

## Waterford team collaborating on landmark global study on mental health during times of infection



Dr. Evan Matthews.

Researchers from the School of Health Sciences at Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) are heading up the Irish arm of a global study on population mental health during times of infection.

Dr Evan Matthews (Department of Nursing and Health Care, WIT) and Prof John Wells (Dean of the School, Health Sciences at WIT) are collaborating with more than 200 researchers and scientists around the world, led by the internationally renowned psychiatrists Prof Christoph U. Correll (The Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, USA; Charite University Medicine, Germany) and Prof Marco Solmi (University of Padua, Italy) to address the health impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

“The COVID-19 pandemic is causing huge personal, societal and economic impact. In such a context, the physical and mental well-being of everybody (not just those who have COVID-19) can be affected to varying degrees by these impacts associated with the pandemic. This research aims to capture these impacts on a global scale and provide comparative information on differences between countries,” explains Dr Matthews who is the leading investigator of the COH-FIT Ireland Study.

The initial research involves a global survey of the general population and health care workers to assess the physical and mental well-being of the population during the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.

Importantly the survey is endorsed by leading authorities in mental health; the World Psychiatric Association and the European Psychiatric Association, and is set to become among the largest of such surveys on mental health during times of infection. “This international and expert collaboration is reflective of the WIT School of Health Science’s commitment to high quality mental health research with national and international impact,” said Prof Wells, Dean of the School of Health Sciences and Co-investigator on the COH-FIT in Ireland study.

“So far 60,000 people across the world have answered the survey and this number is increasing every day. We’re very excited to have WIT researchers leading the Irish investigation in this significant global study examining these issues,” said Dr Mark White, Vice President of Research, Innovation and Graduate studies at WIT.

The research team are encouraging mass participation in the anonymous survey to contribute to identifying the magnitude of the effects and factors aggravating or reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical and mental well-being. By visiting the study website, people can learn more about the study and how they can participate (see <http://www.coh-fit.com>).

People from the Republic of Ireland that engage with the COH-FIT study are reminded that mental health crisis support is available by making contact with their local GP, or phoning: 112 for emergencies; 116 123 to talk to the Samaritans. Additional information and guidance on COVID-19 is available: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

Web: [www.coh-fit.com](http://www.coh-fit.com)

Social media accounts: @CohFit and @NursingWit