



Laidlaw Undergraduate Leadership and Research Programme
Application – 2022 Cohort

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| Name | <i>Sinéad Crowley</i> |
| Programme | <i>Management Science and Information Systems Studies (MSISS)</i> |
| Year of Study | <i>2nd year</i> |
| Research Project Title | <i>An Investigation into the impact of COVID-19 on the Irish Health Care System pertaining to outpatients with chronic illnesses</i> |
| Proposed Supervisor(s) | <i>Dr. Mary Hughes, School of Nursing and Midwifery Trinity College Dublin</i> |

Before completing this submission, you should review the [Laidlaw Programme Application Guide](#) and ensure you have included every component requested

Research Project Proposal (1000 words max.)

Introduction

COVID-19 has significantly impacted outpatient care around the world. Due to risks to patients and staff, hospital appointments moved to telemedicine to protect the vulnerable ^[1]. I will conduct an original investigation into how COVID-19 has impacted individuals with chronic illnesses in the Irish Health Care System. My interest in this area was sparked as I have a chronic illness and am an outpatient of Tallaght University Hospital. During the pandemic, my care was radically changed to two telephone calls a year without the opportunity to have essential vital signs assessed and I missed the lack of face to face interaction. I believe it is imperative to examine what consequences this will have on outpatients in Ireland as 49% of Irish people over the age of 50 have at least one long-term illness and 65% of adults over 65 have two or more ^[2]. For the purpose of my project, I will limit my investigation to three main chronic illnesses; Diabetes, Asthma and Arthritis. I will compare various age groups in Ireland to examine their satisfaction.



Literature Review

I will critically analyse literature on the effects of a change in the modality of hospital appointments and the impact of the introduction of telemedicine on people with chronic illnesses during the pandemic. This will assist me in analysing the effects of COVID-19 on outpatient satisfaction with telemedicine in Ireland. The HSE report^[3] noted an increase in outpatients presenting with complications including diabetic leg ulceration. A study in the UK^[4] found 43% of patients were satisfied with virtual hospital appointments. This indicates some patients were happy with virtual hospital appointments. I aim to build on this research and focus on the differences across age cohorts and between chronic conditions.

Methodology

I plan to conduct an online survey of individuals measuring satisfaction with telemedicine hospital appointments amidst a global pandemic. Through this, I aim to discover how COVID-19 impacted outpatients' satisfaction with their care. The questionnaire will include demographic questions allowing me to compare findings between age cohorts, and chronic conditions. The instrument proposed has been validated previously in a study '*Patient Satisfaction With Telemedicine During the COVID-19 Pandemic*'^[5] which I received permission from Dr Ashwin Ramaswamy to use. All responses will be anonymised at the point of collection.

Week 1 and 2

I will conduct a search of the literature systematically to deepen my understanding of the impact of the introduction of telemedicine for chronic disease surveillance and monitoring of patients during COVID-19. Themes will be developed from the analysis of the literature which will inform the study and assist me in uncovering the impact of COVID-19 on adults with chronic illnesses in Ireland.

Week 3

I will format the instrument for dissemination to the sample via Qualtrics. The instrument is a validated tool previously used in the study stated above. The sample consists of individuals aged over 18 with a chronic illness, who attended telemedicine hospital appointments during the pandemic. There are 266,664 people in Ireland with diabetes^[6], nearly 1 million with arthritis^[7] and nearly 380,000 with asthma^[8]. I will obtain a sample of this population with a proposed response rate of 100 people for each illness. I will circulate the survey to persons in the community through three national patient representative organisations; Diabetes Ireland,



Arthritis Ireland and Asthma Society of Ireland, who have agreed to participate in the study (see emails and documented phone calls in appendix). I will run the survey for 10 days also using paid Facebook and Instagram advertisements to target the sample. Informed consent will be obtained from participants, responses will be anonymised at the point of data collection, and no personal identifying data will be gathered. DPIA and DPO compliance is guaranteed.

Week 4

Once the data has been collected, I will use SPSS to analyse the results. I will create graphs of the responses to each question and compare and contrast between age cohorts and chronic illnesses. The data will be analysed for descriptive statistics. I will analyse the correlation between telemedicine appointments and patient satisfaction, measure response distributions with regard to age and chronic illness and calculate the mean age of responses. Qualitative data will be analysed using content analysis.

Week 5

Based on the responses, I will determine an overall conclusion on how patients believe their care had been affected. I will use the qualitative data collected from the survey to draw these conclusions and compare them with conclusions drawn from other health experts in Ireland and internationally through other studies conducted.

Week 6

Findings will be disseminated through a plan developed with my supervisor. This study has the potential to improve patient care through enhancing telemedicine based on the findings. I will share my research with the HSE so this can be a stepping stone to improving patient health. I believe my research has the potential to improve the care of patients with chronic illnesses.

Research supervisor

My research supervisor would assist me in obtaining TCD ethical approval in advance of the research project to conduct this survey and in reviewing the questions to ensure they are appropriate. She will oversee my work and assist me throughout the project.

Collaboration

To encourage participants to complete the survey and to reach specific patients, I will collaborate with Diabetes Ireland, Asthma Society of Ireland and Arthritis Ireland.



Outcomes

I hope to gain insight into the satisfaction of persons who have a chronic illness and their telemedicine based outpatient care during the pandemic. This will be important to share with health professionals as I believe my research could play a role in highlighting how COVID-19 has impacted outpatients in Ireland and what steps can be put in place to ensure their current and future health.

Pre-clearance requirements

I will require ethical approval from the School of Nursing and Midwifery in TCD for my survey before being able to proceed with the study. I will also require access to Qualtrics to conduct the survey, which my supervisor can provide.



Bibliography

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2. Health Service Executive(HSE), About Long-term conditions. Accessed:
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3. Health Service Executive (HSE), May 2021. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the societal restrictions on the health and wellbeing of the population, on our staff and on health service capacity and delivery.
Accessed:<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/COVID-19-qi-learning/qi-resources-to-support-learning-from-COVID19/COVID-19-pandemic-impact-paper-2021.pdf>
4. Byravan and Sunmboye, April 2021, The Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on Outpatient Services - An Analysis of Patient Feedback of Virtual Outpatient Clinics in a Tertiary Teaching Center with a Focus on Musculoskeletal and Rheumatology Services.
Accessed: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/23743735211008284>
5. Ramaswamy et al, September 2020. Patient Satisfaction With Telemedicine During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Retrospective Cohort Study. Accessed:
<https://www.jmir.org/2020/9/e20786/authors>
6. Diabetes Ireland, January 2022. Diabetes Prevalence in Ireland. Accessed:
<https://www.diabetes.ie/about-us/diabetes-in-ireland/>
7. Arthritis Ireland, Newly diagnosed. Accessed: <https://www.arthritisireland.ie/newly-diagnosed>
8. Asthma Society of Ireland, 2019. Asthma Facts and Figures. Accessed:
<https://www.asthma.ie/get-help/resources/facts-figures-asthma>
9. Diabetes Ireland, Getting Involved in Research Studies. Accessed:
<https://www.diabetes.ie/research/what-is-research/dira/all-research-studies-in-ireland/>



Appendix

- a) I spoke with CEO of the Asthma Society of Ireland, Sarah O'Connor on Tuesday 1st February 2022 at 11:30am who shared the information with Eilis Ní Chaithnía, the Advocacy and Research Manager of the Asthma Society of Ireland. She said that once I have ethical approval from TCD and she has reviewed the content of the survey she would be happy to share the survey on social media and circulate it to members of the Asthma Society of Ireland as it is something she has done in the past.
- b) Following a phone conversation with Diabetes Ireland on Monday 31st January 2022 at 3:50pm, I was informed that once I receive ethical approval from TCD, their research team will review my survey and then once they are happy they will advertise it on the research section of the Diabetes Ireland ^[9] website and social media.
- c) Following a phone conversation and email with Peter Boyd, who works in Arthritis Ireland on Tuesday 1st February 2022 I received the following email:

Dear Sinead,

Thank you very much for putting everything in writing for me.

I am not in a position to give the full and definite go ahead to your project, it would have to be run past our team. However, if you have ethical approval and a clear description of what the survey will entail, sharing a survey on social media/online is something we've done before.

If you could forward all the documentation (ethical approval, study information sheet, wording/graphic for online advertising etc) whenever you have it compiled, I'll be able to bring it to our team and see when we can fit it into the social media schedule.

It sounds like a very interesting study, so good luck with gathering all the documentation.

Kind regards,

Peter



| Leadership-in-Action experience proposal (500 words max.) | |
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| LiA Category | Category B: Leadership Placement |
| <p>Barretstown is a fantastic charity, whose mission is to rebuild lives affected by childhood illnesses.</p> <p>^[1] My life changed forever when I was privileged to spend many summers as a camper in Barretstown. The opportunity to have fun and simply be a child in an environment surrounded by children all experiencing illnesses transformed me and gave me the confidence to live my life and know that I can do anything I want to do. I feel that while Crumlin hospital saved my life, Barretstown gave me my life back. I am forever indebted and there is nothing I am more inspired to do for my Leadership-in-Action project than to play a role in helping another child experience the magic of a SeriousFun Camp and have the opportunity to have their life changed too.</p> <p>The first objective of my leadership in action project is to learn social and cultural awareness skills through volunteering at a summer session for two weeks at The Hole In The Wall Gang Camp in Ashford, Connecticut, USA^[2]. I hope to build connections at this camp and explore a new culture. Volunteering at an international camp will equip me with excellent cultural intelligence and push me out of my comfort zone. I hope to apply leadership skills such as teamwork and communication in a challenging and unfamiliar setting beyond Barretstown to make a meaningful impact.</p> <p>The second objective of my leadership in action project is to put my leadership skills developed throughout the Laidlaw Programme into action by volunteering for four weeks in Barretstown. A piece of my heart will forever be in Barretstown through the magical memories I made there. To have the opportunity to work alongside the programme development team, to take initiative and collaborate and assist in the preparation of the Camper Leadership Programme in particular would be a dream come true.</p> <p>I would like to create a strategy to improve the Camper Leadership Programme and lead the campers in new activities. I have many initiatives that I feel would greatly enhance the programme. For example, I believe introducing guest speakers such as Ellen Keane who has a disability, to give a workshop to the campers would enhance the experience. I would have loved to have heard from successful people who despite their illness and disabilities were able to achieve tremendous success. I plan to lead new initiatives, communicate with other volunteers and lead campers in activities.</p> | |



My hope from the Leadership-in-Action experience is to develop new skills and values. I hope to develop my communication, empathy, creativity, collaboration, leadership, self-knowledge and awareness skills through volunteering internationally and leading my own initiatives in Barretstown. I would also like to put into practice the skills I will develop throughout the Laidlaw programme to make meaningful contributions to the charity that changed my life. If I can play even a small role in improving the life of a child affected by a serious illness, then that would mean the world to me.

Bibliography

1. <https://www.barretstown.org/families-and-campers/teens/camper-leadership-programme/>
2. <https://www.holeinthewallgang.org/programs/>