

# IDS-TILDA Newsletter

SUMMER 2025



## *Greetings*

**from Prof. Mary McCarron  
and the IDS-TILDA Team**



We are delighted to send you our IDS-TILDA summer 2025 newsletter. As you will see, the IDS-TILDA team here at the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability has been as busy as ever. We hope you enjoy reading about all our activities.

We have been especially busy getting ready for Wave 6 of IDS-TILDA. Over the coming months a researcher will phone you to arrange a time for your interview. A nurse will also contact you to arrange a Health Fair appointment. We hope that as many of you as possible will continue being part of the IDS-TILDA study. We need to talk to many people with an intellectual disability, so we know what their lives are like as they grow older.

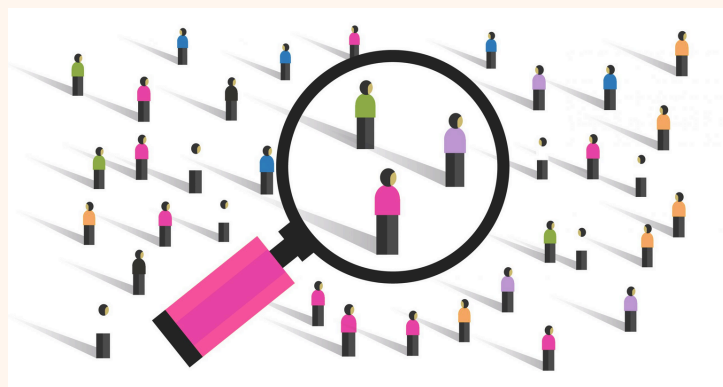
As always, your involvement has been central to the ongoing success of IDS-TILDA. A big thank you to all our participants and to family members and support staff who give their time so generously. Your support has been so important to the success of IDS-TILDA and we thank you for your ongoing commitment to our study.

We hope you enjoy the rest of the summer and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

## *IDS-TILDA IS LOOKING FOR NEW PARTICIPANTS*

We have had a terrific response to the Wave 6 IDS-TILDA recruitment drive and will be continuing recruitment a bit longer. So please encourage your friends to take part. We are looking in particular for people with mild to moderate intellectual disability who are aged between 40 and 49.

If you have any questions about joining the IDS-TILDA study, please contact the IDS-TILDA Assistant Project Manager, **Ms. Jean Moynihan**, at **086 19279171** or email: [MOYNIHJE@tcd.ie](mailto:MOYNIHJE@tcd.ie)



## EXCITING NEW IDS-TILDA HEALTH MEASURES

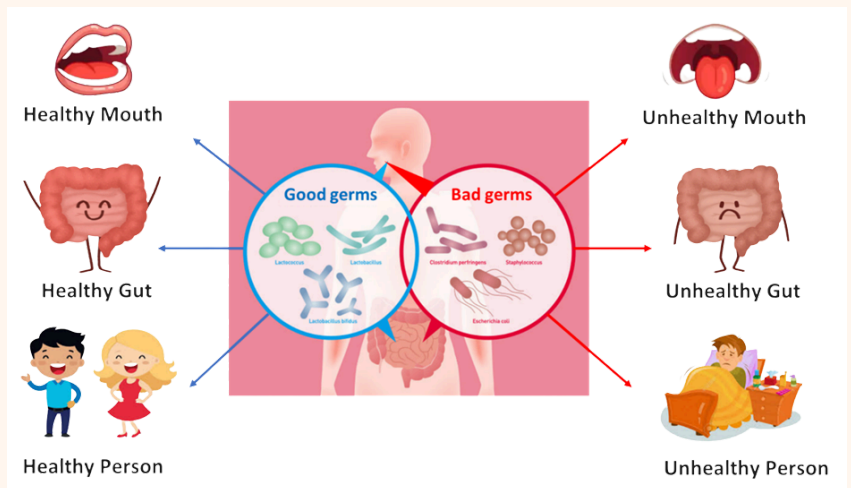
IDS-TILDA is introducing some exciting new health measures as part of Wave 6. These are to check on the mouth and gut health of our participants as this can tell a lot about overall wellbeing. Our mouth and gut contain lots of germs. Most of these are good germs that help us digest our food and medications. The germs found in our mouths are called the oral microbiome and the germs found in our gut are called the gut microbiome. However, as we get older the types of germs that live in our mouths and in our gut can change.

These changes may cause tooth decay, infections, indigestion, constipation, obesity and diabetes. They can also affect mood and mental health.

IDS-TILDA would like to study microbiomes and health in people with intellectual disability. To do this we will be asking for your help during Wave 6 please.

Before your interview, our field researchers will tell you more about how gut microbiome samples are collected and will invite you to take part. If you wish to take part, they will send you a sampling kit which you will use to collect a small poo sample at home. The poo sample will be the size of a pea. This will be put into a special tube and envelopes, for posting back to IDS-TILDA. We will also ask you to complete a short questionnaire to send back to us.

During the Wave 6 Health Fair, we will collect oral microbiome samples using swabs on the tongue and teeth. There will be a short questionnaire with this as well. We will then use these samples to investigate the relationships between the microbiomes and important health outcomes.



*Changes to the balance of good and bad germs (microbes) in our mouth and gut impacts overall health and wellbeing.*

## PROFESSOR MCCARRON HONOURED BY THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

We recently saw the unveiling of a new portrait of Professor Mary McCarron to mark her previous position as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Trinity College. Professor McCarron served two terms as Dean between 2012 and 2019. She was the first woman and first nurse to hold such a prestigious role at the University.



*Professor Mary McCarron honoured with portrait for her work as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences*



Professor McCarron was also presented with the inaugural Dean's Award for Distinguished Service to Health Sciences. This was in recognition of her exceptional contribution to Health Sciences during the course of her professional career. In addition to her service as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor McCarron has held other significant roles at Trinity College where she is Professor of Ageing and Intellectual Disability, Director of the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability (TCAID), Executive Director of the National Intellectual Disability Memory Service, and formerly was Director of Research and Head of the School of Nursing & Midwifery.



*Prof Linda Hogan, Prof Mary McCarron and Prof Brian O'Connell.*

As founder and Principal Investigator of IDS-TILDA, the world's first longitudinal study focused on ageing in individuals with intellectual disabilities, Professor McCarron has significantly advanced clinical knowledge, influenced health policy, and helped establish the field in Ireland.

## ***BREAKING BARRIERS: ENHANCING CANCER CARE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES***



*Prof Damien Brennan, Prof Brian O'Connell, Minister Hildegard Naughton, Mei Lin Yap, Dr Martin McMahon and Prof Mary McCarron.*

The TCAID team, led by Dr Martin McMahon, recently proudly hosted Breaking Barriers: Enhancing Cancer Care for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities — the first conference of its kind in Ireland and internationally. This landmark event focused on the urgent, under-researched area of cancer among people with intellectual disability, highlighting the significant health inequalities faced by this population.

The conference brought together over 200 participants, including people with intellectual disabilities, families, carers, healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers, and advocacy groups. We were honoured to welcome Minister Hildegard Naughton, Minister of State at the Department of Children, Disability and Equality with responsibility for disability, and Professor Brian O'Connell, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Trinity, who opened the event with inspiring and thoughtful remarks.

A unique and important feature of the day were the accessible summaries delivered following each expert presentation. These were presented by PPI advocates, Ms. Mei Lin Yap and Ms. Shannon O'Farrell Molloy, who translated each presentation into an accessible format, ensuring that everyone in the room could understand and connect with the information shared.



## FOCUS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH



Our Wave 5 findings showed that the health of women with intellectual disability is particularly poor. Following this, women's health has been a priority for IDS-TILDA led by Prof Eilish Burke and PhD student, Ms Stephanie Corrigan. We have held a number of events to share research findings and raise awareness amongst women themselves, their carers, support workers, healthcare providers and other researchers. Our ultimate aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of women with intellectual disabilities. These are a couple of the events we have held.

### *Women's Health and Wellbeing Activity Class*

We marked International Day of Action for Women's Health 2025 with a special women's health and wellbeing activity class. The ladies from Stewarts Care, Avista and St Michael's House were put through their paces by the fantastic instructors who brought great energy, encouragement, and enthusiasm to the session. At the end of the class, each participant was presented with a certificate of participation and a goodie bag as a small token of recognition for their involvement and spirit. It was a joy to come together to celebrate and promote women's health and wellbeing in such an inclusive and uplifting way.



### *Prosper Meath and Prosper Fingal Women's Health Day*



*Prof Eilish Burke and Ms Stephanie Corrigan with attendees at the women's health event*

In February, TCAID ran a women's health event in the City North Hotel for women with intellectual disabilities and their support workers from Prosper Fingal and Meath services. This event consisted of presentations led by Professor Eilish Burke and PhD student, Ms Stephanie Corrigan, on topics related to women's health such as physical and mental health, behavioural health and menopause. Videos and accessible summaries were also used to ensure the event was relevant to all in attendance. The event resulted in an enthusiastic, inspired conversation about women's health which was led by the women with intellectual disabilities in attendance. This event truly showed the importance of talking about women's health in a safe, supportive environment and having the confidence to continue the conversation beyond events like these.

**You can reach the IDS-TILDA Team at:**

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