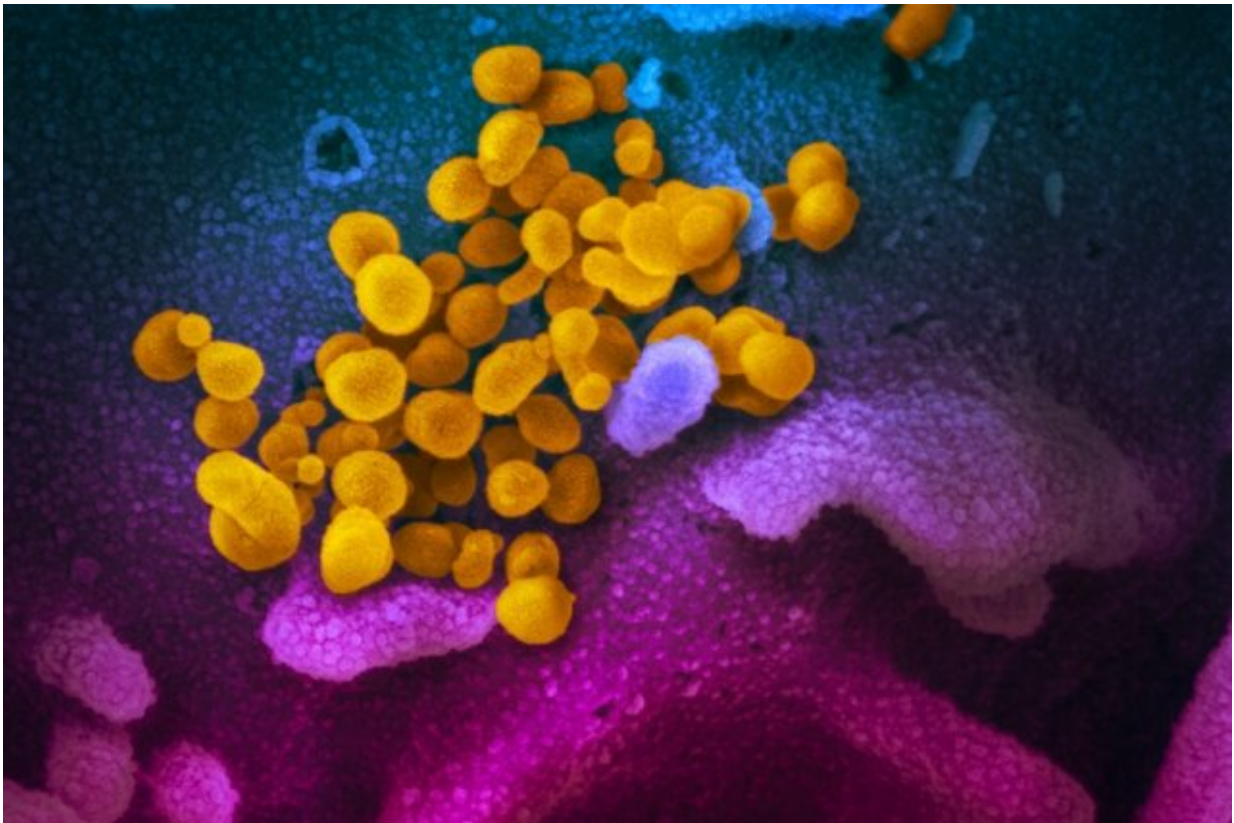


Who has been infected with COVID-19 and why?

June 9 2020



This scanning electron microscope image shows SARS-CoV-2 (yellow)—also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes COVID-19—isolated from a patient, emerging from the surface of cells (blue/pink) cultured in the lab. Credit: NIAID-RML

A research project at Trinity is finding out who has been infected with

COVID-19 amongst our older population, and more importantly why.

Researchers are measuring virus specific antibody levels and exploring what [risk factors](#) are associated with the [disease](#), including analysing how the [immune system](#) has been utilised by this group.

Lead researcher, Dr. Nollaig Bourke, Assistant Professor in Medical Gerontology and her team from the School of Medicine and the Trinity Translational Medical Institute (TTMI) are investigating the 'who' and 'why' of COVID-19 in older people in Ireland. They will investigate which participants of the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) were infected with the disease.

Dr. Bourke's research has been funded by the recent 'COVID-19 Rapid Response Call' research initiative by the Health Research Board and the Irish Research Council.

Dr. Nollaig Bourke said:

"Older people in Ireland have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, so it is really important that we have accurate national rates of infection in this population (including [asymptomatic individuals](#)).

"It is also very important that we understand who got sick and why, so by doing our proposed in-depth research into risk factors associated with COVID-19 disease in older people in Ireland, including detailed analysis of their immune system, we will potentially be able to explain why someone might be more likely to experience severe COVID-19 disease. This would potentially help us identify high risk individuals, as well as reveal what parts of the immune system would be best to target therapeutically in individuals. "

Provided by Trinity College Dublin

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