Applications of Health Psychology: Population Health & Health Services Research (PHHSR) in Ireland

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RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE
Health Psychology & PHHSR

- Health psychology in an interdisciplinary environment
- Unique contributions include:
  - Focus on theory
  - Focus on behaviour & implementation
  - Rigours of methods training
  - Potential to develop interventions applicable across disciplines/settings
The Beginnings

- Health Services Research Centre established in RCSI – 1997
- Hannah McGee as Chair
Next Steps

- Successful proposal to establish a structured PhD training programme in Health Services Research
- Collaboration between RCSI, TCD and UCC
- Commenced October 2007, with funding for intake of 4 cohorts of 6 scholars annually to 2011
- One of 4 structured programmes successful in receiving funding (others in biomedical science, biotechnology)
- Only programme to receive extended funding, with two further scholar intakes in 2011 and 2012
- Final graduates to emerge in late 2016
- Total funding for 36 graduates; programme will produce 60+
Health Research Board identified need for further capacity building in Ireland in PHHSR
HRB supported growth in PHHSR in Ireland

• Strategy triggered a number of initiatives
  – Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement (ICE) awards
    • Post-doctoral level
  – Collaborative Applied Research Grants (CARG) awards
    • Post-doctoral and PhD
    • Awards in 2013
  – Research Leader Awards (RLA)
    • Awarded to individual to lead research in PHHSR
    • First awarded 2013 – senior lecturer and associate professor/professor level
      – Health & clinical psychology success! – Molly Byrne & Brian Maguire
    • Second awards pending (2015) – associate professor and professor level
HRB supported growth in PHHSR in Ireland

- Also ongoing need to develop PhD level capacity
- Not only HSR, also Population Health
- Development of the SPHeRE programme

Current Director: Anne Hickey, RCSI;
Co-Directors: Steve Thomas, TCD; John Browne, UCC.
Guide to SPHeRE Programme

• Funding to recruit 6 fully funded PhD scholars in PHHSR each year for 5 years (2013-2017)

• Capacity for additional scholars:
  • Alternative funding
  • Self-funding (typically part-time)

• Programme ends in 2021
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SPHeRE
To produce a national integrated faculty that meets the growing demand for high quality graduates in PHHSR and improves the quality and relevance of health research in Ireland by:

• Moving to a national programme (expansion to all RoI HEIs).
• Encompassing population health research.
• Building a national knowledge translation network (better capacity and inter-connectivity).
• Upgrading the national skills base (greater access to and promotion of the SPHeRE programme).
SO WHERE’S HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY??
Division of Health Psychology, PSI

• N = 61 members
  – 49 full members
  – 12 affiliate
Year 1: 6 modules + placement + proposal

- M1: Perspectives on PHHSR - linking context and methods
- M2: Health Systems, Policy and Management
- M3: Systematic Reviewing and Protocol Development
- M4: Practical Approaches to PHHSR - methods and study design
- M5: Doing Statistics / Stata and Health Informatics
- M6: Health Economics
Year 3:
Workshops + placement + completion plan
Year 4: Workshops+papers+Thesis

- Writing/Submitting Your PhD – Preparing for the VIVA
- Career Management Skills
- Writing your Curriculum Vitae
- Teaching Methods
- Leadership and Management skills in research
- Grant Preparation and Writing
- Succeeding at an Interview
- Voicing it Better Presentation Skills
HRB & SPHeRE Primary Supervisors 2007-2014 (n=47)

- Primary Supervisors: 84%
- Of which Psychology: 16%
Disciplinary Backgrounds - HRB Scholars 2007-2012

- Anthropology
- Biomedical Science
- Dentistry
- Economics
- Epidemiology
- Geography
- Health Informatics
- Health Policy
- Health Service Management
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Politics
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Statistics
- Dentistry
- Biomedical Science
- Anthropology

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Disciplinary Background - SPHeRE Scholars 2013-2014

- Biomedical Sciences
- Business
- Economics
- Health Promotion
- Medicine
- Nursing/Midwifery
- Nutritional Science
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Social Sciences
- Sociology
- Speech & Language Therapy
- Sociology
- Social Sciences
- Public Health
- Psychology
- Physiotherapy
- Pharmacy
- Nutritional Science
- Nursing/Midwifery
- Medicine
- Health Promotion
- Economics
- Business
- Biomedical Sciences
Psychology Primary Supervisors (n=9) & Scholars (n=17) by Discipline

- Sociology
- Social Work
- Psychology
- Politics
- Health Services Manager
- Global Health
- Geography
- Economics
Sample Scholar Thesis Titles

• Burns, A. (2013 Cohort). Smoking and Smoking cessation in those with Mental Health difficulties in Ireland.
Health psychology in PHHSR: Conclusions

• Not so much about health psychology, but about how health psychology as a discipline contributes to the bigger interdisciplinary picture of PHHSR in order to maximise population health, the quality of healthcare and quality of life in Ireland, and contribute to the evidence base internationally.
THANK YOU!