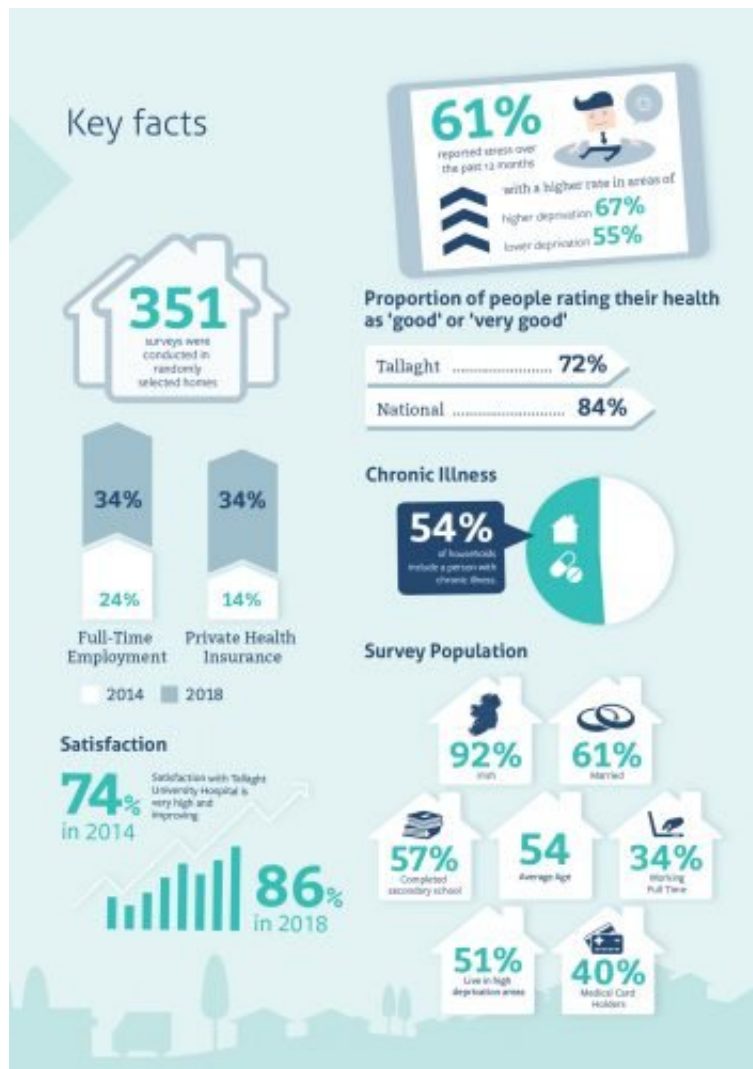


Study reveals high levels of stress across Tallaght community

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Credit: Trinity College Dublin

A new report, co-authored by Trinity academics, highlights increased levels of public satisfaction with the services at Tallaght University Hospital but that a lack of mental health services is leading to increasing levels of stress and psychological ill health—particularly in deprived areas.

Commissioned by the Meath Foundation and presented at the annual Meath Research Symposium at Tallaght University Hospital, the study, *Physical and Mental Health in Post-Recession Ireland: A Community Study from Tallaght, Dublin*, surveyed over 350 homes and found carer burden to be the single largest factor impacting on wellbeing in the area.

Despite improved employment levels generally, 66% of people in deprived areas experienced stress over the last 12 months compared to just over 55% in less deprived areas. It also found that people with less stress were more likely to own private [health](#) insurance, be better educated and were less likely to be living with a person with a chronic illness or disability. However, over half of households surveyed (54%) included a person with a chronic illness. Better physical and mental health are both significantly associated with not living with a person with chronic illness.

One of the report authors Consultant Psychiatrist at TUH, and Professor of Psychiatry at Trinity, Brendan Kelly, says it is evident that despite several years of economic recovery, its benefits have yet to be felt in deprived areas of Tallaght.

Professor Kelly said: "The economic recovery has done little to improve mental health here and this is taking its toll on those in greatest need. For example – it impacts two-thirds of the population living in the deprived communities of Tallaght where people have less education, don't own health insurance and are more likely to be living with the burden of a person with a chronic illness or disability. There is a clear case for

strengthening community and hospital mental health services and for other social care interventions to address the very real challenges these most vulnerable communities endure in their everyday lives."

Of the households surveyed 52% included at least one person who had used Tallaght University Hospital for tests or treatment over the past year. The vast majority (86%) were satisfied with the Hospital compared to 74% in 2014.

In their conclusions, the report authors say there is a compelling need for universal access to high quality [mental health](#) services in primary care (GP) and secondary care ([hospital](#) and specialist clinics) in all communities. It also recommends the development of health and social policies aimed at increasing population wellbeing and which focus on alleviating stress and carer burden, especially in deprived areas. It also calls for future research into other potential contributory factors such as drug misuse as well as the positive role of community resources in supporting wellbeing and improving population health.

Meanwhile, over €330,000 in [research grants](#) were also announced as part of the annual Meath Foundation Symposium held at Tallaght University Hospital.

The event heard a variety of presentations from Consultant Geriatrician, and Professor in Medical Gerontology at Trinity, Des O'Neill, on the design of dementia-friendly Irish hospitals; Meath Foundation Fellow, Marie Mc Cathy on enabling career progression for young people with intellectual disabilities; and a paper presented by Clinical Nurse Manager, Fiona O Donoghue, on the provision of an equal standard of healthcare for deaf people in the Hospital Emergency Department.

Meath Foundation Chair, Mairéad Shields, said: "The Foundation is going from strength to strength: over the past 17 years, the Meath

Foundation has awarded over 98 research grants, totalling over €4.3M. For almost two decades this [annual event](#) has proven itself as a platform to showcase the wide-ranging research funded by the Foundation and undertaken at Tallaght University Hospital. It is also a great opportunity to present annual awards to staff and students whose work has made a positive impact on or indeed the potential to improve, patient care. We are very grateful to the great line-up of speakers joining us today."

Deputy CEO of Tallaght University Hospital and Interim Director of QSRM, Lucy Nugent, said: "The Annual Meath Foundation Research Symposium brings to life the Hospital's ethos of "People Caring for People". We have a proud tradition of research at TUH in line with our status as a teaching Hospital. The level of professional expertise applied to the wide variety of topics reflects the depth of commitment that exists across our clinical staff, who constantly strive to learn, develop and enhance services for our patients and those living in the wider community. Long may it continue."

More information: The report is available online:
www.tuh.ie/News/Physical-and-Mental-Health-Symposium-Ireland-.pdf

Provided by Trinity College Dublin

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