizon@ncbi.iol.ie; Website: http://www.ncbi.ie

Abstract: The MATE Project, Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Training and Employment, is an initiative of the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, funded under the EU EMPLOYMENT (Horizon) programme. The project aims to create an employment support service which promotes the inclusion of people with a visual impairment into the labour market. The service will work with individuals and employers to develop realistic and tailored solutions to assessed need, involving the expertise of professionals from mainstream and specialist services. Research into the needs of visually impaired people, employers and potential employers, will inform the ongoing development of the service.

Research Methods: Qualitative; Quantitative; Survey interviews

Keywords: Employment; Multi-Disciplinary; Needs of Employers; Needs of Potential Employers; Needs of Visually Impaired People; Social Inclusion; Training; Visual Impairment

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: January 1998

Completion Date: December 1999

Funding Agency: Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

Including Disabled People: Dealing with Issues of Citizenship, Participation, Consultation, Representation and Advocacy

Researcher(s): Leane, Máire; Power, Noreen

Institute: Social Studies Research Unit, Department of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork. Tel: 021-902831; Email: m.leane@ucc.ie

Abstract: This research was undertaken at the request of the Ad-Hoc Establishment Group of The Council for the Status of People with Disabilities. The Ad-Hoc Group sought a review of the literature relating to participation and representation, which would serve to identify factors which create barriers to participation and would inform the design of structures to support inclusion and representation. In consequence this project consists of a review and synthesis of the literature relating to the issues of citizenship, participation, consultation, representation and advocacy, as experienced by people with disabilities. The negative implications of a failure to consult people with disabilities about issues which impact upon their lives are considered. The conditions required to ensure that people with disabilities can represent themselves, or be represented by an advocate, are outlined and examples of good practice which facilitate equal participation of all groups, are provided.

Research Methods: Literature review

Keywords: Advocacy; Citizenship; Consultation; Inclusion; Participation; Representation

Geographical Area: Not applicable

Starting Date: December 1995

Completion Date: May 1996

Funding Agency: Ad-Hoc Establishment Group of The Council for the Status of People with Disabilities

Publications/Progress Report:
- The report was submitted to the Ad-Hoc Establishment Group of The Council for the Status of People with Disabilities

NRB Research Department March 1999
Event Structure in Irish Sign Language

Researcher(s): Leeson, Lorraine

Institute: Centre For Language and Communication Studies (CLCS), University of Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin 2. Tel: 087-2373197

Abstract: Focuses on the verbal behaviour of Irish Sign Language. Considers for the first time if there is a ‘passive voice’ in ISL and what the constraints on its operations might be. Looks at functional and morphosyntactic realisation and such ‘functional passive’ verbs in ISL. Considers relevance of such linguistic findings for interpreters working between Irish Sign Language and English.

Research Methods: Descriptive; Analytic; Qualitative

Keywords: Event Structure; Interpreting; Irish Sign Language; Language; Linguistics; Verb Behaviour

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: October 1996

Completion Date: 1999

Funding Agency: • NRB Research Scholarship (1996)
• TCD Postgraduate Award (1997 to present)

Publications/Progress Report:
• Ph. D. (Linguistics) thesis on completion, TCD

Review of Models of Supported Employment in Ireland

Researcher(s): Leigh-Doyle, Sue; Mulvihill, Ray

Institute: Leigh-Doyle & Associates, Market Research and Training Consultants, 73 Seabury, Sydney Parade Avenue, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-2698089; Email: sldoyle@iol.ie

Abstract: Commissioned by the Department of Health and Children, through the National Rehabilitation Board (NRB), the aim of this project was to identify and review models of supported employment which could be developed and promoted as effective employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Research Methods: Secondary data analysis; Interviews with key informants

Keywords: Employment; Evaluation; Supported Employment

Geographical Area: Ireland with reference also to the UK and USA

Starting Date: July 1997

Completion Date: October 1997

Funding Agency: NRB

Publications/Progress Report:
Arts and Disability Resource Pack and Database

Researcher(s): Lennon, Liz; and others
Institute: Arts and Disability Forum, N.I., Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast BT2 7AF, Northern Ireland. Tel: 08-01232-239450
Abstract: The project will result in a resource pack on arts and disability and will be a joint publication of The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaion and The Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The resource pack will provide information on arts and disability matters, for arts and disability organisations. The database will provide information on arts and disability on an ongoing basis.
Research Methods: Questionnaire; Reviewing current databases
Keywords: Arts; Database; Resource Pack
Geographical Area: Ireland
Starting Date: July 1998
Completion Date: 1999
Funding Agency: • The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaion
• The Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

Leisure and Recreation Activities for People with Disabilities

Researcher(s): Lett, Josephine; Quigley, Rita
Institute: Research Department, National Rehabilitation Board, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6080400; Email: research@nrb.iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/~nib
Abstract: This booklet is one of a series listing facilities and activities for people with disabilities. For many people with disabilities, taking an active part in community life is difficult if not impossible. They are often socially excluded and isolated. In recent times, however, greater provision has been made in Ireland to assist people with disabilities to take part in leisure and recreation activities. Originally published in 1991, this updated booklet lists leisure and recreation activities for people with disabilities and provides contact details for these activities. This booklet is available on NRB’s website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb.
Research Methods: Postal questionnaire; Secondary research
Keywords: Leisure; Recreation
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: October 1997
Completion Date: January 1999
Funding Agency: NRB
Publications/Progress Report:
• Leisure and Recreation Activities for People with Disabilities, NRB, January 1999

NRB Research Department
March 1999
Non-ESF-Funded Programmes for People with Disabilities - A Statistical Overview 1997

Researcher(s): Lett, Josephine; McLoughlin, Michelle; Murray, Mary
Institute: Research Department, National Rehabilitation Board, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6080400; Email: research@nrb.iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb

Abstract: In 1995, NRB published a statistical overview of non-ESF-funded programmes for people with disabilities. An update of this exercise was begun in 1997, when contact was made with centres for people with disabilities throughout the country. Data was requested on the numbers of people with disabilities attending non-ESF-funded training and sheltered work programmes, the type of programme involved, and the nature of the attendees' disabilities. Data on the exchequer-funded training programme, TOPs, was extracted from NRB's database. The introduction of the 1997 statistical overview looks at the findings on a national basis by disability type and activity type and provides a comparison with the 1995 exercise. The remainder of the report presents the 1997 figures at training centre level by health board area, disability type and activity type.

Research Methods: Postal questionnaire; Secondary research
Keywords: Non-ESF-Funded Programmes; Sheltered Work; Training
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: July 1997
Completion Date: December 1998
Funding Agency: NRB
Publications/Progress Report:
• Non-ESF-Funded Programmes for People with Disabilities - A Statistical Overview 1997, NRB, December 1998 (unpublished) (summary version is available)

Respite Care Facilities for People with Disabilities

Researcher(s): Lett, Josephine; McLoughlin, Michelle
Institute: Research Department, National Rehabilitation Board, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6080400; Email: research@nrb.iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb

Abstract: This booklet is one of a series listing facilities and activities for people with disabilities. Respite care is defined as 'the temporary care of people with disabilities of all kinds to relieve their social, physical or emotional stress and to provide relief to their primary care givers'. Originally published in 1991, this updated booklet provides information and contact details about respite care facilities for adults and children with disabilities. This booklet is available on NRB's website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb.

Research Methods: Postal questionnaire; Secondary research
Keywords: Carers; Facilities; Respite Care
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: July 1997
Completion Date: April 1998
Funding Agency: NRB
Publications/Progress Report:
• Respite Care Facilities for People with Disabilities, NRB, April 1998

NRB Research Department March 1999
Implementing Change in Psychiatric Nursing through University Education:
Attitudes of Registered Psychiatric Nurses, who have Trained in the
Traditional System, to the Introduction of the New Curriculum

Researchers: Logue, Seán
Institute: St. John of God Hospital, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2881781 Ext. 447; Email: hospitalsjog@iol.ie

Abstract: Adapting to change can often be a challenging and difficult process. Examining the attitudes of traditionally trained nurses to the changes being brought about by the new curriculum in nurse education is vital since these attitudes affect their own future and how they receive nurses who are to be educated in the new system of training, and how the qualified nurses who have trained in the 2 very different systems work together. It is important to see if there is considerable resistance to the new changes and examine how best to overcome it. Only time will tell whether the fears and expectations of the nurses in this study are realised.

Research Methods: Questionnaire

Keywords: Career Development; Conflict; Diploma Nurses; New Curriculum; Psychiatric Nurses; Traditional System

Geographical Area: St. John of God Hospital, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
Starting Date: September 1996
Completion Date: June 1997
Funding Agency: Self-funded

Publications/Progress Report:

Project Interact: Preliminary Investigation into Effect of Contact between Disabled and Non-Disabled Students on Attitudes towards Disabled Persons

Researchers: MacCobb, Siobhán; McGrath, Tina
Institute: School of Occupational Therapy, Rochestown Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2832677; Email: smaccobb@tcd.ie

Abstract: This research measured the attitudes of 2 groups of students in the Health Sciences Faculty, University of Dublin, Trinity College. Occupational therapy students in their first year were then involved in shared learning experiences with adults with learning difficulties as co-students for 2 terms as part of a 2 year project 'Interact'. Their attitudes as measured by the Attitude Towards Disabled Persons Scale, Form A (Yuker, Block, Young, 1966) was again measured during the third term. Physiotherapy students also in their first year were used as controls. There were differences over time in both groups of students, with scores demonstrating differing patterns. Although there was no statistically significant difference found, the occupational therapy students increased their mean score and demonstrated a homogeneity in positive orientation in their attitudes towards disabled people.

Research Methods: Attitude questionnaire; Intervention

Keywords: Attitudes of Students

Geographical Area: Dublin
Starting Date: October 1996
Completion Date: December 1997
Funding Agency:
- Carmona Services, Hospitaller Order of St. John of God
- HORIZON 1995-1997

Publications/Progress Report:
- Report contributed towards final report, Project Interact
- Article being prepared for British Journal of Occupational Therapy

NRB Research Department March 1999
Changing Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education:
The Effectiveness of a Short In-Service Programme

Researcher(s): Marley, Patrick A.
Institute: Rehabilitation Studies, University College Dublin, Graduate School of Business, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-7068865; Email: socvocre@blackrock.ucd.ie; Website: http://www.ucd.ie/gsb/welcome.html

Abstract: This study evaluated the effectiveness of a short in-service programme in changing teachers' attitudes towards people with disabilities and towards the concept of inclusive education. A 14-hour programme - the Awareness, Access and Action programme (AAA Programme) - was developed in consultation with people with disabilities. It was delivered by people with disabilities and provided participants with information about, and contact with, people with disabilities. The results indicated that the AAA Programme had a significant impact on subjects' attitudes towards people with disabilities. However, the subjects' knowledge of disabilities and disability issues increased over the course of the programme and corresponding positive shifts in attitudes were also evident.

Research Methods: Case study of 36 teachers
Keywords: Attitudes of Teachers; Inclusive Education; Teachers
Geographical Area: Ireland
Starting Date: 1995
Completion Date: 1996
Funding Agency: Self-funded
Publications/Progress Report:
• M. Sc. (Rehabilitation Management) thesis, UCD
• Presented at 18th World Congress of Rehabilitation International, Auckland, N.Z., Sept. 1996

'The Law and You' - Reflections on Developments in Irish Disability Law

Researcher(s): McAteer, Theresa
Institute: Forum of People with Disabilities, 21 Hill Street, Dublin 1. Tel: 01-8786077; Email: inforum@indigo.ie

Abstract: This is an assessment of Irish Disability Law in the context of the Open Forum held by the Forum of People with Disabilities in June 1998. Comparisons will be made of anti-discrimination law as it operates successfully or otherwise in others areas (e.g. women's rights) and other jurisdictions.

Research Methods: Members views at the Open Forum; Analysis of political and legal commentary given at the Open Forum
Keywords: Anti-Discrimination Law; Law; Rights
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: July 1998
Completion Date: December 1998
Funding Agency: Combat Poverty Agency
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

NRB Research Department March 1999
How is Blindness Perceived by Blind and Non-Blind People and how are their Perceptions Influenced by Contemporary Representations of Blindness in Ireland?

Researcher(s): McCarthy, Joanne Mary
Institute: Department of Sociology, University College Cork. Tel: 021-902318

Abstract: This project will:
1. identify popular perceptions of blindness in Ireland
2. document how blindness is experienced by blind people in Ireland
3. examine the way in which blind people are included and/or excluded from the labour market
4. consider the relationship between the experience of blindness and blind people's ability to participate in contemporary consumer society
5. develop and expand theories of disability as 'social oppression'.

Research Methods: Analysis of media coverage; Literature review; Structured in depth interviews

Keywords: Blindness; Contemporary Representations; Perceptions

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: September 1998
Completion Date: September 1999

Funding Agency: NRB Research Scholarship (1998)

Publications/Progress Report: M. A. (Sociology) thesis on completion, UCC

Follow-Up Study of 'Our Young Lives' - Special School Leavers of 1987

Researcher(s): McConkey, Prof. Roy; McCormack, Dr. Bob
Institute: St. Michael's House Research and Development Department, St. Michael's House, Ballymun Road, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-8375171

Abstract: This is a longitudinal follow-up study of special school students in St. Michael's House. It involves a comparison with the original research published in 'The Person with Mental Handicap' (McConkey and Conliffe, 1989), seeking the young adults' and the parents' impressions of their lives to-date and hopes for the future.

Research Methods: Individual interviews with service users and parents using a structured interview schedule

Keywords: Follow-Up; Life Expectations; Life Experiences

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: 1998
Completion Date: Spring 1999

Funding Agency: St Michael's House
University of Ulster

Publications/Progress Report: Publication on completion of study
Analysis of Development of Disability Services in Ireland

Researcher(s): McCormack, Dr. Bob

Institute: St. Michael’s House Research and Service Development Department, St. Michael’s House, Ballymun Road, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-8375171

Abstract: This project analysed trends in the development of disability services with particular reference to learning disability. The study identified 6 phases in this development and identifies an emerging future model of service based on model-coherent principles.

Research Methods: Analysis of published and original materials

Keywords: Development of Services; History of Services; Learning Disability; Models of Service; Services

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: July 1997

Completion Date: September 1998

Funding Agency: St. Michael’s House

Publications/Progress Report:
- The Local Support Service, St Michael’s House, unpublished report, 1997
- ‘Trends in the Development of Disability Services’ in National Diploma in Applied Social Studies (Rehabilitation), Module 1, Open Training College, Dublin, 1997
- ‘Patterns in the Development of Irish Disability Services’ in (O’Reilly, Gash and Walsh eds.) Developmental Disability: A Lifecourse Perspective, University College Press, Dublin

Evaluation of the Department of Education Funded Educational Service to Children with Severe and Profound Learning Difficulty within St. Michael’s House

Researcher(s): McCormack, Dr. Bob; O’Driscoll, Damian

Institute: St. Michael’s House Research and Service Development Department, St. Michael’s House, Ballymun Road, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-8375171

Abstract: An evaluation of the Department of Education funded educational service to children with severe and profound learning disabilities in St. Michael’s House based on the 1994 working group report ‘Extension of the Department of Education service to children with severe and profound handicaps in St. Michael’s House’. In order to represent the varied groups involved, Developmental Day Centre (DDC) staff, DDC teachers, Principals, Clinicians, and Heads of Units were interviewed as well as several parents.

Research Methods: Survey questionnaire; Data analysis based on frequencies and qualitative analysis

Keywords: Children; Development of Services; Education; Severe Learning Disability

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: June 1997

Completion Date: January 1998

Funding Agency: St. Michael’s House

Publications/Progress Report: Unpublished report
Evaluating the Impact of a Formal Quality Enhancement System

Researcher(s): McCormack, Dr. Bob; and others
Institute: St. Michael’s House Research and Development Department, St. Michael’s House, Ballymun Road, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-8375171

Abstract: This study is evaluating the impact on quality of service, of the introduction of an externally-accredited quality system, based on the baseline and post-implementation measures with a quota-based random sample of service users.

Research Methods: Pre-post measures with a quota-based random sample of service users, based on individual interviews with service users and key workers, and records

Keywords: Evaluation; Quality of Service

Geographical Area: Dublin
Starting Date: 1997
Completion Date: December 1998
Funding Agency: St. Michael’s House

Publications/Progress Report:
- Due for publication in Autumn 1999

Consultation with Arch Clubs in the Border Region for the National Federation of Arch Clubs

Researcher(s): McDonogh, Olga
Institute: National Federation of Arch Clubs, 74 Meadow Grove, Dublin 16. Tel: 01-2951081

Abstract: This project was a consultation with 4 key stakeholder groups (club members, their parents/guardians, club committees, club helpers) into their views of the organisation’s current strengths and weaknesses and future plans.

Research Methods: Qualitative
Keywords: Arch; Learning Disability; Recreation

Geographical Area: Border counties of Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: November 1997
Completion Date: March 1998
Funding Agency: Peace and Reconciliation Fund

Publications/Progress Report: Final project report

NRB Research Department
March 1999
Meeting Self-Esteem and Social Skills Needs in the Classroom

Researcher(s): McGranaghan, Mark

Institute: COPE Foundation, Bonnington House, Montenotte, Cork.
Tel: 021-507131 Ext.342; Email: tierne@cope-foundation.ie; markmcg@iol.ie

Abstract: A review of the literature has found a relationship between low self-esteem (SE), poor social skills (SK) and learning disability. This study examines this relationship in pupils of Scoil Eanna (a primary school for students with learning disability). It is anticipated that these students will have low levels of SE and poor SK as measured by objective tests. Implementing a programme of classroom management will address these deficiencies. The programme is ultimately designed to enhance SE in a classroom setting and is adapted from a number of proven resources that have been successful in the ‘ordinary school’. It includes such aspects as changing teacher/pupil communication, small-group SK training, changes in task setting and improving classroom environment. It is expected that such a programme will result in increases in SE, decreases in disruptive classroom behaviour, increases in SK and positive changes in academic performance. When implemented, the programme will address the particular needs of this group of students and ultimately through the maintenance of this programme, the school environment will be a more pleasant and productive one for both students and teachers.

Research Methods: Survey involving Pre and Post Test measures

Keywords: Academic Achievement; Classroom Behaviour; Learning Disability; Self-Esteem; Social Skills Training

Geographical Area: Cork city
Starting Date: October 1998
Completion Date: September 1999
Funding Agency: COPE Foundation
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
Prevalence of Depression in General Practice, Industry and Third Level Institutions in the Republic of Ireland

Researcher(s): McKeon, Dr. Patrick
Institute: Depression Research Unit, St. Patrick's Hospital, James Street, Dublin 8.
Tel: 01-8308449; Email: aware@iol.ie

Abstract: Fifty (50) randomly selected general practitioners throughout the Republic of Ireland will be recruited to administer a depression screening instrument to 1,500 consecutive practice attenders. Each practice attender will be given the Zung self-rating depression questionnaire and those that score higher than 50 on this scale will be interviewed by the general practitioner using the patient evaluation sheet. The latter enquires about the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for major depression, minor depression, dysthymia and bipolar disorder. Some 4,000 people in the workplace and 1,500 people in third level colleges will be requested to complete the Zung self-rating depression questionnaire. These will be returned to AWARE in a sealed collection box and a coded result will be returned to the participants in the study. This questionnaire gives a reliable indicator of the presence or absence of clinically significant depression. The 3 sets of data will be analysed to determine the prevalence of depression and to assess the proportion of people in the general population who in turn seek help from their general practitioner.

Research Methods: Data Analysis; Interviews by GPs; Questionnaire
Keywords: Depression; General Population; General Practice; Prevalence; Third Level Colleges; Workplace
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: September 1998
Completion Date: January 1999
Funding Agency: AWARE - Helping to Defeat Depression
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

Housing Options for People with Disabilities

Researcher(s): McLoughlin, Michelle; Quigley, Rita
Institute: Research Department, National Rehabilitation Board, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6080400; Email: research@nrb.iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/~nr

Abstract: This booklet is one of a series listing facilities and activities for people with disabilities. A basic requirement for the integration of people with disabilities into the community is having somewhere to live which enables them to live as independently as possible. However, the needs of people with disabilities as regards housing vary. Some are self-supporting and require mainly a barrier-free environment in which to live independently, while others require different levels of support ranging from personal attendant care to supervised living arrangements. Originally published in 1991, this updated booklet will include lists of, and contact details for, residential facilities available to people with disabilities.

Research Methods: Postal questionnaire; Secondary research
Keywords: Housing
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: July 1998
Completion Date: Summer 1999
Funding Agency: NRB
Publications/Progress Report: Booklet will be published on completion of project

NRB Research Department
March 1999
Monitoring of Training Outcomes: Follow-Up Surveys of ESF and TOPs Leavers

Researcher(s): McLoughlin, Michelle; Murray, Mary; Quigley, Rita

Institute: Research Department, National Rehabilitation Board, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6080400; Email: research@nrb.iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb

Abstract: This is a series of surveys of leavers from ESF-funded and exchequer funded, TOPs, training programmes. The aim of the surveys is to explore the leavers' situation at the time of interview, their views on the training received and the extent to which they found it useful to them.

Research Methods: Face-to-face questionnaire interviews

Keywords: Follow-Up; Training; Training Outcomes

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: July 1995

Completion Date: On-going

Funding Agency:
- European Social Fund
- NRB

Publications/Progress Report:
- Where Are They Now?: Monitoring of Training Outcomes: Follow-Up Survey of ESF and TOPs 1995 Leavers, NRB, August 1997 (main report and research brief)

Counting Us In

Researcher(s): McNamara, Monica

Institute: AONTAS, National Association of Adult Education, 22 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-4754121; Email: aontas@iol.ie

Abstract: Research project evaluating a small pilot scheme organised by 4 VEC Adult Education Organisers (AEOs) and St. Michael’s House to include adults with special learning needs (mental handicap) in adult education evening classes.

Research Methods: Interview and questionnaire survey

Keywords: Adults, Adult Education; Mental Handicap; Special Learning Needs

Geographical Area: Dublin - but all AEOs around Ireland were interviewed

Starting Date: February 1997

Completion Date: February 1998

Funding Agency: Department of Education and Science

Publications/Progress Report: Counting Us In, Aontas, December 1998

NRB Research Department March 1999
The Design of a Set of Independent Living Assessment Instruments for Use in the Irish Context of Rehabilitation

Researcher(s): Melly, Ann

Institute: Rehabilitation Studies, University College Dublin, Graduate School of Business, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-7068865; Email: socvocre@blackrock.ucd.ie; Website: http://www.ucd.ie/gsb/welcome.html

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to design a set of Independent Living Assessment Instruments for use in the Irish context of rehabilitation. A review of the literature resulted in identifying the strengths and weaknesses relating to the development of assessment instruments in the US. Design features which were deemed suitable for use in constructing Irish instruments were also identified. The methodology utilised the knowledge and skills of professional rehabilitation personnel in agreeing instrument design and content. As a result, a set of assessment instruments entitled "Towards an Independent Life" was produced.

Research Methods: Instrument design; Administration of instruments

Keywords: Assessment; Independent Living; Learning Difficulty; Rehabilitation

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: 1995

Completion Date: 1996

Funding Agency: National Training and Development Institute

Publications/Progress Report: M. Sc. (Rehabilitation Management) thesis, UCD

Young Carers in Ireland - Pilot Study on their Needs

Researcher(s): Moane, Dr. Geraldine; and others

Institute: Department of Psychology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-7068363

Abstract: This was a pilot study with a number of young people who 'dropped out' of school to provide high levels of care to a family member. Young carers from Dublin and one rural area participated in the study which set out to identify the reasons why they left school to care at home and the particular issues and needs associated with being a young carer.

Research Methods: Confidential questionnaire

Keywords: Carers; Home; Needs of Young Carers; School; Young Carers

Geographical Area: Dublin and one rural area

Starting Date: October 1996

Completion Date: October 1997

Funding Agency: Self-funded

Gulbenkian Calouste Foundation

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
DRAWARE: Access for all to the Built Environment

Researcher(s): Morrow, Ruth; Olley, John; Rogerson, Fionula

Institute: DRAWARE, School of Architecture, University College Dublin, Richview, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14. Tel: 01-7062769; Email: draware@ucd.ie; Website: http://avc.ucd.ie/draware

Abstract: The project's aim is to ensure an accessible environment for all through education. Education will occur in 3 ways:
- by involving current staff in the School of Architecture, UCD in the process of teaching inclusive design skills,
- by teaching students of architecture at UCD inclusive design skills, and
- by working with the RIAI to produce an inclusive design course to be used in their present Continued Professional Development Course for architects in practice.

This work will be carried out in consultation with architects in practice and representatives from various groups who have to-date been excluded from full access to the built environment - in particular Disability Groups.

Research Methods: Teaching in practice; Consultation; Research

Keywords: Access; Architecture; Built Environment; Education; Inclusive Design

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: January 1998

Completion Date: December 1999

Funding Agency: HORIZON European Social Fund

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

A Relationship Enrichment and Sexual Education Programme for the Learning Disabled: A Study in Action Research

Researcher(s): Muldoon, Niall

Institute: Granada Institute, Crinken House, Crinken Lane, Shankill, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2721030

Abstract: This Relationship Enrichment and Sexual Education Programme is the culmination of the deliberations between Granada clinicians and care staff as to how to deal with a number of clients demonstrating inappropriate sexual behaviour. The research uses the action research paradigm and lays out the process with which the programme was developed over a number of months. A needs assessment was carried out on the clients and staff in order to discover what exactly these 2 groups wanted from such a programme. With this information a set of 12 lesson plans were designed to be delivered over a 12 week period by both care staff and clinicians working as co-trainers.

Research Methods: Action research

Keywords: Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour; Learning Disability; Relationship Enrichment; Sexual Education Programmes

Geographical Area: Dublin

Starting Date: September 1997

Completion Date: July 1998

Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

Publications/Progress Report:
- M. Sc. (Counselling Psychology) thesis on completion
- Presented at the St. John of God Research Study Day, November 1998
The Intellectual Disability Database in the Republic of Ireland

Researcher(s): Mulvany, Fiona

Institute: The Health Research Board, 73 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2.
Tel: 01-6761176; Email: fionam@hrb.ie; Website: http://www.hrb.ie

Abstract: The Intellectual Disability Database has been in existence since 1995 and was established to ensure that information is available to enable the Department of Health and Children, the health boards and the voluntary agencies to provide appropriate services designed to meet the changing needs of the population of people with intellectual disability (mental handicap) and their families and to co-ordinate the delivery of those services. The objectives of the database are to:
- improve the accuracy of data available to health boards on the population of people with intellectual disability;
- enable the current needs of clients with intellectual disability to be assessed more accurately; and
- support planning for the future developments of services for clients.

The database incorporates 4 basic elements of information: demographic details, current service provision, future service requirements and details of allowances received. The Disability Database Division in the Health Research Board manages the Intellectual Disability Database on behalf of the Department of Health and Children.

Research Methods: Ongoing data collection and updating at health board level using the Intellectual Disability Database National Planning Data Form. Data are transferred from the health boards to the Department of Health and Children via diskette on an annual basis.

Keywords: Allowances; Database; Demographic Profile; Intellectual Disability; Mental Handicap; Needs of People with Intellectual Disability; Services

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: Began between 1993-1995

Completion Date: On-going

Funding Agency: Department of Health and Children

Publications/Progress Report:
Employment Challenges for the Millennium: A Strategy for People with Disabilities in Sheltered and Supported Work and Employment

Researcher(s): NACTE Steering Group on Sheltered and Supported Work and Employment

Institute: NRB’s National Advisory Committee on Training and Employment (NACTE), 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6080400; Email: research@nrb.iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb

Abstract: In its submission to the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities, NRB drew attention to what it called the ‘ad hoc system of sheltered workshops and settings’ that has been developed in Ireland to try to respond to the work needs of people with disabilities who, for various reasons, are unable to find employment in the open labour market. NRB recommended, inter alia, that ‘the status of people with disabilities currently in sheltered work be reviewed, including such issues as wage structure, the legal status of workplaces and workers, funding, standards and conditions’. In January 1996, NRB’s National Advisory Committee on Training and Employment (NACTE) established a sub-committee:

- to examine all aspects of the current position in regard to sheltered and supported work/employment of people with disabilities in Ireland
- to examine models of sheltered and supported work/employment in other countries
- to make recommendations to NACTE regarding the measures required to bring the position in Ireland in line with best international practice.

Research Methods: Invitations for submissions; Consultation meetings; Agency and centre visits; Data collection; Literature review

Keywords: Employment; Sheltered Employment; Sheltered Work; Supported Employment; Supported Work

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: January 1996

Completion Date: December 1997

Funding Agency: NRB

Publications/Progress Report:


Access to Radio Stations for People with Disabilities

Researcher(s): O’Boyle, Donal K.; O’Brien, Sally

Institute: ‘Access’ For The Handicapped, Bunbeg, Co. Donegal. Tel: 075-31176

Abstract: The aim of the project is to compile a guide of the access facilities available to people with disabilities to national, local and community radio stations on both sides of the border. The project would look at opportunities of working in front or behind the microphone, with a view to employment, interviews etc..

Research Methods: Questionnaire, and a visit to most of the stations currently on air

Keywords: Access; Airwaves; Media; Radio Stations

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: June 1998

Completion Date: Mid 1999

Funding Agency: Self-funded

Publications/Progress Report:

- Will appear in various publications, and a complete guide will be available on completion
Review of Housing Design Standards for Severely Disabled People and their Carers in Northern Ireland

Researcher(s): O’Brien, Paraig
Institute: Disability Research Unit, Department of Design and Technology, London Guildhall University, 41-71 Commercial Road, London E1 ILA.
Tel: 00-44-1-71-3201000

Abstract: Part A: Review of Standards: Systematic review of the legislation, concepts and range of design standards which apply to domestic housing in Northern Ireland. Identification of variances and gaps in design standards when applied to severely disabled people. Severely disabled people are defined here as permanent wheelchair users who require hoist assisted transfer to access facilities in the home.
Part B: Review the main methods of calculating activity space standards, so that customised specifications can be developed to compliment existing design guidance.

Research Methods: Literature search; Internet search; Qualitative; Quantitative; Critical appraisal

Keywords: Carers; Design Standards; Hoists; Housing; Severely Disabled

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland
Starting Date: October 1998
Completion Date: May 1999
Funding Agency: Awaiting outcome of funding applications
Publications/Progress Report:
- M. A. (Disability Design Research) thesis on completion, London Guildhall University

A Follow-Up Study of Graduates of Scoil Bernadette

Researcher(s): O’Callaghan, Richard
Institute: Research Department, COPE Foundation, Bonnington House, Montenotte, Cork. Tel: 021-507131 Ext. 342; Email: tierne@cope-foundation.ie

Abstract: This study examined the lifestyles of learning disabled persons who graduated from special education (Scoil Bernadette) in the years 1984 through 1991 and subsequently attended and graduated from the Vocational Training Centre (VTC) at COPE Foundation. The aim of the study was to find out how young adults, who have a mild general learning disability, perceive they are getting on in the various roles they play in life. The intention was to inform service providers and service users about the impact of this type of disability, of special schooling and of vocational training on the lives of the target population. This information was later used to provide ongoing advice and assistance to clients who have left the services. Personal attitudes towards issues such as employment, relationships, recreation, health, accommodation and aspirations for the future were examined. Results indicated the need to examine more closely the needs of ex-clients. There is a strong case for continuing ways to foster self-esteem, social skills and personal development in this group even after they have left the services.

Research Methods: Interviews; Questionnaire

Keywords: Adults; Follow-Up; Learning Disability; Lifestyles; Mild General Learning Disability

Geographical Area: Cork city and county
Starting Date: Autumn 1995
Completion Date: 1996
Funding Agency: COPE Foundation
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
The Prevalence of Foot Deformity in Cerebral Palsy (CP)

Researcher(s): O'Connell, Penelope A.; Stephens, Michael

Institute: Central Remedial Clinic, Vernon Avenue, Dublin 3. Tel: 01-8332206; Email: tdcrc@crc.ie

Abstract: This study was conducted within the Gait Laboratory of the Central Remedial Clinic. Clinical observations suggest that deformities of the foot and ankle are common in children with cerebral palsy. A total of 200 children with CP were included and their ambulatory status was determined. Results indicate that there was a very high incidence of foot deformity in children with cerebral palsy. Equinovalgus was the deformity most common in the group - and was commonly represented in diplegia and quadriplegia. The study concluded that 93% of all children with cerebral palsy will develop a dynamic or fixed deformity of the foot and ankle. These findings have implications for therapy, management and surgery.

Research Methods: Empirical

Keywords: Cerebral Palsy; Children; Foot Deformity; Physical Disability; Prevalence

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: 1995

Completion Date: 1996

Funding Agency: Central Remedial Clinic

Publications/Progress Report:
- Due for publication Autumn 1998 in the Journal of Paediatric Orthopaedics (US Publication)

Identification of Service Need within Community Support Systems for People with Multiple Sclerosis

Researcher(s): O'Connor, Helen

Institute: Rehabilitation Studies, University College Dublin, Graduate School of Business, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-7068865; Email: socvocre@blackrock.ucd.ie; Website: http://www.ucd.ie/gsb/welcome.html

Abstract: This study set out to examine the use of available services by people with MS and to establish the level and type of demand for services they used. The findings, derived from a postal survey and focus group discussions, revealed strong concerns by customers about the services that are currently available; the manner in which these are provided; and the services not available but which are required to enable people to live good quality lives.

Research Methods: Focus groups, Postal survey; Quantitative

Keywords: Community Support; Multiple Sclerosis; Physical Disability; Service Needs

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: 1995

Completion Date: 1997

Funding Agency: Self-funded

Publications/Progress Report: M. Sc. (Rehabilitation Management) thesis, UCD
Impact of Education and Training on Women with Disabilities and Employers in Health and Social Care Sector

Researcher(s): O'Kelly, Ann
Institute: Department of Health Promotion, National University of Ireland, Galway.
Tel: 091-524411; Email: a.ofarrell@mis.ucg.ie

Abstract: The project will carry out a process evaluation of the Department of Health Promotion, N.U.I., Galway's HORIZON Programme: Women with Disabilities Training Course. The objective of the research is to ascertain the impact of the project on 2 groups, namely, course participants and employers in the health and social service sector.

Research Methods: Focus group discussions; Interviews; Qualitative; Quantitative

Keywords: Employment; Health; Health Promotion; Physical Disability; Sensory Disability; Social Care; Women

Geographical Area: Co. Galway; Co. Mayo; Co. Roscommon
Starting Date: July 1998
Completion Date: December 1999
Funding Agency: • EU HORIZON
• National University of Ireland

Publications/Progress Report: Masters of Health Promotion thesis on completion

A Comparative Study of the Mental Health Law of Ireland and Selected Other Jurisdictions

Researcher(s): O'Neill, Anne-Marie
Institute: Department of Law, National University of Ireland, Galway. Tel: 091-524411

Abstract: The project draws together the scattered strands of Irish Mental Health Law and makes comparisons with the laws of other jurisdictions with a view to making proposals for reform.

Research Methods: Traditional Legal

Keywords: Law; Mental Health Law

Geographical Area: Primarily Ireland but examples drawn from England and Wales, Canada, USA and Australia for the purposes of research as well as from European and International Law

Starting Date: September 1995
Completion Date: 1999/2000
Funding Agency: NRB Research Scholarship (1995)

Publications/Progress Report: Ph. D. (Law) thesis on completion, N.U.I., Galway
The Development of a High-Intensity Parent-Training Programme for the Treatment of Moderate/Severe Child Conduct Problems

Researcher(s): O'Reilly, Dermot
Institute: St. John of God, Lucena Clinic, Bray, Co. Wicklow. Tel : 01-2866886
Abstract: This research describes the development of an intensive home-based parent-training programme for the treatment of moderate to severe conduct problems. Direct observations of parent and child behaviour were conducted in the home setting, using a partial-interval time-sampling strategy during baseline, treatment and post-treatment phases of the study. A multiple-baseline across subject’s experimental design with 2 families was adopted. The study examined the effectiveness of a multi-component treatment strategy for the reduction of adverse child behaviour. Treatment was primarily home-based, with the addition of high-intensity training in a time-out procedure for the reduction of non-compliance and adverse child behaviour. Implications for the development of effective treatment programmes for children with severe conduct problems are discussed.

Research Methods: Multiple-baseline across subject’s experimental design
Keywords: Children; Conduct Problems; Moderate/Severe Child Conduct Problems; Parent-Training Programmes
Geographical Area: South Dublin/Co. Wicklow
Starting Date: October 1997
Completion Date: April 1998
Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God
Publications/Progress Report:
- Submitted to ‘Journal of Research and Social Work Practice’

Integrated Education for Students with a Physical Disability: A Survey of the Provisions being made

Researcher(s): Perrin, Hannah; Prendiville, Anne M.
Institute: Muscular Dystrophy Ireland, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-8721501; Email : info@mdi.ie; Website : http://www.mdi.ie
Abstract: Twenty-one (21) boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) aged 6-16 years participated in the study. Fourteen (14) boys attended a mainstream school while 7 boys attended a special school. Their respective families and schools also participated. Parents’ and teachers’ perceptions as to whether or not boys with DMD have learning difficulties was ascertained. The origin of the learning difficulties were discussed in terms of genetic, environmental, and/or socioemotional factors. The results showed that little or no agreement existed between the parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of the boys’ personalities and therefore, no definitive conclusions could be drawn as to the effect of emotions on these boys’ learning difficulties. The limitations of this study were discussed, as were the implications for future research.

Research Methods: Assessment tools; Guided interviews; Individual assessment
Keywords: Children; Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy; Education; Learning Difficulty; Physical Disability
Geographical Area: Co. Dublin
Starting Date: January 1995
Completion Date: January 1996
Funding Agency: Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
Publications/Progress Report: The report is finished and held at MDI

NRB Research Department March 1999
Pragmatic Linguistic and Psychological Aspects of Development in Young Hearing Impaired Children

Researcher(s): Pitt, Theresa

Institute: University College Dublin Graduate School of Business Studies, Centre for Insurance Studies, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-7068963; Email: pitta@tinet.ie

Abstract: A study of the relationship between theory of mind development and language development in children with hearing impairment and the process of evolution of both, related to the problems of developing social communication skills

Research Methods: Test battery; Video analysis; Parental questionnaire

Keywords: Children; Hearing Impairment; Language; Linguistics; Pragmatic and Linguistic Progress; Theory of Mind

Geographical Area: Leinster

Starting Date: May 1997

Completion Date: January 2002

Funding Agency: Self-funded

Publications/Progress Report:
- Ph. D. (Social/Emotion Language Development) thesis on completion, UCD

Independent Living for People with Cystic Fibrosis

Researcher(s): Purcell, Fiona

Institute: Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland, 24 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6. Tel: 01-4962433; Email: cfhouse@internet.ireland.ie

Abstract: This report is a response to the new challenges being faced by people with cystic fibrosis. The aim of the project is to identify the issues and problems involved in achieving independent living for people with cystic fibrosis. The issues raised were discussed under 7 headings: Education, Employment, Training, Income Support and Finance, Health Services, Housing and Transport. Recommendations are made for improvement where deemed necessary and beneficial.

Research Methods: Questionnaires; Literature review; Interviews

Keywords: Cystic Fibrosis; Independent Living; Physical Disability

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: January 1996

Completion Date: January 1998

Funding Agency: 
- Combat Poverty Agency
- Department of Education

Publications/Progress Report:
- Purcell, F., Independent Living for People with Cystic Fibrosis, CFA (summary version also available)
Costs of Disability Study: Research Briefs

Researcher(s): Quigley, Rita
Institute: Research Department, National Rehabilitation Board, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-6080400; Email: research@nrb.iol.ie; Website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb

Abstract: Two research briefs were produced which addressed issues arising from the Costs of Disability study carried out by Dr. B. Murray in 1992-1995. 'Costs of Disability Study-2-Poverty Among People with Disabilities' examined the incomes of and expenses incurred by people with disabilities, and compared their expenditure patterns, and living standards in general, with those of the average Irish Household, as defined by the Household Budget Survey carried out on a national level by the Central Statistics Office. 'Costs of Disability-3-Caring for People with Disabilities' looked at the problems of poverty, ill-health, social exclusion and the need for support among carers of people with disabilities.

Research Methods: Secondary data analysis
Keywords: Carers; Costs of Disability; Living Standards; Poverty
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: Mid 1996
Completion Date: October 1998
Funding Agency: NRB

Publications/Progress Report:
- Costs of Disability Study-2-Poverty Among People with Disabilities (Research Brief), NRB, January 1998
- Costs of Disability-3-Caring for People with Disabilities (Research Brief), NRB, October 1998
(These publications are available from NRB's website: http://www.iol.ie/~nrb.)

A Survey of International Law and Policy on Disability

Researcher(s): Quinn, Dr. Gerard
Institute: To be written in a personal capacity (Contactable at Law Reform Commission, 111 St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-4751310)

Abstract: This project will cover developments at the UN, its Specialised Agencies, the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Research Methods: Legal and policy analysis
Keywords: International Law and Policy; Law; Policy
Geographical Area: Global
Starting Date: Summer 1998
Completion Date: Winter 1999
Funding Agency: None

Publications/Progress Report: Book to be published upon completion

NRB Research Department
March 1999
Factors influencing Marital Adjustment following Traumatic Brain Injury

Researcher(s): Rodgers, Magdalen

Institute: Department of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6082715

Abstract: This study will identify the factors which lead to difficulties in the marital relationship following head injury and to integrate a structured intervention into existing rehabilitation services. The project also aims to focus on the needs of spouses, as primary carers of those with head injury. The well being of the head injured individual is directly related to the quality of care they receive. Therefore the adjustment of the non-injured spouse in coping with their situation is a valid outcome of the rehabilitation process and will be an important focus of this study.

Research Methods: Measurement tools; Semi-structured interviews

Keywords: Brain Injury; Carers; Head Injury; Marital Adjustment; Rehabilitation; Spouse

Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland

Starting Date: September 1998

Completion Date: June 2000

Funding Agency: NRB Research Scholarship (1998)

Publications/Progress Report: Ph. D. (Psychology) thesis on completion, TCD

Suicidal Ideation in Irish Adolescents

Researcher(s): Rowley, Jo

Institute: St. John of God Services, Cluain Mhuire Family Centre, Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2833766

Abstract: This project will determine levels of reporting of thoughts of self-harm in a selected community of young people attending mental health services. The youth Self-Report and children's Depression Inventory was administered to a community based sample of 11-18 year olds attending mainstream schools and also to a sample of young people attending mental health services (outpatients and a special school). The scoring on items dealing specifically with the thoughts of self-harm were compared between the groups and were related to total scores. On completion the results will provide information on the extent of thought of self-harm in Irish young people, and provide a profile of young people at particular risk for such thoughts.

Research Methods: Achenbach child behaviour checklist; Achenbach youth self-report; Children's depression inventory

Keywords: Adolescents; Depression; Mental Health Difficulty; Self-Harm; Suicide

Geographical Area: South Dublin

Starting Date: October 1997

Completion Date: December 1998

Funding Agency: Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

NRB Research Department

March 1999
Need for Disability Accessible Transport

Researcher(s): Ryan, Joe
Institute: Disabled People of Clare, Roxton, Corofin, Co. Clare. Tel: 065-43488
Abstract: Disabled People of Clare is a voluntary group which promotes the rights of people with disabilities. It wants to research the need for disability-accessible transport in Clare, in particular a taxi service in Ennis. The findings would provide the basis for assessing the feasibility of a disability-accessible transport service.

Research Methods: Questionnaire to individuals and service providers
Keywords: Accessible Transport; Rights; Taxis
Geographical Area: Co. Clare
Starting Date: 1997
Completion Date: 1998
Funding Agency: Combat Poverty Agency
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

Positively Coping: A Study of the Coping Strategies and Resources of Parents with an Able Child on the Autistic Spectrum

Researcher(s): Sharry, John
Institute: St. John of God, Lucena Clinic, 59 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6.
Tel: 01-4923596
Abstract: This study using semi-structured interviews, documents the coping resources and strategies adopted by a group of 13 parents with an able child on the autistic spectrum, all of whom attend a special school in the South Dublin area. Implications for professional practice include the need for a flexible, positive and non-prescriptive approach to working with parents with a disabled child, and also the need to create wide-ranging services throughout the life cycle which support and build upon the coping resources and strategies which parents actually utilise.

Research Methods: Qualitative; Semi-structured interviews
Keywords: Autistic Spectrum; Children; Coping; Parenting
Geographical Area: South Dublin
Starting Date: September 1996
Completion Date: 1997
Funding Agency: Self-funded
Publications/Progress Report:
- Summary article submitted to International Journal of Research and Social Work, due for publication in 1999
An Assessment of the Impact of Childhood Neuromuscular Condition on Irish Families

Researcher(s): Shaw, Kendra

Institute: Muscular Dystrophy Ireland, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-8721501; Email: info@mdi.ie; Website: http://www.mdi.ie

Abstract: The objective of the proposed research is to examine the impact of childhood neuromuscular conditions on a family by using the Impact-on-Family Scale (Stein & Riessman, 1980). Parental feelings about their child(ren)'s health, educational, and social needs will also be examined as a way to better understand the full impact of neuromuscular conditions on the family. The study will also assess the cost of disability by gathering relevant information from parents of children with a neuromuscular condition. This information includes the cost of equipment, house and car adaptations, medical fees, transport, holidays and the average income of the family. Parents' views on public awareness about muscular dystrophy will also be examined. A sample of 100 families who have children with muscular dystrophy will be used from both urban and rural localities in Ireland. 10% of the sample will have 2 or more persons with muscular dystrophy in 1 family.

Research Methods: Assessment measures; Semi-structured interviews

Keywords: Children; Costs of Disability; Family; Impact on Family; Muscular Dystrophy; Neuromuscular Conditions; Physical Disability; Poverty Traps; Quality of Life

Geographical Area: Ireland

Starting Date: January 1998

Completion Date: October 1998

Funding Agency: Combat Poverty Agency

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

Role of Parents/Carers in Facilitating Work Transitions for People with Disabilities

Researcher(s): Sheehan, Mary

Institute: Tallaght Partnership Ltd., Unit 19, Village Green, Tallaght, Dublin 24.
Tel: 01-4597990

Abstract: AP, an EU HORIZON initiative of the Tallaght Partnership to promote education and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, wish to examine the transition process from care to work for people with disabilities. The focus is on how parents/carers perceive this process, in particular: transfer of independence, welfare implications and confidence in support systems. A number of research methods will be used 'to ensure different facets of the same symbolic reality are deliberated upon in a comprehensive way' (referred to as 'triangulation').

Research Methods: Participant observation; Semi-structured interviews; Focus groups

Keywords: Carers; Employment; Parents; Transition to Work

Geographical Area: Tallaght, Co. Dublin

Starting Date: 1997

Completion Date: October 1998

Funding Agency: Combat Poverty Agency

Publications/Progress Report: None to-date
Research into Part M of the Building Regulations and the Possible Extension of the Regulations to cover Housing

Researcher(s): Sillery, Peter A.
Institute: Department of Surveying and Building Technology, Dublin Institute of Technology, Bolton Street. Tel: 01-4023723; Email: psillery@hotmail.com
Abstract: The project looks at the present situation in other countries and compares it to Ireland. It also looks at adaptable housing from a cost viewpoint and suggests new policies that could be adapted by the government to cater for people with disabilities.

Research Methods: Literature review; Interviews; Site visits; Seminars; Questionnaires; Letters of inquiry; Consulting with disability groups
Keywords: Adaptable Housing; Building Regulations; Housing; Part M
Geographical Area: Ireland mostly but also Denmark, Sweden, Canada, USA, UK and France.
Starting Date: October 1996
Completion Date: October 1998
Funding Agency: • European Social Fund • Department of Education

Understanding and Responding to Challenging Behaviour: A Survey of all Clients in COPE Foundation Services

Researcher(s): Smith, Majella; and others
Institute: Research Department; COPE Foundation, Bonnington House, Montenotte, Cork. Tel: 021-507131 Ext. 342; Email: tierme@cope-foundation.ie
Abstract: A survey conducted within COPE Foundation (1994) revealed that a total of 8 percent of clients presented challenging behaviours (CBS). The current survey proposes to expand the definition of CBS to reflect the changing behaviour profile of clients within the services today. To accurately assess this profile the survey will use 2 assessment instruments, a standardised objective questionnaire and a questionnaire based on that used in 1994. It is felt that these additions/revisions will reflect a more comprehensive picture of CBS in COPE Foundation services. This information will be of immense value in the design and implementation of future staff training. Ultimately it will help maintain a safe living environment thus improving the quality of life for both staff and clients.

Research Methods: Questionnaires
Keywords: Challenging Behaviour; Staff Training
Geographical Area: Cork city and county
Starting Date: October 1998
Completion Date: June 1999
Funding Agency: COPE Foundation
Publications/Progress Report: None to-date

NRB Research Department
March 1999
The Impact of Human Resource Management on the Employment of People with Disabilities

Researcher(s): Stewart, Adrian
Institute: Rehabilitation Studies, University College Dublin, Graduate School of Business, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-7068865; Email: socvocr@blackrock.ucd.ie; Website: http://www.ucd.ie/gsb/welcome.html

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to establish whether Human Resource practices in 15 self-selected companies employing in excess of 1,000 employees discriminated against people with disabilities in accessing or retaining employment. The findings indicated that people with disabilities were discriminated against. Policies and practices adopted in the retention of people who acquire a disability while working were more accommodating than policies and practices involved in recruitment. Respondents were supportive of equality legislation on disability but were not in favour of introducing a compulsory scheme.

Research Methods: Questionnaire
Keywords: Discrimination; Employment; Human Resource Management
Geographical Area: Ireland
Starting Date: 1995
Completion Date: 1997
Funding Agency: National Training and Development Institute
Publications/Progress Report: M. Sc. (Rehabilitation Management) thesis, UCD

Therapy for Hereditary Blindness

Researcher(s): Tuohy, Gearoid
Institute: Department of Genetics, Trinity College Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6082482

Abstract: The objective of the proposed research is to halt photoreceptor death in retinal tissue which has been observed to occur in patients suffering from retinitis pigmentosa (RP) and age related macular degeneration (ARMD), both of which lead to complete blindness. The research aims to supply, via sub-retinal and intra-ocular injection, a genetic based therapy to replace mutated genetic transcripts involved in the aetiology of RP with faithful and functional copies of the normal gene. In addition, it is planned to investigate opportunities of interrupting the severe apoptosis reported in patients diagnosed with retinal damage. Apoptosis, or 'programmed cell death', is the active genetic mechanism responsible for the degeneration of the photoreceptor layer. The prospect of disrupting the apoptotic machinery carries implications far beyond its immediate relevance to ocular therapies.

Research Methods: Cell culture; In vitro studies; Observation in animal models
Keywords: Age Related Macular Degeneration; Apoptosis; Blindness; Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: 1998
Completion Date: 2000
Funding Agency: NRB Research Scholarship (1998)
Publications/Progress Report: Ph. D. (Science) thesis, TCD
Access to Education for People with Disabilities - A Legal Analysis

Researcher(s): Twomey, Maura
Institute: Law Department, University College Cork. Tel: 021-902532
Abstract: The project is a 20,000-word thesis which examines the legal right of access to education for people with disabilities in Ireland. It looks at constitutional rights, legislative provisions (Equal Status Legislation and Education (No.2) Bill, 1997) and the law in Germany is considered comparatively.

Research Methods: Law library research; Letters and phonecalls to disability organisations and government departments
Keywords: Access; Education; Legal Rights; Legislation
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland; Germany
Starting Date: October 1997
Completion Date: October 1998
Funding Agency: Self-funded
Publications/Progress Report: In part fulfilment of LLM (Master of Laws) thesis on completion of project, University College Cork

Adjustment after Spinal Cord Injury

Researcher(s): Waldron, Brian
Institute: Department of Psychology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-7068363; Email: bwaldron@macollamh.ucd.ie
Abstract: The purpose of this research study was to investigate factors influencing adjustment following spinal cord injury. Treischman (1988) conceptualised adjustment after spinal cord injury as an interaction between organic, environmental and personal variables. Using the Symptom Checklist 90-Revised as a measure of adjustment, this research examined factors within each area such as the type of injury sustained, social support, health locus of control, education, employment, income, attributions of cause and blame for the injury and beliefs about physical appearance. An additional aim of this study was to investigate the role of the trauma and dissociation in adjustment to spinal cord injury. Open questions were used to examine the role of religious beliefs, and factors which aided or hindered the participants in their adjustment. Thirty (30) participants comprising a nation-wide sample who had sustained a traumatic spinal cord injury participated in the study. A set of standardised questionnaires were administered during a personal interview with each participant.

Research Methods: Personal interviews; Standardised questionnaires with additional open ended questions
Keywords: Adjustment; Attributions of Guilt and Blame; Dissociation; Education; Employment; Health Locus of Control; Income; Religious Beliefs; Social Support; Spinal Injury; Trauma
Geographical Area: Republic of Ireland
Starting Date: September 1996
Completion Date: October 1998
Funding Agency: Department of Psychology, UCD
**Independent Living for People with Disabilities**

**Researchers:** Walshe, Dermot

**Institute:** Dublin 7 Centre for Independent Living, Harbour House, 6 Westernway, Broadstone, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-8304932

**Abstract:** D7CIL is an action-research project promoting independent living for people with disabilities. It seeks to research the provision of accessible, affordable and suitable housing for people with significant disabilities, in accordance with the philosophy of independent living. This will involve an assessment of the needs of people with disabilities and a review of housing practice and policy. The study will be used to develop housing policy which promotes independent living.

**Research Methods:** Interviews; Questionnaires; Group discussion

**Keywords:** Independent Living; Housing; Housing Policy and Practice Review; Suitable Housing

**Geographical Area:** Dublin

**Starting Date:** 1997

**Completion Date:** 1998

**Funding Agency:** Combat Poverty Agency

**Publications/Progress Report:** None to-date

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**Employment Manual**

**Researchers:** Wilkinson, Marion

**Institute:** Brainwave, The Irish Epilepsy Association, 249 Crumlin Rd., Dublin 12. Tel: 01-4557500. Email: brainwve@iol.ie

**Abstract:** Manual / guide of good practice for employers when employing people with epilepsy.

**Research Methods:** Questionnaire; Frequently asked questions

**Keywords:** Employment; Good Practice; Epilepsy

**Geographical Area:** Ireland; Germany; Finland; France; Norway

**Starting Date:** January 1996

**Completion Date:** December 1998

**Funding Agency:** EU HORIZON

**Publications/Progress Report:** Employment manual on completion of project

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**Third Level with a Disability : Students’ Views on Third Level Education and Employment Opportunities**

**Researchers:** Woods, Máiréad

**Institute:** AHEAD, Newman House, 86 St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-4752387; Email: ahead@iol.ie; Website: http://www.ahead.ie

**Abstract:** A survey of students with disabilities was conducted to inform AHEAD on issues related to higher education and employment opportunities for students/graduates with disabilities.

**Research Methods:** Quantitative

**Keywords:** Employment Opportunities; Higher Education; Views of Students

**Geographical Area:** Republic of Ireland

**Starting Date:** 1996

**Completion Date:** 1997

**Funding Agency:** European Commission through HORIZON; Higher Education Authority

**Publications/Progress Report:** Report published
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