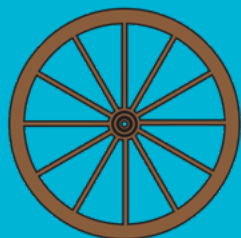




# Pavees Granēl: National Traveller Cancer Research- awareness, barriers and opportunities for muni health



This leaflet highlights some of the key findings from the Survey of Cancer Awareness and Attitudes among the Traveller Community in Ireland: A co-designed study led by UCD in partnership with Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre and the HSE National Cancer Control Programme.

The research focused on Travellers' awareness of cancer- the risk factors, signs and symptoms, and also key barriers and challenges. It also looked at healthcare professionals' views.

The research would not have been possible without the Traveller Community Health Workers across Ireland who coordinated and collected the data from 483 surveys and assisted in recruitment for the qualitative interviews with Travellers and healthcare professionals.



## How was the research done?

This national research involved engaging with Travellers and Healthcare Professionals:

- 483 Travellers across Ireland completed a survey; of this group, 22 in-depth interviews were undertaken; and
- 15 in-depth interviews with healthcare professionals were also undertaken.

## Experience of Cancer

**36%** said that they themselves had been diagnosed with cancer and **42%** said a family member had cancer.

## Health literacy

**57%** of Travellers found it easy or very easy to understand the instruction leaflets that come with medicines.

## Beliefs about Cancer

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**71%** of Travellers agreed that cancer can be cured.

**63%** of Travellers agreed that people with cancer can expect to live their lives normally.

**48%** of Travellers agreed that they would want to know if they had cancer, but **35%** say they would not want to know.

**42%** of Travellers said they believe cancer is a death sentence.

Traveller women were more likely to have positive beliefs about cancer than Traveller men. Younger Travellers were more likely to have positive beliefs than older Travellers.

## Risk factors for Cancer

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**36%** of Travellers smoke compared to **21%** of the general population.



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**88%** of Travellers recognised smoking as a risk for getting cancer.

**38%** of Travellers recognised that drinking alcohol, even now and again, increases the risk of getting cancer.



**41%** of Travellers recognised that being overweight is a risk for getting cancer.

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**26%** of Travellers recognised that not enough exercise increased the risk of cancer.



**22%** of Travellers recognised that Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) could increase the risk of cancer.



## Signs and symptoms of Cancer:

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Most Travellers knew that a lump or a bump, or a changing mole could be a sign of cancer. Other common signs and symptoms of cancer such as an ongoing cough or losing weight were less well recognised by Travellers.



## Barriers to attending a doctor

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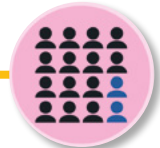
**37%** of Travellers said they don't like speaking to a doctor's receptionist about their symptoms.

**32%** worry about what the doctor might find wrong with them.

## Cancer Screening:

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Cancer screening uptake is high amongst Travellers compared to the general population.



### What helps to achieve high uptake of screening?

- Talking to the local Traveller Primary Healthcare Workers was highlighted as key to achieving high screening uptake.
- Receiving an invitation to attend screening helps to improve screening uptake

### What are the barriers to attending screening?

- Fear of results
- Feelings of embarrassment
- Not receiving an invitation to attend screening

## What Travellers said

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Racism and discrimination:

***“there’s an issue maybe around, you know, the fear of, you know, being discriminated against by the doctors, by the staff in the surgery. So I think it’s, yeah, I think it’s a fear of discrimination”***

***“the doctors themselves, some of them wouldn’t take on Travellers. It has improved a bit but not much”***

Fear of cancer:

***“some people find a lump or they find something that’s not right with them, they think of death straight away”***

***“Some Travellers out there that won’t even say the word cancer”***

Gender:

***“a lot of Traveller women...they put themselves last, they put like the family would be first or the children would be first”***

Social Determinants of Health:

***“your employment, your education, your accommodation, your social outlets. All of that plays a part on physical and mental health. And until that improves Travellers’ health is not improving.”***

***“the lack of literacy and being able to, not just being able to read and understand the instructions on medication but when you actually see a doctor or a health care professional there’s also a barrier there that they may not necessarily understand their language, their vocabulary”***

## Building on existing strengths

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***“... the Primary Health Care Workers have a very important role; they go out to the homes and advise people of all different things, like healthy eating, smoking groups, non-smoking groups and all that, advising people that wouldn’t get out. They actually go to their homes and tell them about it”***

***“...the Primary Health Care workers really do fantastic work in producing information and material and resources that is very easy to understand and very accessible. And I think that’s really important.”***

***“And since the men’s worker has come on board it’s just brilliant because you see more engagement from men. It’s just fantastic.”***





## What healthcare professionals said

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Racism and discrimination:

***“they’re a discriminated population ... I mean, they’re an exceedingly discriminated against group within our society ... and we tolerate that”***

***“I think Travellers are discriminated against in life, in society, in policy, in investment, in service design”***

Fear of cancer:

***“I think that there’s a lot of fear around going to hospitals and going to doctors. And yeah, I think that’s basically a fear and prevents them from going and I think it makes it worse.”***

Social Determinants of Health:

***“they’re living in such sub-standard accommodation that you can’t even start to think about anything else that it affects you from the moment you wake up in the morning to the last thing at night. It affects your engagement to the outside world. It affects your mental health, it affects your physical health”***

***“one of the, the big things is them not receiving post, not receiving their, and not receiving appointments, and I would get a lot of that like a lot of my time would be following up to check to see did they get appointments that I would be aware that they would, they would have; have they attended them?”***

Health improvement enablers

***“Maybe for healthcare professionals, that maybe we need to be taught a little bit more how to tailor messages or how to, you know, find out from people from the Traveller community that work within health promotion”***



***“Have a meaningful discussion where they are the real partners, and everything we do, the Traveller Community should be the lead agency”***

***“(X Primary Healthcare for Traveller Project) it’s, it’s transformative in terms of, particularly, cancer diagnosis”***









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