



Embargo: 1.00 am, Monday, 10 October 2016

Over one-third of 15-24 year olds drink sugar sweetened drinks most days of week or daily

Young people, males and those from lower socio-economic groups are most frequent consumers of sugar-sweetened drinks (SSDs) across island of Ireland

An all-island conference to be hosted by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH) will hear tomorrow, World Obesity Day (Tuesday, 11 October 2016), that 36% of 15-24 year olds in the Republic of Ireland are drinking sugar sweetened drinks (SSDs) most days of the week or daily.

These data will be contained in a presentation, *A spoonful of sugar* to be presented by IPH's Drs Joanna Purdy and Noelle Cotter at IPH's fifth annual Open Conference.

This year's conference will be held in Belfast's Titanic Quarter and will be opened by the Northern Ireland Minister for Health, Michelle O'Neill MLA and the keynote address will be given by Dr Fiona Sim, Chair of the Royal Society of Public Health on "*The role of the arts and creativity in public health*".

Drs Joanna Purdy and Noelle Cotter will indicate that the 2015 *Healthy Ireland Survey* reveals some important evidence about SSD consumption in the Republic of Ireland:

- Over one-third of 15-24 year olds, and over one quarter of 25-44 year olds, drink SSDs at least once a day or most days of the week;
- 58% of all those aged 15 and over consume SSDs, and over a fifth consume SSDs most days of the week or daily;
- 86% of 15-24 year olds and 68% of 25-44 year olds drink SSDs.

Drs Purdy and Cotter will note that, "in the context of World Obesity Day's focus on overcoming childhood obesity, one in four children across the island of Ireland are overweight or obese."

IPH's analysis of data provided for 13 year olds in *Growing Up in Ireland* (2011) reveals high levels of SSD consumption:

- Almost half of 13 year olds (47%) consumed SSDs in the previous 24 hours – 53% of boys and 42% of girls;
- While 18% consumed SSDs more than once during that period.

Drs Joanna Purdy and Noelle Cotter will indicate to the Open Conference that the Revenue Commissioners estimate that in 2014, 411.3 million litres of SSDs were sold in Ireland.

“World Health Organization guidelines state that free sugars should comprise less than 10% of our daily energy intake with reductions below 5% (approximately 6 teaspoons) per day would provide additional health benefits. Consuming one 330 millilitre can of SSD could take a child over their recommended daily sugar intake.”

Notes to Editors

Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH)

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland is an all-island body which supports cooperation on public health North and South to promote collective action for sustained improvements in health with a particular focus on addressing health inequalities.

All-Island Open Conference

IPH’s annual Open Conference provides a platform to highlight how effective public health interventions can make significant positive difference to the lives of individuals and to the type of society we live in. It provides an important all-island forum to showcase public health research and opportunities for key players including practitioners, policy makers and the community and voluntary sector to exchange ideas that can help create a healthier population.

Nineteen papers will be presented at tomorrow’s Open Conference – which will focus on the theme “*Breaking down boundaries – innovation, participation and creativity in public health*” – on a range of public health issues such as:

- Tackling poverty and inequality across the life cycle – innovative practices and interventions in the context of the delivery of programmes or services relevant to public health.
- Connecting evidence with public health policy – novel approaches with an emphasis on engagement, participation and multidisciplinary collaboration.
- How healthy are we? – research, policy and the creative arts as tools for advancing the public’s health.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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