

Traveller Health

Irish Travellers have poor health outcomes compared to the general population. Discrimination, poor living conditions, low educational outcomes, high unemployment and difficulty accessing health services contribute to this.



HEALTH GAP

Life expectancy for both Traveller men and women is less than in the general population

- 15 years less for Traveller men
- 11.5 years less for Traveller women

Traveller infant mortality is estimated at 14.1 per 1,000 live births. This compares to 3.9 per 1,000 live births among the general population.

Travellers experience the same health problems as the general population however the rates of certain conditions are different.

- Suicide for Traveller men is 7 times higher and most common in young Traveller men aged 15-25.
- Suicide for Traveller women is 5 times higher than the general population

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a major issue for Irish Travellers:

- 59.4% of Traveller men believe their mental health was not good for one or more days in the last 30 days – compared with 21.8% of male medical cardholders in the general population
- 62.7% of Traveller women said their mental health was not good for one or more days in the last 30 days compared to 19.9% of female medical card holders.

DISCRIMINATION

- 66.7% of service providers thought that Travellers experience discrimination in their use of health services in general

- 62% of Travellers have experienced discrimination when they were at school, this was 61% in shops/pub/restaurant
- 55% Travellers have experienced discrimination in getting work, this was 52% with guards/courts

WOMEN'S HEALTH

- 25% of Traveller women compared to 13% of women in the general population had breast cancer screening
- 23% of Traveller women had smear test (cervical cancer screening) compared to 12% of women in the general population

LIFESTYLE

- One in every 4 Travellers have high cholesterol and one in every 3 have high blood pressure
- There is a 15% higher rate of cigarette smoking among Travellers compared to the general population
- 30.9% said price is a factor which prevents them from eating healthily

BARRIERS

Barriers to accessing health services include:

- Waiting lists (62.7%)
- Embarrassment and stigma (47.8%)
- Lack of information (37.3%)
- Lack of trust in health services (41% compared to 82% among general population)
- Lack of dignity and respect in health services (40%)

Source: *Our Geels – the All Ireland Traveller Health Study, 2010*