



CHERISH Overview

The following factsheet provides an overview of CHERISH – the Choosing Healthy Eating for Infant Health study, an initiative funded by the Health Research Board (HRB)

About CHERISH

CHERISH, the Choosing Healthy Eating for Infant Health study, is a **HRB-funded** study that seeks to improve and support healthy infant feeding practices among parents and primary caregivers in Ireland. A key impetus for the study is to help reduce the risk of childhood obesity and overweight.



Research team

The CHERISH study comprises a multidisciplinary research team involving:

- Health researchers from UCC, NUIG and TCD
- Primary care partners, including practitioners at the Mallow Primary Healthcare Centre in Co. Cork
- National and international experts in infant feeding
- A Patient and Public Involvement Group (PPI) comprising parents and service users with an interest in infant feeding

Stages of the research

The CHERISH study involved a number of research stages or work packages (WPs):

WP1 – Establishing the evidence base for the burden of childhood obesity in Ireland and the role of early dietary interventions

WP2 – Developing a pilot intervention to influence early infant feeding practices

WP3 – Implementing and evaluating the pilot intervention

Development

A core part of the CHERISH study was developing an intervention for use in primary care settings to help improve and support healthy infant feeding practices.

An accompanying implementation strategy was also developed to support healthcare practitioners delivering the intervention. The key components of both are shown on the right.

Some of the research outputs (published studies) from the WP1 are listed overleaf.

CHERISH intervention

- Brief verbal infant feeding messages given to parents by primary healthcare practitioners during routine infant vaccination visits
- Supporting materials (leaflet, magnet, bib) for parents and signposting to online resources, e.g. MyChild.ie



Implementation strategy

- Incentivised training for healthcare practitioners delivering the intervention
- Supporting materials
- Technical assistance
- Local opinion leader
- Electronic delivery prompts on computer screens





CHERISH

Choosing Healthy Eating for Infant Health

Recent publications:

Toomey, E. et al (2020) A collaborative approach to developing sustainable behaviour change interventions for childhood obesity prevention: Development of the Choosing Healthy Eating for Infant Health (CHERISH) intervention and implementation strategy, *British Journal of Health Psychology*.

Matvienko-Sikar, K., et al (2019) Choosing Healthy Eating for Infant Health (CHERISH) study: Protocol for a feasibility study, *BMJ Open*, 9.

Calnan, S. et al (2019) Role of integrated knowledge translation in developing and implementing a multi-component infant feeding intervention: Insights from the CHERISH study, *European Health Psychologist Bulletin*, Vol.21(1).

Matvienko-Sikar, K. et al (2020) A core outcome set for trials of infant-feeding interventions to prevent childhood obesity, *International Journal of Obesity*.

Matvienko-Sikar, K., et al (2019) Behaviour change techniques and theory use in healthcare professional-delivered infant feeding interventions to prevent childhood obesity: A systematic review, *Health Psychology Review*, Vol. 13(3).

A full list of published papers and conference presentations related to CHERISH is available at:

www.cherishstudy.com/publications-presentations/

Feasibility study

Following intervention development, a study was conducted to determine the feasibility and acceptability of implementing the CHERISH intervention in primary healthcare settings. This study was conducted in GP practices at the Mallow Primary Healthcare Centre (MPHC) in Co. Cork – a leading primary healthcare centre and one of the first such centres in Ireland. The study was conducted between April and December 2019.



Healthcare practitioners at MPHC taking part in CHERISH

Study findings

Preliminary findings from the feasibility study indicate that:

- the intervention was acceptable and feasible to implement
- healthcare practitioners recognised the value of implementing it
- challenges were faced, however, in recruiting parents to the study
- healthcare practitioners also cited competing demands as a challenge when implementing interventions of this kind due to the broad scope of their work

Training evaluation

The CHERISH study also conducted an evaluation of training provided to healthcare practitioners (GPs and practice nurses) prior to their implementation of the intervention.

Findings from this evaluation showed that the majority of those participating believed the training and resources were acceptable, appropriate and feasible to use.

Participants were also asked what the most common sources of infant feeding information were prior to the training: the top three sources cited were HSE leaflets, discussions with colleagues and infant formula manufacturers' leaflets.



Knowledge translation

CHERISH has undertaken a range of activities in the area of knowledge translation as well, including:

- holding knowledge exchange meetings between participating researchers and practitioners
- compiling a knowledge exchange strategy for the project
- increasing the profile of CHERISH via media and journal articles
- disseminating findings through more user-friendly formats such as factsheets, policy briefs, blogs

Note: Additional factsheets on these CHERISH-related activities are available on the CHERISH website: www.cherishstudy.com