COVID – 19 and People with an Intellectual Disability

What did we find out from Wave 4 of the IDS-TILDA Study?

An Accessible Report
The Intellectual Disability Supplement

to TILDA

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The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing 2020
How did COVID-19 affect people with an intellectual disability in Ireland?

Findings from Wave 4 of The Intellectual Disability Supplement to The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (IDS-TILDA)

By

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Message from Mary

COVID-19 had a big impact on all our lives this year

This report helps us to understand how this has affected people with an intellectual disability

Thank you for all your help and support with IDS-TILDA

Best wishes,

Prof Mary McCarron
Some words we use in this report

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a virus that can make people sick.

Lockdown

Lockdown means that everyone was asked to stay in their homes and stop doing their usual activities.

Self-isolation

Self-isolation means staying away from other people. This means staying in your room.

Symptom

A symptom is a feeling of not being well – like a fever, cough or headache.
What % of people

When we say ‘Hardly any’ we mean 1-4% of people

When we say ‘Very few’ we mean 5-9% of people

When we say ‘A few’ we mean 10-19% of people

When we say ‘Some’ we mean 20-39% of people

When we say ‘Just under half’ we mean 40-49% of people

When we say ‘Half’ we mean 50% of people

When we say ‘A lot’ we mean 51-59% of people

When we say ‘Most’ we mean 60-79% of people

When we say ‘Nearly everyone’ we mean 80-99% of people
IDS-TILDA is a study that helps us to understand what it’s like to grow older in Ireland with an intellectual disability.

We ask people questions about:
- Their health
- Their friends and family
- Their mental health
- What services they use
- Where they live

In 2020, we also asked people questions about COVID-19.

We wanted to find out how COVID-19 affected people’s lives.

710 people with an intellectual disability from all over Ireland answered these questions about COVID-19.
This report is about COVID-19

We all had to change the way we do things because of COVID-19

In IDS-TILDA we could not meet all of our participants face to face

We talked to some people using a phone or a computer instead
What did we find?

443 people had a test for COVID-19

This means that about 6 out of 10 people we asked had a COVID-19 test

71 people felt unwell with symptoms that were like COVID-19

Only 11 people tested positive for COVID-19
This means that about 3 out of 100 people with an intellectual disability had COVID-19.

People who had COVID-19

We asked the 11 people who had COVID-19 questions about their experience.

7 people who had COVID-19 had symptoms.

4 people who had COVID-19 didn’t have any symptoms.
The most common symptoms people with COVID-19 in the IDS-TILDA study had were:

- Tiredness
- Fever
- Cough

Nobody in the IDS-TILDA study died of COVID-19
Nearly everyone who had COVID-19 lived in a group home or campus setting.

Most people who had symptoms of COVID-19 had a plan in place to self-isolate.

2 out of 3 people with symptoms of COVID-19 were able to follow the guidelines.
Stress or Anxiety because of the COVID-19 pandemic

More than half of the people we asked said that they felt stress or anxiety because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

383 people said this.

Reasons people felt stress were:

- Not being able to do usual activities
- Not seeing friends or family
- Loneliness
- Scared about getting COVID-19

People who lived with family or independently or in a community group home were more stressed than people who lived in a residential setting.
The thing that made people most stressed was:

• Not being able to do usual activities

Most people who lived independently or with family were also stressed about:

• Not seeing friends

A lot of people who lived in a community group home were also stressed about:

• Not seeing family
Good things about COVID-19

More than half the people said there were some good things about lockdown

Some good things were:

Trying new activities

More time for rest

Better relations with staff

Using technology to communicate
People with Down syndrome

There were **139 people with Down syndrome** in IDS-TILDA

**69 people** with Down syndrome had a COVID-19 test

**13 people** with Down syndrome felt unwell with symptoms that were like COVID-19

**2 people** with Down syndrome had to go to hospital because of symptoms that were like COVID-19

Nobody with Down syndrome tested positive for COVID-19
The Main Points

Hardly anyone with an intellectual disability in Ireland had COVID-19

Hardly anyone with an intellectual disability had to go to hospital because of COVID-19

No one from the study died because of COVID-19

The plans for managing COVID-19 in intellectual disability services worked well
A lot of people felt stress or anxiety because of COVID-19

People also thought some of the changes were good

Remember

The best way to stay safe from COVID-19 is to:

Follow public health guidelines