Issue 9 October 2026

Recommended Reading

Irish College of GPs Library

Welcome to the October issue of Recommended Reading.
Every month, the library scan resources of interest to General Practice and recommends reports and research articles from reputable sources. Previously published issues are available on our website https://www.irishcollegeofgps.ie/Home/Clinical-Hub/Publications-and-Journals/Evidence-Based-Resources. We welcome any feedback or comments which can be emailed directly to library@icgp.ie.

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College News & Publications

Forum October 2026

Does your patient really need benzos? Drug shortages provide opportunity for review

The GP Podcast

In the latest episode, Dr Eamonn O'Shea, Cardiovascular Clinical Lead, and Dr David McConaghy, Prevention Clinical Lead, discuss the HSE Structured Chronic Disease Management Programme, which launched in 2020.

Recent contributions to medical literature by Irish College of GP's affiliated researchers:

1. **Process evaluation of an Irish Remote Model of Opioid Agonist Treatment with a Focus on Rural Communities: An Embedded Mixed-Methods Study.**
   Heroin Addiction and Related Clinical Problems: 2026, 28: 37-48.
   College Affiliation: Dr Des Crowley; Prof Claire Collins.
   Read Article

2. **Epidemiology, multimorbidity patterns and outcomes of paediatric sepsis admissions in Ireland 2020-2025.**
   Eur J Pediatr. 2026 Sep 19;185(10):767. doi: 10.1007/s00431-026-07438-9.
   College Affiliation: Dr Andrea Fitzgerald; Dr Diarmuid Quinlan; Dr Ellen Hayes.
   Read Article

3. **Delivering a primary care intervention to reduce frailty and improve resilience in people experiencing homelessness: a pilot feasibility study.**
   BJGP Open. 2026 Aug 11:BJGPO.2025.0271. doi: 10.3399/BJGPO.2025.0271. Epub ahead of print.
   College Affiliation: Dr Thomas Cronin
   Read Article

GPs In the News: What's making headlines?

- **Irish Examiner, 18 September 2026**
  Rural Ireland Thinks: Access to health services tops concerns for people living in countryside
- **Irish Times, 23 September 2026**
  Oireachtas committee to hear no clinical reason for retaining three-day abortion wait
- **Irish Times, 24 September 2026**
  Doctor AI will see you now – but you may want a second opinion
- **Irish Times, 30 September 2026**
  Removing three-day wait would lead to rise in 'already massive' number of abortions, GP says
- **Irish Times, 5 October 2026**
  'I decided to take a leap of faith': Largest ever number of GPs graduate
- **Irish Times, 10 October 2026**
  'It is labour intensive but vital work': An island-hopping GP on the west coast
- **The Medical Independent, 13 October 2026**
  No intake into military medicine training programme this year

Latest from the Department of Health

Press Release, 22 September
Minister Butler welcomes Interim Report from Specialist Group established to develop Traveller Mental Health Action Plan

An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

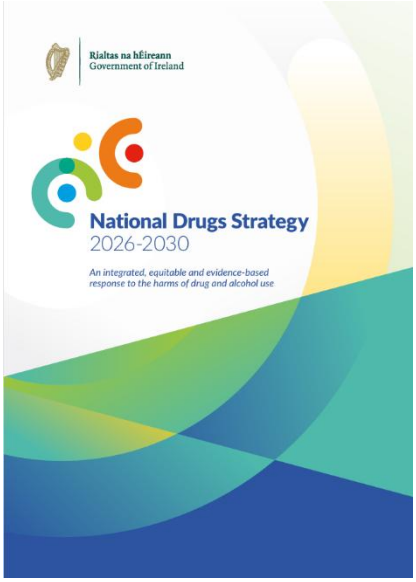
Press Release, 7 October
Budget 2027 delivers €29.1 billion for health services as Government continues investment in more care, closer to home

Press Release, 8 October
[Minister for Health encourages public to check eligibility and apply for a Free GP Visit Card]

Press Release, 10 October
[Minister Butler marks World Mental Health Day 2026 by announcing €11 million investment in early intervention, youth mental health and talk therapies]

Press Release, 13 October
[Ministers for Health publish new National Drugs Strategy 2026–2030]

Key Health Reports



National Drugs Strategy 2026-2030
The National Drugs Strategy 2026-2030 adopts a health-led, evidence-based approach to reducing the harms of drug and alcohol use, with a strong emphasis on prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery and social integration. It prioritises equitable access to services across regions and population groups, including women and other underserved communities.

Key GP-relevant issues include earlier identification of substance-use problems, referral to addiction and community supports, integrated care for patients with complex needs, expansion of alternatives to criminal sanctions, increased naloxone availability, and closer collaboration between primary care, mental health, social care and addiction services.

Read Report

Budget 2027
Ireland's Budget 2027, announced on 6 October 2026, includes several health and social care measures that are particularly relevant to General Practice.

Budget 2027 contains several measures relevant to general practice, with a continued emphasis on community-based care. Key initiatives include 1.8 million additional Home Support hours for older people, expanded disability services, 33,000 extra counselling hours, and extension of the Free Contraception Scheme to age 37. Increased social welfare payments and a new €500 Cost of Disability payment may positively affect patient wellbeing and health inequalities.

The Irish government's Budget 2027 allocates €7 million for the reform of general practice services, focusing on out-of-hours services and improving access to GP care. This funding aims to build on the progress made under previous GP agreements and enhance the overall sustainability of GP services.

For GPs, the budget reinforces the shift towards managing more care in community settings. However, there are no major announcements on GP workforce expansion or contractual reform, leaving ongoing capacity pressures unresolved.

The Strategic Review of General Practice is expected to be completed by the end of 2026, with recommendations for a new, modern GP contract to be brought forward.

Read More

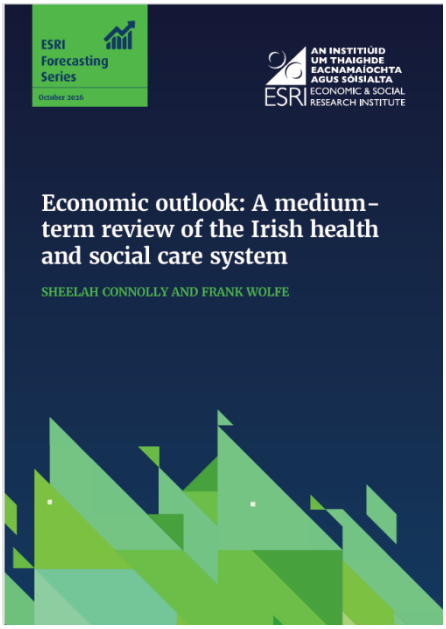
Comparative Policy Analysis for Skin Cancer Prevention in the UK and Ireland

The All Island Institute of Public Health (IPH) has published a new report examining skin cancer prevention policies across the UK and Ireland. Skin cancer remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Northern Ireland - non-melanoma skin cancer accounted for almost 30% of all cancer diagnoses in men and 24% in women between 2018 and 2022.

By 2040, melanoma diagnoses are projected to increase by 149% among men and 82% among women in Northern Ireland.

The new report highlights opportunities to strengthen prevention through coordinated government action, improved research and data, and stronger measures to reduce exposure to artificial UV radiation, including a ban on commercial sunbed use.

Read Report



Economic outlook: A medium-term review of the Irish health and social care system

The Economic outlook: A medium-term review of the Irish health and social care system from the ESRI highlights that Ireland's growing and ageing population will substantially increase demand for health and social care services up to 2040, placing significant pressure on the healthcare workforce, infrastructure and public finances.

Issues particularly relevant to General Practice:

Rising demand in primary care: Population growth and ageing are expected to increase the need for GP services and ongoing management of chronic disease, multimorbidity and frailty in the community.

Workforce pressures: The report identifies workforce shortages as a major challenge for the health system. Recruiting and retaining GPs and general practice nurses will be critical to meeting future demand.

Access and funding challenges: Despite high levels of public spending, many people continue to pay out-of-pocket for primary care, while access problems and waiting times persist across the system. This has implications for equity of access to GP services.

Prevention and population health: The report suggests that improving population health and preventing illness could help reduce future demand for health and social care services. This reinforces the importance of preventive care, screening, risk-factor management and health promotion in general practice.

Digital transformation: Digitalisation, including electronic health records, data sharing and artificial intelligence, is identified as both a challenge and an opportunity for healthcare delivery.

Key takeaway for GPs: The report suggests that a sustainable health system will require greater capacity in community-based care, investment in the primary care workforce, stronger prevention strategies, and better use of digital technologies to manage increasing demand from an older population.

Read Report

Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) Round-up

October 2026 Therapeutics Today

This monthly newsletter is produced by the National Medicines Information Centre (NMIC) who are based in St James's Hospital. Evidence-based information is provided to prescribers to promote the safe, effective and efficient use of medicines.

NMIC Bulletin Vol. 32 No.1: Sodium-glucose co-transporter 2(SGLT2) inhibitors in cardiac and renal disease

With SGLT2 inhibitors now included in clinical guidelines for the management of Heart Failure and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), this bulletin aims to provide an overview of the key considerations needed to ensure their safe and effective use in adults, with a focus on these conditions.

- Initially licensed for the management of type 2 diabetes (T2DM), large placebo-controlled trials have shown cardiovascular and renal benefits of sodium-glucose co-transporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitors.
- In addition to their indication in the management of T2DM, the SGLT2 inhibitors dapagliflozin and empagliflozin are also licensed for the treatment of heart failure and chronic kidney disease.
- SGLT2 inhibitors have been shown to be safe, with urinary tract and fungal genital infections among the most commonly reported adverse effects.

- More serious, but less common adverse effects highly unlikely to affect people without diabetes include ketoacidosis, lower limb amputation and Fournier's gangrene.
- 'Sick day guidance' should be provided to all those on SGLT2 inhibitor therapy, including advice that SGLT2 inhibitors should be held if acutely unwell, especially if at risk of dehydration.

Spotlight on Irish Articles

1. **Characterising pharmacist interventions from person-centred medicines reviews in general practice settings.**
   Kirke et al., *Explor Res Clin Soc Pharm. 2026 Aug 18;24:100833.*
   Read Full Text

2. **Helicobacter pylori eradication treatment dispensing in the Irish General Medical Services population from 2012 to 2022.**
   Dobrić et al., *Int J Clin Pharm. 2026 Sep 27. doi: 10.1007/s11096-026-02229-6.*
   Read Full Text

3. **Follow-up pathways, investigation utilisation, and general practitioner communication following acute medical unit assessment.**
   Abdullah et al., *Ir J Med Sci. 2026 Oct 5. doi: 10.1007/s11845-026-04652-0.*
   Read Full Text

4. **Changes in physical performance and frailty-associated risk associated with participation in a community exercise programme: Findings from the ExWell cohort.**
   O'Shea et al., *J Frailty Aging. 2026 Oct 5;15(5):100199. doi: 10.1016/j.tjfa.2026.100199.*
   Read Full Text

5. **Optimizing respiratory integrated care models in Ireland: insights from PCP feedback on the early days of integrated chronic disease management pathways.**
   O'Brien et al., *Prim Health Care Res Dev. 2026 Oct 7;27:e123. doi: 10.1017/S1463423626101807.*
   Read Full Text

Spotlight on Research Articles

1. **Drivers of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Adoption in Supporting Chronic Disease Management in Primary Care: A Scoping Review.**
   Wang et al, Nurs Rep. 2026 Sep 2;16(9):315. doi: 10.3390/nursrep16090315.
   Read Full Text

2. **Women's Experiences of Recurrent UTIs: A Qualitative Study of Preventive Management and Decision Support Needs.**

Hayes et al., *Health Expect. 2026 Oct;29(5):e70890. doi: 10.1111/hex.70890.*
Read Full Text

3. **'We don't need to check it, but we do check it': a qualitative study of the views of primary care healthcare professionals on blood test monitoring in three long-term conditions.**
O'Donnell et al., BJGP Open. 2026 Oct 6:BJGPO.2026.0075. doi: 10.3399/BJGPO.2026.0075.
Read Full Text

4. **Prioritisation Is Treatment: What Generalists Do When Guidelines Collide.**
Jerjes W, Majeed A. J Gen Intern Med. 2026 Oct 5. doi: 10.1007/s11606-026-10861-1.
Read Full Text

5. **Management of type 2 diabetes, 2026. A consensus report by the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD).**
Davies et al., Diabetologia. 2026 Oct 2. doi: 10.1007/s00125-026-06855-7. Epub ahead of print.
Read Full Text

6. **Strengthening health systems to prioritise, provide care, and prevent osteoarthritis: a roadmap for global health policy.**
Briggs et al., Lancet. 2026 Oct 11:S0140-6736(26)01700-9. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(26)01700-9. Epub ahead of print.
Read Full Text

Top Tip from the Library – Menopause Essentials

The European Menopause and Andropause Society (EMAS) provides guidelines and education on menopause and andropause. These include information on the diagnosis, treatment, and management of symptoms such as hot flashes, sleep disturbances, and sexual dysfunction. They have 60 Menopause Essentials fact sheets, all free to download and easy to understand.

EMAS also offers educational resources for healthcare professionals, including training on menopause management and updates on the latest research findings. The society aims to improve the quality of life for individuals going through menopause and andropause and enhance the knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals caring for them.

Learn more: https://emas-online.org/guidelines-and-education/#emas-menopause-essentials

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