



PAVEE POINT

TRAVELLERS CENTRE

Key Findings from Our Geels – All Ireland Traveller Health Study

- **10,618 families** enumerated (**9,056 in ROI and 1,562 in NI**)
- **Participation rate 80%** - Phenomenal response rate as a result of the extensive contribution of Travellers, Traveller organisations and networks
- Estimated total **Traveller population 40,129 on IOI**
- **Average Family Size: ROI 4, NI 2.5**

Age structure

- **42% of Travellers under 15 years** of age compared with **21% of the general population**
- **63% of Travellers under 25 years** compared with **35% of the general population**
- **3% of Travellers are aged 65 years and over** compared with **13% of the general population.**
- **Only 8 Travellers were found over 85 years of age**

Life Expectancy

- In 1987 the gap in life expectancy between **Traveller women** and settled women was 12 years **the gap in 2008 is 11 years**
- In 1987 the gap in life expectancy between **Traveller men** and settled men was 10 years **the gap in 2008 is 15 years.**

Mortality

- **Traveller men have four times the mortality rate of the general population**
- **Traveller women have three times the mortality rate of the general population.**
- If Travellers had the same health status as the general population, the number of **deaths expected in the year would be 54**, the **actual number of deaths was 188**, which means an **excess of 134 deaths** Traveller deaths.
- **Suicide is 6 times the rate of general population** and accounts for approx **11% of all Traveller deaths**
- The **infant mortality rate for Travellers is 3.5 times the rate of the general population (4 infant deaths per 1,000 in the national population compared to 14 infant deaths per 1,000 in the Traveller population)**



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Morbidity

- Over **52% of Travellers aged 40 – 60 years** who were interviewed had been **diagnosed with high blood pressure** in the last year, compared to **35% of the general population**
- Over **42% Travellers diagnosed with high cholesterol** in last year compared to 30% of the general population.

Main Causes of Death

- Heart disease and stroke – 25%
- Cancer – 19%
- Lung disease – 13%

Causes of gap in levels of morbidity and mortality among Travellers

- Both Travellers and health service providers interviewed acknowledged that **Social Determinants** were the main cause of the poor health status of Travellers
- Accommodation, education, employment, poverty, discrimination, lifestyle and access and utilisation of services.

Social Determinants

- **4.8% of Travellers in ROI and 14.5%** in NI either employed or self-employed
- In ROI **38.5% of 30-44 year old Travellers** and **25.8% of 45-64 year old Travellers** had primary education only
- In NI **26.2% of 30-44 year olds** and **18.4% of 45-64 year olds** had primary education only
- The majority of respondents, (**75.9% in ROI and 94.3% in NI**), lived in family units of 5 or less.
- Difficulty in reading in **28.8% of Traveller families in the ROI and 33.5% of NI families**

Lifestyle

- Of those tested in the last 12 months **a quarter was diagnosed as having High Cholesterol and over a third had High Blood Pressure.**
- **66.3% said that illicit drug use** is a problem in the community.
- **30.9% Travellers** said price is a factor which prevents them to eat healthy.
- Overall there is a **15% higher rate of smoking** among Travellers compared to the general population.



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Adult Health Services

- **Barriers** identified were **waiting list (62.7% ROI and 46.8% NI), embarrassment (47.8% ROI and 50.1% NI) and lack of information (37.3% ROI and 28.6% NI)**
- **Complete trust in health professional (41.0% ROI and 34.6% NI)** was lower than **general population (82.7%)**

Value of Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects

Health Information

- **83% of the Travellers** interviewed said they got their health information and advice from Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects and the Travellers organisations.

Women's Health

- **25% of Traveller women** compared to **13% of general population** had a breast screening.
- **23% of the Travellers** had Smear test compared to **12% of general population.**

Social Capital

- Importance and pride in Traveller identity and culture
- Very good support within family and community
- Extended family networks
- Strong sense of community
- Empowerment of Traveller women
- A community open to adapting to change
- High level of trust within the Traveller community relative to the settled

80 study coordinators from Traveller projects trained as trainers by UCD. The study coordinators trained **400 Traveller peer researchers** from over **50 Traveller organisations and Primary Health Care for Traveller projects** around the country. Innovative audio, visual computer programme developed which facilitated the participation of Travellers with all levels of literacy in the research.(180 laptop computers adapted)

The study has created a great interest in Travellers' own health and we need to build on this enthusiasm and not let them down" Traveller Peer Researcher

We hope that this work we have done, will become the foundation of more work with Travellers' on their health, as Travellers' on the doorsteps asked us to use this information to help them improve their health" Traveller Peer Researcher.