Welcome to the second issue of NILS News which keeps you up-to-date about the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS) and the related Northern Ireland Mortality Study (NIMS)—including details on news, events and publications.

News

NILS Research Support Unit launched

The NILS Research Support Unit (NILS-RSU), which is funded by the ESRC Census Programme, was officially launched on the 4th June 2009 by Prof. Dave Martin (ESRC), Dr. Dermot O'Reilly (QUB) and Dr. David Marshall (NISRA). It is a new unit within the Centre of Public Health in Queen's University, Belfast aiming to provide user support for the NI Longitudinal Study (NILS), which is maintained by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The core objective of the unit is to provide an expert support service to research users of NILS from the academic and public sectors and to promote NILS within the broad umbrella of the ESRC Census Programme and NI policy community. It is intended that the Research Support Unit will promote the research potential of the NILS and will provide leadership and strategic direction in the future development of NILS and other UK longitudinal studies.

Further information can be obtained from the RSU website (www.qub.ac.uk/nils).

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RSU launch: Dr David Marshall (NISRA), Prof. Dave Martin (ESRC, University of Southampton), Dr Dermot O’Reilly (QUB)
New NILS research application forms

In response to feedback from the members of the NILS Research Approvals Group (RAG), the NILS Team have amended the documentation which must be completed by researchers seeking access to NILS data. These forms have been revised to ensure that sufficient information is collected from researchers to enable potential projects to be assessed fully and appropriately. It is expected that this will help to create a more streamlined research approvals process, which will assist researchers in ensuring that their applications meet the criteria for approval.

Update of births and deaths data on NILS/NIMS

The NILS datasets were recently updated to include births data to NILS mothers up to the end of 2007. The NIMS has been updated with deaths data to the end of 2007. Further data releases will be made after Christmas.

New Projects

Since the last edition of NILS News, six projects have been approved by the NILS Research Approvals Group (RAG). A list of the projects, and their lead researchers, is given below:

1. The retirement transition and the Celtic fringe: Mobility trends and migrant and rural community well-being, Dr Aileen Stockdale.

2. An exploratory analysis of adolescent dental health and use of dental care services in Northern Ireland, Ms Claire Telford.

3. The use of house value (as defined by rateable value) as an indicator of cumulative wealth in older people: a study using the Northern Ireland Mortality Study (NIMS), Dr Sheelah Connolly.

4. DHSSPS equality assessment of health outcomes using NILS, Mr Bill Stewart.

5. Variation in morbidity and mortality by country of birth in Northern Ireland, Dr Sheelah Connolly.
6. A study of the socio-demographic and socio-economic factors related to risk of avoidable and preventable deaths in Northern Ireland, Dr Michael Donnelly.

Events

Past

- **April 2009:**
  Harriet Young (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) made a presentation to the Census Workshop: Health and Ethnicity (16th April 2009), entitled “Integrated analysis of the England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland Longitudinal Studies: Health and Mortality as a case study”. This presentation was based on research which analysed the association between self-reported health and long-term illness in the 2001 census and subsequent mortality in all three longitudinal studies.

- **May 2009:**
  A variation of the above presentation was given to conferences held by the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) & British Society for Population Studies (BSPS), on 13th May 2009 and 14th May 2009, respectively.

Dr Dermot O'Reilly (QUB) also gave a presentation on “Reinvigorating your data with some contextual colour”, to the BSPS day conference on 14th May 2009.

Dr Ian Shuttleworth (Queens University, Belfast) gave two presentations at the 5th International Conference on Population Geography, Dartmouth College on 6-9th August 2009. They were ‘Post-2001 Geographies of Internal Migration in Northern Ireland: Insights from the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study’ and ‘Tilting the Balance? Population Redistribution through Internal Migration in Northern Ireland, 2001-2007’.

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- **September 2009:**
  Heather Kinnear (Queens University, Belfast) presented findings from her research into 'Linking Northern Ireland Health Services Data to the 2001 Census: An exemplar project to examine variations in the uptake of breast cancer screening' to the Scottish Health Informatics Program (SHIP) conference at The University of St Andrew’s.

  Mark McCann and Heather Kinnear presented posters on their NILS research at the Social Science and Medicine conference held on 9-11 September 2009.

  Dr Dermot O’Reilly gave a presentation entitled “Using the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study to study risk of admission to care homes” to the first CAP/SPARC International Conference on Policy and Aging, in Belfast on 16th-17th September 2009.

  Dr Pat McGregor (University of Ulster) gave two presentations on “Education and the contemporary baby boom: evidence from the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study” at the British Society for Population Studies (BSPS) Conference on 9th-10th September, and in a Workshop on Child Development, NUI Galway on 18th September.

- **October 2009:**
  Michael Rosato made a presentation on the NILS to a group of researchers from the Institute for Nursing Research at the University of Ulster. The presentation received positive feedback, and researchers have formed a group whose intention is to learn more about the NILS with a view to formulating proposals for NILS research. Michael Rosato attended the first meeting of the group and will continue to liaise closely with its members.

- **November 2009:**
  Mark McCann had an article based on NILS research, “A Census-based longitudinal study of variations in survival amongst residents of nursing and residential homes in Northern Ireland”, accepted by *Age and Aging* (Vol. 38, Nov 2009) for publication.

  Dr Ian Shuttleworth (Queens University, Belfast) has delivered an updated version of his presentation, first given at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire in August 2009, to both QUB and NUI Galway. He gave the
presentation to the Department of Geography at NUI Galway on 12th November, and to the School of Geography at QUB on 18th November.

**Future**

- **November 2009:**
  Three presentations on NILS analyses will be given at the European Public Heath Association Conference (EUPHA) on 25 to 28 November 2009 in Lodz, Poland. They are: ‘Older people’s living arrangements and risk of admission to a care home in Northern Ireland’; ‘Does being an informal carer deter women from attending for breast cancer screening?’; and ‘Community polarisation in Northern Ireland: an examination of health outcomes’.

- **User Forum Seminar Series:**
  Dr Pat McGregor (University of Ulster, Jordanstown), in his capacity as Chair of the NILS User forum, is planning a series of four seminars to increase understanding of the potential of the NILS. The seminars aim to bring together researchers, data providers, NISRA staff who administer the NILS, and outside reviewers to facilitate increased understanding of the composition of the NILS, its functions and potential for future projects. The seminars will cover the following four topics - List Inflation and Imputation, Births, Deaths, and Migration. Anyone interested in attending one of these seminars can call Dr McGregor on +44 (0)28 9036 8028, or email him at ppl.mcgregor@ulster.ac.uk

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Recent Publications

1. **Pervasive area poverty: Modelled household income in a NILS context.** *OFMDFM*
   
   Alan McClelland, David Donnelly
   

   
   O'Reilly D, Connolly S, Rosato M, Patterson C.
   

   
   Mark McCann
   
   [http://ageing.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/38/6/711](http://ageing.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/38/6/711)

Feedback

The NILS News will be produced twice a year and sent to our mailing list and put on the NILS website.

We would be pleased to receive feedback from you about the content, with any offers of contributions or requests for information you would like to be covered in future issues.

Please send any comments or offers of contributions and dates of relevant meetings to [nils-rsu@qub.ac.uk](mailto:nils-rsu@qub.ac.uk)