

Press Release

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€8.8M INVESTMENT IN HEALTH RESEARCH TRIALS TO BENEFIT PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

People from both sides of the border will benefit from new health and social care research trials thanks to –a new Cross-Border Healthcare Intervention Trials in Ireland Network (CHITIN).

CHITIN aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland (Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan, Monaghan, and Louth) through cross border research collaborations.

The research will look at key health challenges such as youth mental health, obesity, asthma and stroke. A brief summary of each project is outlined below.

CHITIN has received €8.8m in funding from the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Match-funding for the project has also been provided by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Welcoming the launch of the CHITIN project, Dr Janice Bailie, Assistant Director, Research and Development, Public Health Agency and lead partner on the project said: **“Funding of €8.8m for the CHITIN project is great news for health research. Not only is CHITIN going to help benefit the health and wellbeing of people and help prevent illness, it means that those people who may not have been able to access health research previously have the opportunity to do so in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland.”**

Janice added: **“In addition to this, a network of health and social care research professionals will be created and this will help shape research in the future whilst**

working towards a shared goal so people can enjoy the benefits health research can bring them in the future.”

According to Darrin Morrissey, Chief Executive at the Health Research Board: **“Health research and trials can transform people’s lives. They help prevent illness, improve patient care and advance health policy. I believe the learning and health benefits that we get from this initiative will extend throughout the island of Ireland.”**

Aidan Kearney participated in a health research intervention trial with positive outcomes. Aidan’s life changed for the better: **“I am fitter, stronger, and healthier than ever before in my life thanks to being involved in a health research trial. I used to worry about the future – not now. I now have hope which I never had before.”**

Joan Jordan who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2010 also participated in a health research trial. Joan is involved in trial recruitment and retention and would encourage everyone to take part in health research. She said: **“There is no cure for MS and it was very important for me to take part in clinical trials because I don’t want this to happen to anyone else. It is important people participate in trials. Every trial that happens means we learn more that’s the hope in future there will be better treatments and prevention.”**

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **“The EU’s INTERREG VA Programme seeks to ensure equity of access to healthcare services for all citizens regardless of where they live. This project seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of people living on both sides of the border, through a unique partnership of healthcare providers with a wealth of experience in the research and delivery of highly effective public health campaigns.**

“By working in collaboration they will be laying the foundations for new treatments and preventative measures that can improve the quality of life of thousands of citizens,” she continued.

-ENDS-



Notes to Editors:

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The CHITIN trials are:

1. Anticipatory Care Planning Intervention for Older Adults at Risk of Functional Decline: A Primary Care Feasibility Study (Host Organisation – QUB)
2. BRAIN-Diabetes: Border Region Area lifestyle Intervention study for healthy Neurocognitive ageing in Diabetes (Host Organisation – QUB)
3. Improving mental health among at-risk young people in a challenging border region (Host Organisation – UU)
4. Inhaler compliance Assessment (Asthma) INCA_Sun: A Prospective 8 month, randomised, controlled, multicentre asthma education study in patients with unstable asthma using the INCA device (Host Organisation – RCSI)
5. Mirror box therapy with Stroke: a cross-border Randomised Controlled Trial to evaluate the effectiveness of mirror box therapy in upper limb rehabilitation with sub-acute Stroke patients (Host Organisation – UU)
6. MY COMRADE PLUS: A pilot cluster Randomised Controlled Trial, for patients with multimorbidity, of the Multimorbidity Collaborative Medication Review And Decision Making intervention (MY COMRADE), practice based pharmacists (PBP's) or PBP's plus an adaptation of MY COMRADE (Host Organisation – NUIG)
7. PAIGE2 – Pragmatic Pregnancy and Post Pregnancy Lifestyle Intervention for Overweight Women with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus: a Randomised Controlled Clinical Trial (Host Organisation – BHSCT)



8. A randomised pilot study of a theory-based intervention to improve appropriate polypharmacy in older people in primary care (PolyPrime) (Host Organisation – QUB)
 9. The feasibility of a walking intervention to increase activity and reduce sedentary behaviour in people with serious mental illness (Host Organisation - UU)
 10. The Walking In SchOols (WISH) Trial: A peer-led, school based walking intervention for adolescent girls (Host Organisation – UU)
 11. Delivery of a habit-based intervention '10 Top Tips for a healthy weight' to overweight or obese pregnant women on the island of Ireland: a feasibility study exploring integration into existing antenatal care pathways (Host Organisation – QUB)
- The CHITIN project has received €8.8m (including 15% contribution from the Department of Health NI and Ireland) from the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, which is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).
 - The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
 - The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the border region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
 - Health and Social Care (HSC) is a priority of the INTERREG VA programme and has a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) value of €53m and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.



- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu
- The defined area for CHITIN Trials is NI and the border region of the ROI (Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan, Monaghan, and Louth)
- Match-funding for this project has been provided by the Departments of Health in Ireland and Northern Ireland.