

R-001 - Early Life Factors and Mental Health in adulthood – QUB

The proposed study is part of a wider program of research outlined within Phase II of the Centre of Excellence in Public Health Research to identify and investigate the mediators, modifiers and developmental sequences in the occurrence of mental illness over different stages of the life course.

The current short proposed study will investigate the incompletely understood relationship between early life factors and poor mental health in NI; the specific research questions are:

1. To determine if early life factors such as low birth weight and gestational age influence the likelihood of poor mental health in later life;
2. To determine if risk of poor mental health is influenced by socio-economic position throughout the life-course.

The proposed record linkage study will combine information from the Child Health System (CHS- covering the years 1971-1986 incl.) with the Enhanced Prescribing Database (EPD) database (2008-present). Other patient-level attributes will be derived from the NHAIS database at BSO (which holds the basic demographic data for all patients registered for health care in NI) and will include age and sex, and, based on their residential address, institutional status, house value, as well as the NIMDM deprivation score for the corresponding SOA. The CHS will need to be first matched to the NHAIS to identify the HCN of each patient; this can be achieved using primarily full name (including maiden name), DOB and sex. The presence of mental ill-health will be assumed on the basis of medications prescribed, dispensed and collated in EPD, according to the relevant BNF categories.