

Lifelong Learning For All In Ireland

Paper 3



Lifelong Learning Improves Health Outcomes

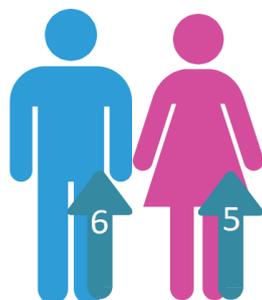
Healthy Wealthy and Wise, published by the UK based Learning and Work Institute, as well as the *3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)* provide evidence on the links between lifelong learning and health outcomes.

AONTAS and our members argue that education occurs throughout our lives and includes formal, nonformal and informal learning. The GRALE report notes that health and well-being should also be seen as something nurtured throughout our lives. As we age we need to be able to manage our own health, and the health, diseases and disabilities of those we love. To take care of our health and well being over our lifespan requires knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes developed not just during primary and secondary education but throughout life. The health of our societies depends upon lifelong learning.

As an example of education for wellbeing, 2018 AONTAS STAR Award winners Soilse promotes holistic recovery to transform the individual's health. It is a personal learning journey, transforming attitudes, values, skills and purpose.

Acknowledgements

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Health and Wellbeing

This series on the value of Lifelong Learning For All In Ireland was inspired by presentations and conversations at the AONTAS Lifelong Learning for All policy event held 9 March 2018 at Buswell's Hotel, Dublin, as part of the 2018 Adult Learners' Festival week.

Healthy Behaviours and Attitudes

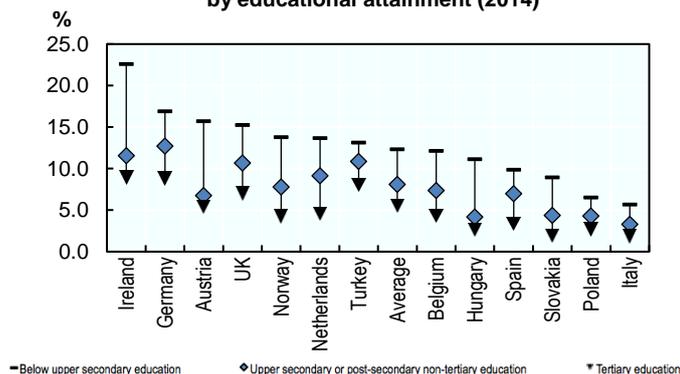
Education is closely linked with healthy behaviours and knowledge about healthy living. The 3rd GRALE report notes that people with more education are more likely to have a greater understanding of their health, a better understanding of treatments available to them, and more skills to manage their health. People with more education also report spending fewer days in bed and miss fewer days of work due to illness. 'International studies have linked education to determinants of health such as healthy behaviour and the use of preventive services. Better educated people are less likely to smoke, drink a lot or use illegal drugs. They are also more likely to exercise more, to use seat belts in the car, to get vaccinated and to participate in screening programmes.' (GRALE, 2016)

Concerning the benefits of lifelong learning specifically, the 3rd GRALE report identifies a UK study which found that no matter what path adults have taken in their early years, participating in education between the ages of 33 and 42 has positive effects on smoking cessation, exercise, and life satisfaction, all of which are indicators of long-term health.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

OECD Education at a Glance 2017 notes depression as a key identifier for evaluating social outcomes of education. While little evaluation has been done to date on the many elements of wellbeing, starting in 2018 the OECD will evaluate outcomes such as health status, work-life balance, social connections, civic-engagement and personal safety as identifiers of the most significant social benefits of education. This chart shows the impact of educational attainment on reported depression across European OECD countries. In Ireland rates of depression are 10 percentage points lower for those with third level education than those with below secondary education.

Percentage of adults who report having depression, by educational attainment (2014)



Life Expectancy

The higher level of educational attainment, the longer someone is likely to live in Ireland. At age 30, men who have completed higher education can expect to live 6 years longer than men who didn't complete secondary school. For women the difference is 5 years of additional expected life.

The reasons for longer life are many, but include factors such as

- having more information about the environmental elements that can harm us (including types of food, drinking, smoking and drug use).
- an increase in employment earnings which allows for access to better quality food, preventative health care, and better quality acute health care.
- less likelihood that employment requires dangerous or physically harmful work.
- more leisure time that allows for increased physical activity.

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