

Recommended Reading



Irish College of GPs Library

Welcome to the November issue of Recommended Reading.

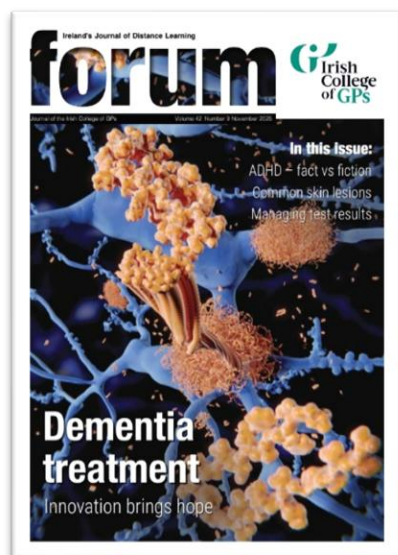
Every month, the library scan resources of interest to General Practice and recommends reports and research articles from reputable sources. Previously published issues are available on our website <https://www.irishcollegeofgps.ie/Home/Clinical-Hub/Publications-and-Journals/Evidence-Based-Resources>.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

Inside this issue:

College News & Publications	GPs In the News	Latest from the Department of Health	Key Health Reports
Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) Round-up	Spotlight on Irish Articles	Spotlight on Research Articles	Top Tip



College News & Publications



Forum November 2025

Dementia Treatment: Innovation brings hope

Atrial Fibrillation General Practice Update (October 2025)

Author: Eamonn O'Shea, Joseph Galvin

The aim of this General Practice Update (GPU) is to provide GPs with a guidance document on Atrial Fibrillation in General Practice which will encompass case-finding, initial diagnosis, appropriate referral pathways and ongoing management of the condition within general practice.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease General Practice Update (October 2025)

Author: Shane McKeogh, Bernard Duggan, Breda Cushen

The aim of this document is to support GPs in the diagnosis and management of COPD in their daily practice. It consists of a summary of guidelines, particularly the Global Initiative for Chronic Lung Disease (GOLD) 2025 report.

Processing of Patient Personal Data: A Guideline for General Practitioners, Version 3.0

Author: Irish College of GPs Data Protection Working Group

The College is publishing an update to its document "Processing of Patient Personal Data: A Guideline

for General Practitioners”, which was originally produced in response to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the subsequent Irish Data Protection Act. The College issued its previous guidance in 2019, and the update reflects maturity in the application of data protection and related legislation. There is also an awareness that the forthcoming Health Information Bill and legislation related to Artificial Intelligence may necessitate further updates; however, it was felt reasonable to issue a reflection of the status quo in 2025

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

1. **Impact of Ireland’s new diagnostic imaging referral pathway.** *Ir J Med Sci.* 2025 Nov 8. doi: 10.1007/s11845-025-04119-8.

College Affiliation: Dr Fintan Stanley (PhD), Data Analyst & Dr Mike O’Callaghan, GP & Clinical lead, Research, Policy & Information Department .

 [Read Article](#)

2. **The acceptability and utility of parental guidance on weight-talk with children for general practitioners.** *BJGP Open.* 2025 Oct 29;BJGPO.2025.0087. doi: 10.3399/BJGPO.2025.0087.

College Affiliation: Dr Billy Twomey, GP.

 [Read Article](#)



Guidance for GPs

Principle-Based Position Statement on the Use of AI in Clinical Decision-Making

The *Medical Council* position statement sets out the core values and considerations that should guide medical professionals in the responsible use of AI in clinical settings. There is also a briefing paper which was researched and written for the purpose of informing the Medical Council on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in medicine in Ireland. While AI can be a valuable tool for assisting clinical decision-making and providing administrative support, it should always complement rather than replace human medical knowledge and expertise. By adhering to good professional practice principles, doctors can ensure that AI contributes to safer, fairer, and more effective care.

 [Read Position Statement](#)

 [Read Briefing Paper](#)

Guidance for Medical and Healthcare Professionals for Completing a Capacity Statement

If someone is completing an Enduring Power of Attorney or Co-Decision-Making Agreement, they will need a statement of capacity to be completed by a doctor or a healthcare professional. The *Decision Support Service (DSS)* has created a sample form for medical and healthcare professionals to record their capacity assessments.

 [Read Guidance](#)

New Acute Respiratory Infections guidance published

The *Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)* have released a comprehensive suite of updated guidance documents and resources on the public health management of Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) in non-healthcare settings. These materials are designed to support public health teams across Ireland with clear, practical recommendations ahead of the Winter Season 2025/2026. These updates are part of a broader effort to streamline respiratory guidance and ensure consistency across settings.

 [Read Guidance](#)

GPs In the News: What's making headlines?

-  **RTE Radio 1 – Today with Claire Byrne, 2 Oct 2025**
[How to age in a positive healthy way](#)
-  **RTE, 18 Oct 2025**
[Group representing rural GPs highlight recruitment issues](#)
-  **Medical Independent, 22 Oct 2025**
[Could it be sepsis?](#)
-  **Medical Independent, 27 Oct 2025**
[Working with AI scribing tools](#)
-  **Irish Times, 13 Nov 2025**
[Tackling issues such as hearing loss and obesity could prevent 100,000 dementia cases here](#)
-  **Irish Medical Times, 17 Nov 2025**
[Ireland on course for cervical cancer elimination by 2040](#)

Latest from the Department of Health

Press Release, 14 Nov 2025

[Minister for Health signs legislation that will enable pharmacists to prescribe for certain common conditions for the first time.](#)



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

Press Release, 22 Oct 2025

[Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy publishes report of consultations to inform the development of the successor national drugs strategy](#)

Press Release, 21 Oct 2025

[Minister Murnane O'Connor launches inaugural Sláintecare Healthy Communities National Conference 2025](#)

Press Release, 18 Oct 2025

[Minister for Health launches Ireland's first National Endometriosis Framework](#)

Key Health Reports



Healthy Ireland Survey 2025

The Healthy Ireland Survey is an annual survey, carried out by IPSOS B&A on behalf of the Department of Health, providing insights into a range of health and lifestyle behaviours. This year's Survey, which included more than 7,500 people aged 15 and over, covered smoking, vaping and alcohol consumption, sleep, health service utilisation, contraception and caring responsibilities. It also includes, for the first time, a module on menopause. The results demonstrate some improvements in the reported good health of the population, and reductions in many harmful health behaviours including binge drinking.

 [Read Report](#)

Highlights:

✓ **High GP Utilisation**

80% of people report visiting a GP in the past 12 months, with an average of 4.1 visits per person, significantly higher than the 71% recorded in 2015. It should also be noted that the population as a whole has risen by approximately 800,000 since 2015 – we have more people in total living in Ireland, and they now visit the GP more often.

✓ **Persistent Smoking Rates & Quit Attempts**

17% of the population are current smokers. Among these, 46% of those who have smoked in the past year attempted to quit, but 67% of those quit attempts were made without any quitting aids.

✓ **Rising E-Cigarette Use, Especially in Young People**

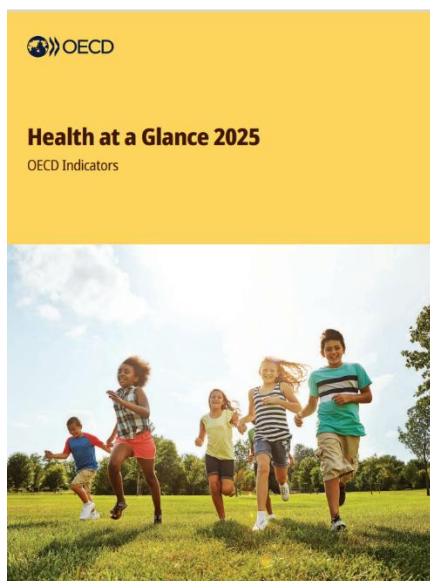
8% of the population currently use e-cigarettes (5% daily, 3% occasionally) and usage is strongly age-skewed: among 15–24-year-olds, 18% report using e-cigarettes daily or occasionally. Also, 50% of e-cigarette users are ex-smokers, but 17% have never smoked.

✓ **Alcohol Use & Harmful Drinking**

71% of people consumed alcohol in the past 12 months (down slightly from 2024), and 26% report binge drinking (six or more standard units on a typical occasion) — down from 28% in 2024 and 30% in 2015. Additionally, 20% of the population are at risk of hazardous or harmful drinking per AUDIT, with men (29%) much more likely than women (11%) to be in that risk group.

✓ **Menopause Symptom Burden and Healthcare Seeking**

For the first time, the survey included a menopause module. Of women who are peri- or post-menopausal, many report significant symptoms: 77% report temperature regulation issues; 66% fatigue; 56% sleep difficulty; 56% mood changes; 53% memory/concentration problems; 51% weight/body shape changes. Moreover, 69% of women in perimenopause sought *medical* support, and among those, 84% went to a GP. Also, of those using HRT, 93% describe it as “very” or “somewhat” effective.



OECD Health at a Glance 2025

Health at a Glance provides a comprehensive set of indicators on population health and health system performance across OECD Members, Key Partners and accession candidate countries. These indicators cover health status, non-medical determinants and health risk factors, access to and quality of healthcare, health spending and health system resources.

 [Read Report](#)

Highlights:

✓ **Person-centredness of Primary Care**

The report uses PaRIS (Patient-Reported Indicator Surveys) data to assess “person-centredness” of primary care: how well primary care

responds to patients' preferences, trust in professionals, and holistic management. This underscores the importance of primary care / GPs not just for medical treatment, but for continuity, coordination, and building trust with patients.

✓ **Avoidable Hospital Admissions as a Signal of Primary Care Performance**

One of the metrics used is hospital admissions for conditions that *could* be largely managed in primary care (asthma, COPD, congestive heart failure, diabetes). Between 2013 and 2023, the OECD average for asthma & COPD admissions fell by 35%, showing improvement in some systems. Ireland's rate of avoidable admissions (545 per 100,000) is above the OECD average (473). This suggests gaps in primary care management of chronic conditions, which often fall under GP responsibility.

✓ **Reliance on Foreign-Trained Physicians**

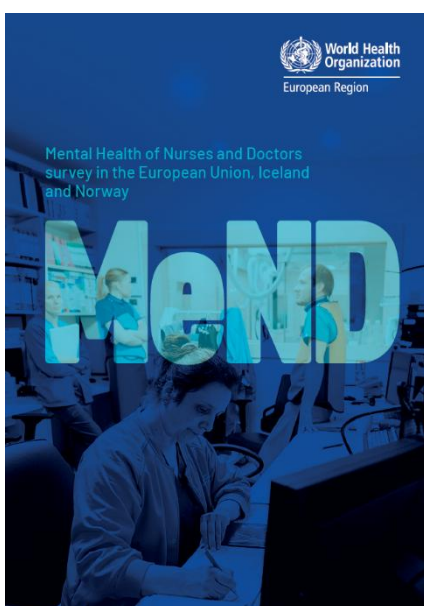
The OECD highlights a growing dependence on internationally trained doctors: in 2023, foreign-trained physicians made up on average 20% of the physician workforce in OECD countries, and in Ireland, that share is particularly high; over 40% of doctors in Ireland are foreign-trained.

✓ **Digital Health and Health Data / EHRs**

There is progress across OECD countries in expanding access to electronic health records (EHRs) and online health services. But Ireland lags in core EHR functionalities: citizens in Ireland have access to fewer than 30% of core EHR features, limiting interoperability across GPs, hospitals, and other care sites.

✓ **Health Workforce and Capital Investment Warnings**

The report flags low capital investment in health infrastructure in some countries; **Ireland** is cited as having “a continued period of low capital investment” in health, which could limit expansion of primary care infrastructure or modernization. In terms of workforce: while Ireland has a relatively high number of nurses, the number of practising doctors per 1,000 is slightly below the OECD average (3.8 vs 3.9) according to the country note. This, combined with reliance on foreign-trained doctors, suggests workforce fragility.



WHO Mental Health of Nurses and Doctors (MeND) Survey

The Mental Health of Nurses and Doctors (MeND) survey, conducted by WHO Regional Office for Europe aimed to explore the mental health, well-being and working conditions of doctors and nurses in the 27 European Union countries plus Iceland and Norway.

The findings indicated a high prevalence of mental health conditions and unsafe working conditions – including violence, extended working hours and shift work – across all studied countries. Unsafe working conditions were associated with poorer mental health; conversely, the presence of workplace supports and protective factors was associated with better mental health. Seven policy actions are listed to support Member States in prioritizing action to improve working conditions and monitor progress.

[!\[\]\(0fb13ad0bfa3d86868cdd3883e5665b3_img.jpg\) Read Report](#)

Key Findings:

- ✓ **High Prevalence of Poor Mental Health among Doctors**
Around **1 in 3 doctors and nurses** reported symptoms of depression or anxiety.
- ✓ **Unsafe Working Conditions Are Closely Linked to Mental Health**
The survey found unsafe working conditions (e.g., violence, long hours, shift work) are strongly associated with poorer mental health.
- ✓ **Thoughts of Self-Harm / Passive Suicidal Ideation Are Non-Negligible**
Approximately **1 in 10 doctors and nurses** reported “passive suicidal thoughts” (e.g., thinking they would be “better off dead” or “hurting themselves”) in the past two weeks.
- ✓ **Precarious Employment and Excessive Working Hours**
About **32% of doctors** are on temporary contracts, which is linked to anxiety about job security. **25% (one in four) of doctors** reported working **more than 50 hours per week**.
- ✓ **Policy Recommendations: 7 Urgent Actions**
The WHO report outlines **seven policy actions** to improve conditions and protect health workers’ mental health. These include: zero-tolerance for violence and harassment; better shift predictability; fair overtime management; tackling excessive workloads; leadership accountability; expanding access to mental health support; and regular monitoring of worker well-being.

Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) Round-up

November 2025 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 Volume 31 Issue No. 1 November 2025: An update on valproate

Key Facts:

- There are known teratogenic and neurodevelopmental risks associated with the maternal use of valproate.
- HPRA pharmacovigilance updates highlight the safety concerns, restrictions and contraindications associated with the prescribing and use of valproate in girls and women of childbearing potential.
- Due to the potential increased risk of neurodevelopmental disorders in children born to men treated with valproate during the three months before conception, the EMA has also recommended precautionary measures for male patients.
- HPRA valproate risk minimisation measures are tailored to the specific responsibilities and roles of each Health Care Professional (HCP).

HSE Patient Safety Supplement: Reducing and managing the risk of choking in adults

This Patient Safety Supplement aims to raise awareness among HSE and HSE funded healthcare services and staff on the occurrence of choking incidents in adults. This supplement will focus on supporting staff to help minimise the risk of choking in adults from food, liquids or medicine and advise staff on how to respond effectively to a choking incident.

EASO Algorithm for the pharmacological treatment of obesity and its complications

The new EASO medication management algorithm provides clinicians with practical guidance on aligning individual patient profiles with the evidence-based effects of available medications. Developed through rigorous analysis of randomised controlled trials and grounded in the new EASO obesity framework, the algorithm offers a simplified, clinically relevant tool to improve obesity management in adults.

Spotlight on Irish Articles

1. Leveraging physical activity data in chronic disease management.

Shabbir & O'Regan. *Ir J Med Sci.* 2025 Nov 10. doi: 10.1007/s11845-025-04151-8.

 [Read Full Text](#)

2. Addressing obesity related self-stigma using inquiry-based stress reduction in the GP setting.

O'Shea et al., *Ir Med J.* 2025 Oct 23;118(9):151.

 [Read Full Text](#)

3. Changes in benzodiazepine, z-drug, and other sedative prescribing in primary care in Ireland between 2014 and 2022.

Mattsson et al., *Fam Pract.* 2025 Oct 21;42(6):cmaf078. doi: 10.1093/fampra/cmaf078.

 [Read Full Text](#)

4. Dementia, more than a diagnosis and drugs: perspectives from primary care on the new therapeutic era for Alzheimer's disease.

Foley et al., *The Lancet Primary Care, Volume 0, Issue 0, 100061.*

 [Read Full Text](#)

5. How prevalent are modifiable dementia risk factors in Ireland?

McGarvey et al., *BMJ Open.* 2025 Nov 11;15(11):e106032. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2025-106032.

 [Read Full Text](#)

Spotlight on Research Articles

1. A systematic review and meta-analysis of the efficacy and safety of pharmacological treatments for obesity in adults.

McGowan et al., *Nat Med.* 2025 Oct;31(10):3317-3329. doi: 10.1038/s41591-025-03978-z.

 [Read Full Text](#)

2. The WHO Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use 6th edition and the WHO Selected Practice Recommendations 4th edition: Special Issue on Evidence that Informed the Update.

BMJ Sex Reprod Health. 2025 Nov 3;51(Suppl 1).

This is a special publication that details the evidence and updates behind the latest versions of WHO's global family planning guidelines. This special issue, which includes both the MEC 6th edition and the SPR 4th edition, addresses key updates such as hormonal contraceptive use with HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and antiretroviral therapy (ART), breastfeeding women, and the use of medications to ease IUD insertion. These documents are used by healthcare providers globally to ensure the safe and effective use of contraceptive methods based on the latest clinical and epidemiological data.

 [Read Full Text](#)

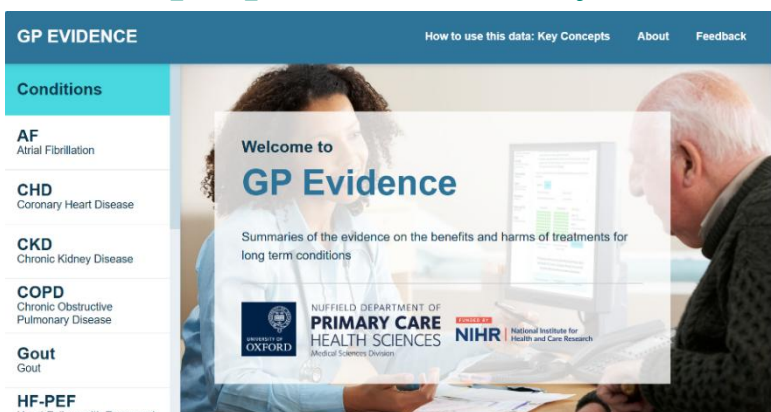
3. Endometriosis: from awareness to action

The Lancet Obstetrics, Gynaecology, & Women's Health, Volume 1, Issue 3.

Two landmark Reviews published in *The Lancet Obstetrics, Gynaecology & Women's Health* reveal stark global inequities in how endometriosis is recognised, treated, and prioritised in national health systems. Endometriosis is a chronic inflammatory disease that can cause severe pelvic pain and infertility. It affects an estimated one in ten women and girls worldwide, yet the new research shows that across the 194 WHO member states, nearly half of all countries have no national policies or clinical guidance on diagnosis or care.

 [Read Full-Text](#)

Top Tip from the Library – GP Evidence



✓ GP Evidence was developed to make the scientific evidence underpinning guideline-recommended treatments easier to access and understand for practising GPs.

✓ Summaries of the evidence on the benefits and harms of treatments for long term conditions.

✓ This free website was developed by the University of Oxford.

Click here to access: [GP Evidence](#)

Read more: Treadwell JS, Crocker JC, Mahtani KR. **The GP evidence website: focus-group evaluation study of a new point-of-care information resource.** *BJGP Open.* 2025 Nov 3;BJGPO.2025.0109. doi: 10.3399/BJGPO.2025.0109. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41184064.



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- *Educational Articles for General Practice*

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