



Lifeways

Cross-Generation Cohort Study

Over 10 Years of Commitment to
Irish Family Health



Newsletter Autumn 2014

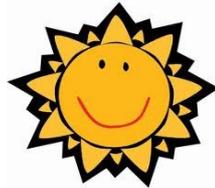
Completing the follow-up

Thank you for being part of the Lifeways Study. With you and your family's co-operation we have collected data from over 300 children when they were aged nine years. Some of the key findings have been presented at several scientific meetings and published in academic journals and reports which we have highlighted in this newsletter.

Your participation in Lifeways is entirely voluntary. Information about an individual is never used—it is the overall pattern of health and illness in Ireland that is being investigated, and confidentiality is guaranteed by the study.

Thank you for sending in your questionnaires, and participating in doctors visits and home visits. The success of the Lifeways Study depends on your continued cooperation and without it there could be no study.

Sincerely,
Professor Cecily Kelleher, MD
Principal Investigator



Interesting findings

Parent-rated child health and obesity

Parents were more likely to report poor health for their children, when the children were obese. Also, healthy parents were more likely to report healthy children.

Shrivastava et al., British Medical Journal Open, 2014

Health care utilisation

We found that the economic recession influenced how often people in Ireland attended their GP, and that children tend to attend their GP more often not only when they are unwell, but also if they are from a family where the mother attends often.

Viljoen et al., European Journal of Public Health, 2013.

More interesting findings

Weight is strongly linked to mothers family

We looked at children's weight and height at birth, aged 5 and 9 years and the same measures for parents and both sets of grandparents. We found that weight was strongly linked to the mothers side of the family.

Kelly et al., British Medical Journal Open, Due for publication.

Dietary patterns during pregnancy and children's weight

Children with a diet pattern of pasta, vegetables, cereal and juice were less likely to be overweight or obese.

Pregnant mothers with a diet pattern that is high in processed foods during pregnancy were linked with children's overweight/obesity. Many processed foods tend to be high in fat, sugar and salt. This is consistent with our earlier findings.

Murrin et al., Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism, 2013.

Asthma at age 3, 5 and 9 years was associated with mothers diet in pregnancy

We found that mothers who ate more fresh vegetables, fruit and oily fish while they were pregnant appeared to have children less likely to develop asthma.

Viljoen, Mother's Dietary Patterns during Pregnancy and the Risk of Asthma Symptoms in Children at 3,5 and 9 years. PhD Thesis.

Blood lipids (fat) and glucose (sugar) levels in children was associated with their weight.

We found that children with higher body weight had higher fat and sugar levels in their blood. This is what we would expect to find and is similar to results from other research studies on children.

Coming soon...

We will be completing the current data collection round by asking Lifeways parents to provide us hair and saliva samples. Over the upcoming weeks you will receive a pack which contains detailed instructions on how to provide these samples. Since this study is a cross-generation study, it is essential to have complete information from children and parents,



PhD Graduate, Karien Viljoen receiving the Gold medal award at the annual Association for Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER), November 2013

The Lifeways study is funded by the
Health Research Board
and overseen by a Medical and
Scientific Steering Group



Conferences and presentations

Over the past year the findings from Lifeways have been presented at several scientific meetings and conferences.



Pictured above: The Lifeways Team 2014

Conferences and presentations International Congress of Nutrition (ICN), Grenada, Spain, September 2013

The ICN is a large 5-day conference held every 4 years to share the latest findings in the area of nutrition research. Dr Celine Murrin gave a presentation on the relationship between mothers diet during pregnancy and children's weight. The Lifeways study is one of the few studies that has such detailed dietary information during pregnancy and therefore is of great interest to the research community.

European Congress on Obesity (ECO), Sofia, Bulgaria, May 2014

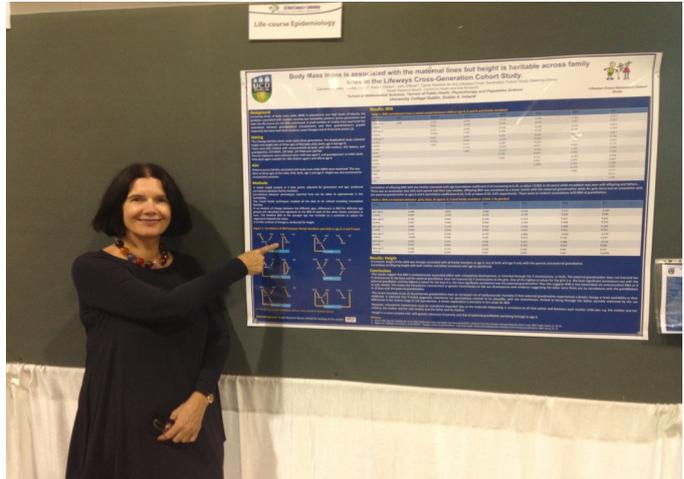
Last May, one of our PhD students Hala Khalil attended the ECO where she presented findings from the Lifeway study. This conference was a great opportunity to share and exchange information on the origins of obesity with other researchers from different countries. The data collected from our Lifeways families over the last 12 years has allowed us to explore the growth of children and understand how the childhood environment shapes this.

The School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Population Science in University College Dublin is also involved in another ongoing study in children: the **World Health Organization (WHO) European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative**. We are collecting the Irish data which aims to measure overweight and obesity in primary school children aged 6-9 years on a regular basis. Up until now, we have finished three data collection rounds and a fourth one is coming up.

World Congress of Epidemiology, Anchorage, Alaska, August 2014

Researchers from the Lifeways team attended the World Congress of Epidemiology in Anchorage, Alaska. Prof Cecily Kelleher presented some of the findings on how the determinants of height and weight is passed on in families. Dr Karien Viljoen presented her findings on how mothers' food intake during their pregnancy may affect the chances of developing asthma in their children.

We received very positive feedback on the Lifeways study from the international research community.



Prof. Kelleher presenting a poster at the World Congress of Epidemiology

Lifeways children are growing up

We are always happy to receive an update from you about your family and your Lifeways Child's health and development.

Any recent news on school, sport, cultural milestones or rewards? Please let us know, and pictures are always welcome!

Is your child aware that they are part of a unique Irish cohort? Are they familiar with the Lifeways study and how important they are to health research?

Now that your children are approaching young adulthood they are likely to voice their own attitudes and opinions. We would be very interested in hearing their perspective on being part of a research study. You can email us with any thoughts or questions they may have to lifeways@ucd.ie

Contact us:

- Lo-call on: **1 890 202 502 (lo-call)**

- Email us at lifeways@ucd.ie

- Find us on **Facebook**

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