Researchers at NUI Galway collaborate on global COVID-19 awareness and responses study

Researchers in the Health Behaviour Change Research Group at the School of Psychology in NUI Galway are collaborating with a team of over 100 behavioural scientists from more than 20 countries around the world on the International Covid-19 Awareness and Responses Evaluation (i-CARE) Study. The international survey assesses people’s awareness, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours in response to the various measures put in place to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 across the world.

The study has been endorsed by the Behavioural Change Subgroup who are advising the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHT) COVID-19. Data from the study will be fed back to the Behavioural Change Subgroup by Professor Molly Byrne, Director of the Health Behaviour Change Research Group at NUI Galway, and a member of the Subgroup. The findings of this study will be used to inform current responses nationally and globally for tackling COVID-19.

The research team plan four waves of pushes for the global survey, which is open now, and hope to reach 100,000 respondents each time. The push will take place every four weeks, with the researchers making new data analyses openly available every two weeks.

This study is being coordinated by the Montreal Behavioural Medicine Centre by Professors Kim Lavoie and Simon Bacon, who work closely with the Health Behaviour Change Research Group.

Professor Molly Byrne said: “The COVID-19 pandemic is the most significant public health threat many of us will experience. As countries around the world struggle to manage this deadly virus, governments must develop public health strategies to ensure that people follow challenging preventive actions, such as self isolation at home, social distancing, responding to symptoms, hand hygiene and coughing etiquette. The global response to COVID-19 has resulted in exceptionally high levels of international collaboration, as the world comes together to tackle this global threat. The iCARE study focusing on the public response to national strategies is an excellent example of what can be achieved when scientists around the world collaborate. The findings will be used to inform the response to COVID-19, at both a national and global level.”

Co-Director of the study, Professor Kim Lavoie, said: “This study will provide us with ongoing information about how people are responding to government messages and strategies and what can be achieved when scientists around the world work together. This range of opinions that will create a clearer understanding of global attitudes toward the pandemic.”

“This is critically important because different countries are at different stages of outbreak and are deploying different policies,” he says. “To be able to really understand what is working and what is not working requires us to capture as broad a cross section of the world as possible. This range of answers will let us compare different policies across the globe.”

To complete and share the survey visit bit.ly/icarestudy.

For further information on the study email covid19study@mbmc-cmcm.ca or contact Professor Molly Byrne at molly.byrne@nuigalway.ie

When a University Hospital Galway (UHG)/Health Service Executive call went out recently for PPE donations, Merit Medical Galway found a way to ensure they were delivered and greatly welcomed by Deirdre Killeen, Senior Support Services Officer/Registered Nurse. Well done to Rafal Chorzyński, Patricia McHugh and Avril O’Higgins for making this happen.