



All Ireland Network on Sexual Violence Research

Connecting sexual violence researchers across the island of Ireland

Newsletter July 2024

Introduction

We are delighted to welcome you to the All-Ireland Network on Sexual Violence Research (AINSVR), a Network that aims to connect scholars, practitioners and policy makers working on issues related to sexual violence across the island of Ireland.

Our newsletter provides a space to reflect on AINSVR activities and share information

about members research and other relevant initiatives.

On 5 June 2024 the University of Limerick hosted our online PhD 'Thesis in Three' Competition. We had a total of 6 participants and the competition was judged by [Ms Jolena Flett](#), Victim Support Northern Ireland, [Dr Sinead Ring](#), Maynooth University, and [Dr Susan Leahy](#), University of Limerick, with [Dr Eithne Dowds](#), Queen's University Belfast, acting as Chair.

All of the presentations were excellent, and it was incredibly difficult to choose a winner, but the panel were extremely impressed by **Niamh Burns**, The University of Brighton, who was chosen as the winner. Many congratulations Niamh! Niamh's project is entitled '*The invisibility of sexual, and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the Northern Irish conflict (between 1968 and 1998) and the implications of shedding light on this phenomenon on social policy and policy processes.*'



Our other participants were:

- **Ciara Buckley** (Dublin City University), *Understanding and Responding to Sexual Violence in the LGBTQ+ Community.*
- **Chloe Hanna** (Queen's University Belfast), *He Who Shall Not be Named?*

Rethinking Northern Ireland's Approach to Defendant Anonymity.

- **Daniel Kane** (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland), *Sexual Assault Treatment Units: The Irish Experience.*
- **Kirsten McGregor** (Queen's University Belfast), *Assessing the feasibility and viability of a victim-led Restorative Justice system for cases of serious sexual violence in Northern Ireland.*
- **Ann Ryan** (University College Dublin), *An Exploratory Human Rights Informed Study of CASP as Experienced by those who have made Adult Disclosures of Child Sexual Abuse.*

SAVE THE DATE: We plan to host an in-person event at Queen's University Belfast on **2nd September 2024** on the theme *Tackling VAWG across the island of Ireland.* As part of the day, Network members will have the opportunity to showcase their research through poster presentations over lunch. More details to follow.

Remember to check out our website: ainsvr.org and follow us on X @ainsvr2023.

Publications

- [Conor Hanly and Tamara Cassidy](#) (2024) *Rapid Review of Evidence on Delays in Processing Adult Sexual Cases*. Department of Justice. 14 June 2024. Available [here](#).
- [Aoibheann Brennan-Wilson, Magaly Marques, Anna Coates, Avni Amin, John Garry, Mark Tomlinson, Anam Nyembezi, Asha George, Maria Lohan](#), (2024) 'Masculinities and sexual and reproductive health and rights: a global research priority setting exercise'. *The Lancet Global Health*, 12(5), e882-e890. Available [here](#).
- [Maria Lohan, Avni Amin, Magaly Marques, Mark Tomlinson](#) (2024) 'Engaging men and boys in sexual and reproductive health and rights'. *BMJ*, 385, Article q1042. Available [here](#) (subscription required).
- [Nicole Munns, Maggie Brennan, Elaine Byrnes, Cydney Sheridan, Melvin Jabar, Maria Caridad Tarroja,](#)

[Zaldy Collado, Derek Perkins](#) (2024) *Facilitation of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) in the Philippines*. April 2024. Available [here](#).

- [Susan Leahy](#), 'Victims need to be placed at the heart of the justice system'. *The Journal*, 4th July 2024. Available [here](#).

Projects

[Dr. Sandra Sanmartín Feijóo](#), Dublin City University, was awarded a DOROTHY COFUND postdoctoral fellowship under the supervision of AINSVR member Dr. Mairéad Foody and non-member Prof. Heidi Vandebosch at the University of Antwerp (Belgium). The DOROTHY programme is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and the Irish Research Council (IRC), the Health Research Board (HRB), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and aims to tackle public health crises from a

multidisciplinary perspective. See more [here](#).

The research project, titled "A Mixed-method study on the relationship between pornography and attitudes towards aggression and violence among adolescents [MARIGOLD]", will delve into the complex interactions between pornography consumption and attitudes towards sexual violence among adolescents.

The CSAReps project, 'Investigating Fictional Representations of Child Sexual Abuse in Contemporary Culture: Myths and Understanding', launched in January 2024. It examines how child sexual abuse (CSA) is represented in fictional works and how these works affect their audiences. CSA is a critical issue facing contemporary societies, but it remains relatively taboo and this social avoidance negatively impacts survivors' wellbeing. Despite the taboo, CSA is often represented in fictional works, such as novels, films, and television series, which collectively provide a key lens through which we view our world and thus may affect both survivors' and wider public understandings of the issue.

The CSAReps project's goals, therefore, are to: 1) analyse how CSA is represented in the popular genres of crime, horror, young-adult and 'issues' fiction, exploring a spectrum of representations from sensitive, survivor-centred portrayals which may foster understanding to sensationalist portrayals which may amplify detrimental CSA myths; 2) undertake the first empirical investigations into people's responses to CSA fictions, including adult and adolescent survivors, support professionals who work with survivors, and general audiences.

The project hopes to generate insight into how these creative works may inform public understandings of CSA, which in turn crucially affect prevention efforts and survivors' health outcomes. It is funded by a European Research Council Starting Grant and carried out by an interdisciplinary research team: [Dr Ailise Bulfin \(PI\)](#), [Caroline Dunne](#), [Aleksandra Milenovic](#), [Victoria Pöhls](#) and [Giulia Scapin](#). It is generously supported by an advisory board of survivors, and

academics and support professionals working in the area.

[Dr Eithne Dowds](#), School of Law, Queen's University Belfast, in collaboration with [Professor Sarah Hull](#), Clinical Director at The Rowan, Sexual Assault Referral Centre secured funding from Queen's University Faculty Research Initiatives Fund for a project entitled 'The Role of the Forensic Medical Examination in the Investigation and Prosecution of Rape'. This project will conduct a comprehensive multidisciplinary literature review and explore the possible theoretical and methodological foundations for an empirical project on the role of the forensic medical exam (FME) to the investigation and prosecution of rape in Northern Ireland.

[Dr Elaine Byrnes](#), Dublin City University (DCU), reports that a two-year collaboration between anti-human trafficking charity Justice and Care as well as researchers from DCU and colleagues at De La Salle University, Manila culminated in the publication of a

final report entitled *Facilitation of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) in the Philippines* in April 2024 (see publications). A key finding is that Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) in the Philippines, including live streaming of abuse, has reached epidemic levels, sustained by global demand and run like a 'cottage industry'. The research team was given unique access to incarcerated facilitators of OSAEC at a Filipino correctional institution, as well as members of government, law enforcement and NGO's, both local and international, to better understand how OSAEC is happening in the Philippines and address the environment in which it operates and thrives. We report that the crime is conducted by local offenders trafficking victims in vulnerable communities to Western perpetrators. Additionally, Western owned financial institutions and tech companies are being used to facilitate it.

Extension funding has been secured by DCU and our research partners De Le Salle University, Manila. This will build on two key

final report recommendations. Firstly, engagement with the financial institutions to survey system requirements to support better detection and reporting of suspicious transactions, as well as the proactive disclosure of these to law enforcement. Secondly, a community awareness raising campaign will be developed and piloted in three local government areas of Metro Manila to help people understand the detrimental impact of OSAEC, dispelling beliefs and fallacies that enable and sustain the crime in communities.

Recent Events

[Professor Maria Lohan](#) - Shared Research Priorities for Engaging Men and Boys in SRHR in Accountable Ways, United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD30), New York, 1 May 2024.

[Dr David Prendergast](#), Assistant Professor, School of Law, Trinity College Dublin, presented a paper titled 'The difference

between recklessness and negligence' at the Sir Gerald Gordon Seminar on Criminal Law, University of Glasgow, 6 June 2024. The paper argues against advertence to risk as the pivotal difference marker between recklessness and negligence as *mens rea* concepts. The conceptual analysis in the paper engages with, and seeks to inform, contemporary debates about fault requirements in regard to non-consent in sexual offences.



On June 7th & 8th, [MOVE Ireland](#) along with [The Men's Development Network](#) hosted their joint annual National Training Conference in the Anner Hotel, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The theme of this year's conference was 'From Harm to Hope:

Building Collaborative Relationships for a Safer Ireland.’ The aim of the conference was to highlight the importance of collaboration when addressing DSGBV, create a space for networking and looking toward the future of collaboration when addressing domestic abuse. A number of guest speakers shared insights into their organisation’s work and the successes and challenges they have faced while addressing DSGBV.

Minister for Justice Helen McEntee opened the conference virtually. CEO of CUAN, Dr Stephanie O’Keeffe was also present to open the conference, and highlighted the importance of a ‘collaborative spirit’ and ‘joined up vision’ when combating DSGBV. MOVE Ireland CEO Dr Michelle Walsh, would like to extend a huge thank you to all who attended on the day and helped make the conference the success it was. We hope that this conference has fostered the building of collaborative relationships that will contribute to creating a safer Ireland.

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE: Lex Connect: All-Ireland Law PhD Conference, **2 November 2024**, Dublin City University. Conference Theme: *From law on paper, to law in action*. PhD students from any institution across the island of Ireland can submit a 250 words abstract on any area of law by **31st August 2024** to lexconnectconference@gmail.com. A one-paragraph summary curriculum vitae should also be included and the area of law the proposal fits into should be specified.

SAVE THE DATE: Dr Susan Leahy is hosting a conference at the University of Limerick on **25th October 2024**. This one-day event will focus on **media and cultural representations of sexual and domestic abuse in Ireland**. Attendance will be free. The conference programme and details on how to register will be circulated to all network members in due course.

Other News

The Minister for Justice of Ireland appointed [Dr Conor Hanly](#) to the Board of Cuan (the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency) in April 2024. The first Board meeting was held in May 2024.

If you have an idea for an event or want to collaborate in some way please do get in touch with us at ainsvr2023@gmail.com