



# One in ten Irish men will have a heart attack

By Sarah Neville

ONE in 10 Irish men over 50 have suffered a heart attack compared to one in 20 women of the same age.

According to a survey of health of over 50s in Ireland, more men suffer heart attacks. However, hypertension is the most common illness for men and women in this age group.

The study was carried out by UCD as part of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE).

"Hypertension was identified as the most common illness for both men and women in this age group, with nearly 30pc of both genders suffering from the condition," said Professor Colm Harmon from the UCD Geary Institute. "Over 25pc of men and women reported suffering from high cholesterol. Both arthritis and osteoporosis showed to be more common among women than men at 25pc to 16pc and 9pc to 1pc respectively.

"On the other hand, 10pc of men were reported to have suffered a heart attack as compared to 5pc of women," he said.

The majority of people between 50 and 59 rated their health as excellent or very good compared to just 30pc of the over 80s.

The issue of health of the elderly is particularly important as economists view health as a

capital stock which has been accumulated over time. For that reason, the survey included questions on behavioural health risks like smoking, alcohol consumption, and vigorous and moderate physical activity.

Four out of five over 50s said that they had visited their GP in the last 12 months and 11pc had visited a specialist.

For those aged 70-79, approximately 20pc had at least one recent overnight inpatient visit. When it comes to the 80 plus age group, more men visited the hospital than women, with 30pc attending.

## AGEING

The research also found that 50pc of GP visits and 30pc of nursing home stays were shown to have been entirely paid for by the respondents.

Dr Liam Delaney from the UCD School of Public Health and Population Science and the UCD School of Economics, and lead investigator on the SHARE study said: "There are two major realities about ageing addressed in this study. One is finance, the other is health.

"The aim is, at a really early stage, to gear us up for making that shift as our population ages, and how to make the changes to the health services and pensions we need. If we don't take account of the challenges, we are not going to age successfully as a society."