



A wholesome threesome: Engaging citizens, academics and government actors in the development of the Irish National Survey of Sexual Health (INISH)

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Overview

The **Irish National Survey of Sexual Health**

(INISH) is a nationally representative study providing **up-to-date evidence** on sexual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours in Ireland to **improve policy and services**

Three-way research partnership



PPI Advisory Panels



Academic research team



Government actors (Steering group, HSE staff)

Why?

- Last dedicated sexual health survey in Ireland: **2010**
- **Changes** in society, people and how we understand and discuss sex and sexual health
- Better **policies** in sexual and reproductive health
- Better **education** and sexual **health promotion**

Sexual health research landscape

National surveys: The Irish Study of Sexual Health and Relationships 2006; Irish Contraception and Crisis Pregnancy (ICCP) Study 2010; CSO Sexual Violence Survey 2022; International Sex Survey (Ireland) 2022

International surveys: Natsal (since 1990); GeSiD (2018); surveys in other countries

Changes in ...

... **Perspective** sexual behaviour as a risk ↔ sexual health and well-being

... **Legislation / Medication licensing:** Marriage Equality and Gender Recognition Acts (2015); Over-the-counter availability of Emergency Contraception (2015); Removal of the 8th Amendment of the Constitution and introducing legal abortion (2019); HSE PrEP programme (2019)

... **Public discourse / Lifestyle** Contraception; pregnancy termination; sexual abuse and violence; LGB+ identities; mental health; STIs; pornography; COVID-19

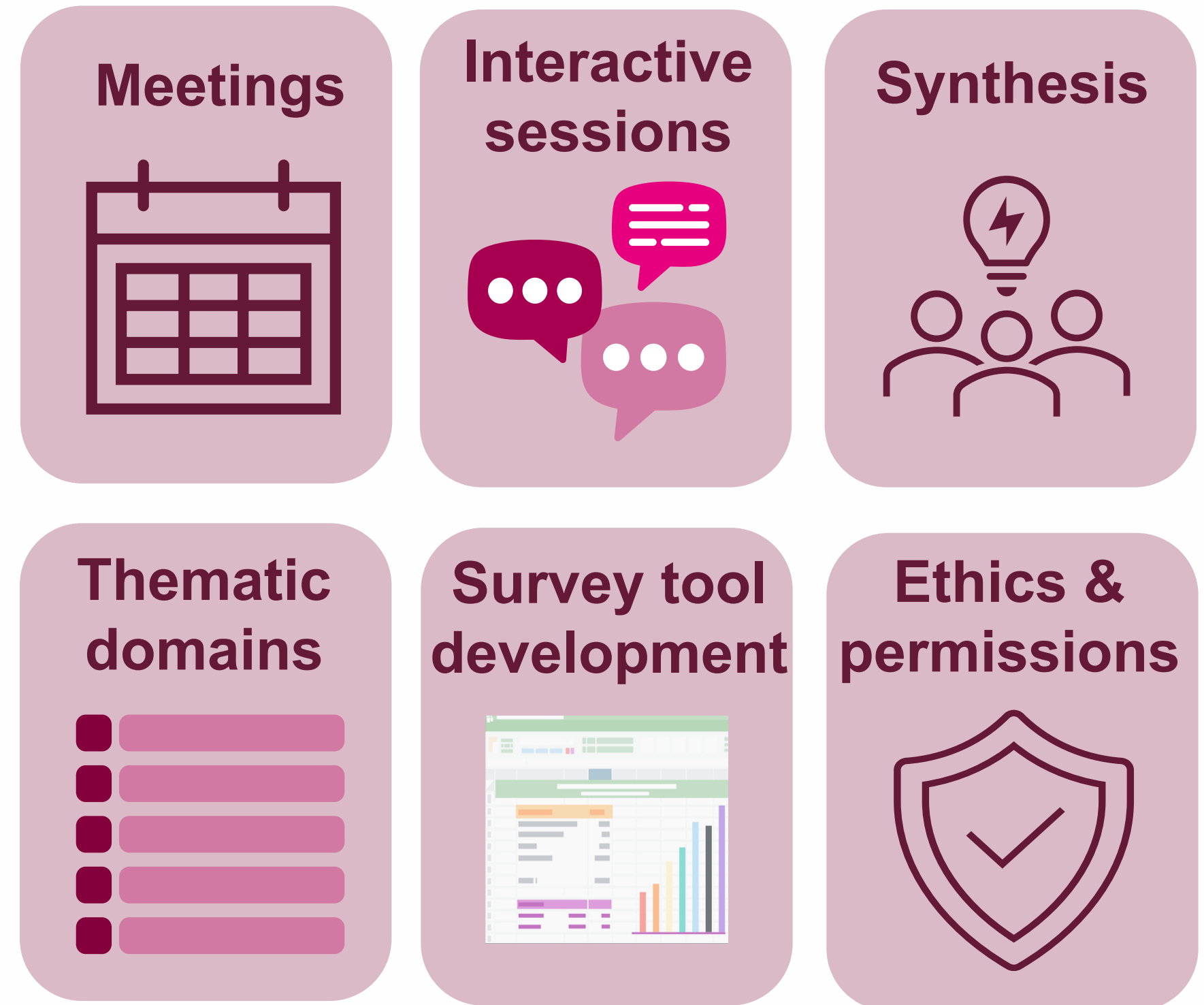
Aims

- 1) To understand **what method(s) works the best for a nationally representative survey on sexual health** in Ireland
- 2) To develop a **study protocol for** a nationally representative survey on sexual health
- 3) To provide **guidance, supervision and assistance to an external contractor carrying out the data collection**

How?

- **PPI Panel members** contribute to survey topics, review public materials, community engagement and dissemination strategies
- **The Steering Group** comprising government representatives, practitioners, and sexual health research experts, provides **oversight and technical input**
- **The academic team** coordinates engagement, synthesises inputs, and leads questionnaire development and refinement

Components of the partnership approach



Public Panels

- **PPI Advisory Panel** through public call and purposive sampling to ensure diversity
- Meetings are held **online**, include polling, prioritisation exercises, facilitated discussions to **identify key topics** and back-end **review** of public-facing materials

Recruitment materials were shared through multiple channels, including social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram

PUBLIC ADVISORY PANEL

Members wanted!



We are seeking members (18 years or older) to join our advisory panel for a research study to promote sexual health and wellbeing in Ireland.

Register your interest by scanning this QR code or visiting tinyurl.com/inishppi

To find out more email inish@universityofgalway.ie



Social media image



Are you interested in promoting sexual health in Ireland? Join our study!

We are seeking 10-15 dedicated individuals from diverse communities across Ireland to join an Advisory Panel for a new, nation-wide study of sexual health, called the Irish National Survey of Sexual Health (INISH). As a panel member, you will play a crucial role in developing and implementing the study. Your unique perspectives and experiences will ensure that the study reflects the needs of all communities in Ireland.

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To find out more email inish@universityofgalway.ie

Why Join Our Advisory Panel?

- Make a Difference!**
Contribute directly to the development of Ireland's sexual health research.
- Diverse Representation!**
We are committed to inclusivity and seek panel members from various backgrounds and communities.
- Collaborative Environment!**
Engage in meaningful discussions with researchers and fellow panel members.
- Learning Opportunities!**
Gain insights into sexual health research and enhance your understanding of how research works.

Who Can Apply?
We welcome applications from individuals who:

- Reside in Ireland and are 18 years or older
- Represent diverse communities, including different ethnicities, age groups, sexual orientations and gender identities, social classes, and regions
- Have an interest in, and a commitment to, improving sexual health in Ireland

How to Apply?
To apply for our PPI Panel, please scan the barcode below and register your interest!



Join us in driving positive change in sexual health across Ireland. With your help, we can make a meaningful impact!

For any inquiries or further information, please contact inish@universityofgalway.ie

Recruitment flyer

Identification of priorities - snapshots

:Padlet

Health Promotion Research Centre + 7 • 14m

General Panel | What are some important sexual health issues? List up to 5.

07.11.2023 | Meeting #1

Consent

★★★★★ (4) Rate

Add comment

Abortion access

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

LGBTQ+ inclusivity

★★★★★ (5) Rate

Add comment

Eliminating new HIV diagnoses

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Knowledge of periods

Not sure if this counts

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Healthy relationships

★★★★★ (3) Rate

Add comment

Trauma

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

DoxyPeP

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

STI information

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

BDSM and how to be safe about it

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

Supports to decrease Stigma & shame

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Support Services

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Contraception

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

Antibacterial resistant gono/chlamydia

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Information on SATU and rape crisis centres

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

LGBTQ+

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Kinks

★★★★★ (3) Rate

Add comment

Misinformation debunking

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

Consent

☆ Rate

Add comment

Sexual pleasure

★★★★★ (3) Rate

Add comment

Pornography consumption

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

sexual consent

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Access to abortion services and follow up supports

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Knowing different types of abusive relationships - not all are physical

★★★★★ (3) Rate

Add comment

teaching sexuality

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

Qualitative research about people's perceptions of sex and relationship to it (overt, repression, etc)

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Have you ever been pregnant, made someone else pregnant and involved in abortion

☆ Rate

Add comment

sex work; ever paid for sex or received money or gifts for sex

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

the church, religion, and sex

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

intersex, variations of sexual development

★★★★★ (2) Rate

Add comment

PCOS, intersex conditions, and other underresearched areas of human Antony

☆ Rate

Add comment

Allowing space to ask difficult or embarrassing questions

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Trans identity and the body (it is not a simple narrative)

☆ Rate

Add comment

Teaching variations in anatomy

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Polyamory, ethical non monogamy

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

Teaching all anatomies to all genders

★★★★★ (1) Rate

Add comment

had / conceived

☆ Rate

Add comment

sexual health issues

☆ Rate

Add comment

Please upvote: Which are the 10 most important topics in your opinion?

Sexual health training for people in public health

- Trainings for people working with older adults
- Trainings for people working with adults with disabilities
- Trainings on LGBTQ+ issues
- Trainings on Trans/GNC issues

Votes
12 0

Barriers to accessing sexual health services

Votes
11 0

Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education in schools

- Removing Catholic Church teachings from sexual education
- Fear based education

Votes
11 0

STIs and STI prevention

- Stigma, fear, and knowledge around STI testing
- Testing innovations
- Rising HepC (elimination of HepC by 2030)
- Rising HIV in heterosexual community
- HIV prevention

Votes
10 0

Sexual health in older population

Votes
9 0

Toxic masculinity/rape culture

- "Have you ever raped/sexually abused someone?"

Votes
10 1

Sex work, sex work industry

+ Post

RANK	Priorities by the General Population PPI Panel (n = 7)	Priorities by the Special Populations PPI Panel (n = 12)	Priorities by the Steering Group (n = 10)	Priorities by the HSE SCHPP Staff (n = 7)	Priorities by the sex research community in Ireland (n = 10)	Priorities by the stakeholders participating in Tierney and Kelleher's scoping study (n = 72)
1	Abortion: access to services and follow-up supports	Sexual health training for people in public health	Contraceptive and condom use	STI Testing and prevention	Sexual behaviours	Sex education
2	STIs: Information, testing, and elimination	Barriers to accessing sexual health services	STIs	Marginalised populations	Consent	Sexually transmitted infections/HIV testing
3	Sex education	Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education in schools	Access to sexual health services	Education	Contraception	Access to contraception
4	LGBTQ+ inclusivity	STIs and STI prevention	Sexual Orientation and Gender identity	Sexual behaviours	Pornography	Non-consensual sex/coercion
5	Consent	Sexual health in older population	Sexuality and Relationships Education	Condom use	Sexual violence and abuse	Sexual health and reproductive knowledge
6	Kinks & safety	Toxic masculinity/rape culture	Sexual health needs of marginalized groups	Access to sexual health information	Sexual pleasure	Experience of crisis pregnancy
7	Pornography consumption	Sex work, sex work industry	Consent	Sexuality across the lifecourse	Trans inclusion	Contraception use and methods
8	Sexual pleasure	Trans healthcare	Experiences of unplanned/crisis pregnancy; abortion; abortion services and their accessibility	STI Awareness, incl. HIV	Crisis pregnancy and abortion	Sexual pleasure and wellbeing
9	Stigma and shame reduction	Abortion: access to information and services	Sexual health and well-being; sexual pleasure	Sexual knowledge	Diversity	Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about abortion
10	Contraception	Consent	Sexual health knowledge	Pleasure	Gender inequality	Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about different kinds of relationships and sexual lifestyles

Survey instrument development

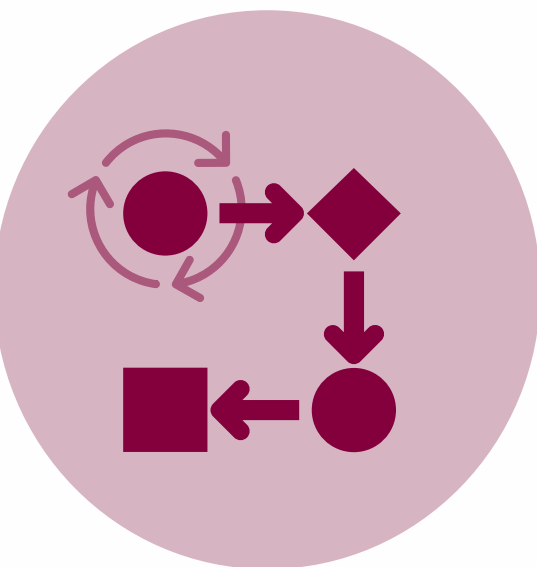


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Based on the stakeholders' priorities

1. **HSE SHP National Indicator Set**, based on ECDC indicators
2. **Natsal-4** full survey instrument
3. First sexual experiences: **Natsal-4 online questionnaire**
4. **International Sex Survey** (e.g. pornography use; paraphilias; sexual experiences and function)
5. **Literature search** and **ICCP-2010** questions
6. Demographic questions: CSO 2022 **Census + Natsal**
7. If **no validated item** was available, created new

INISH Feasibility Study 2025



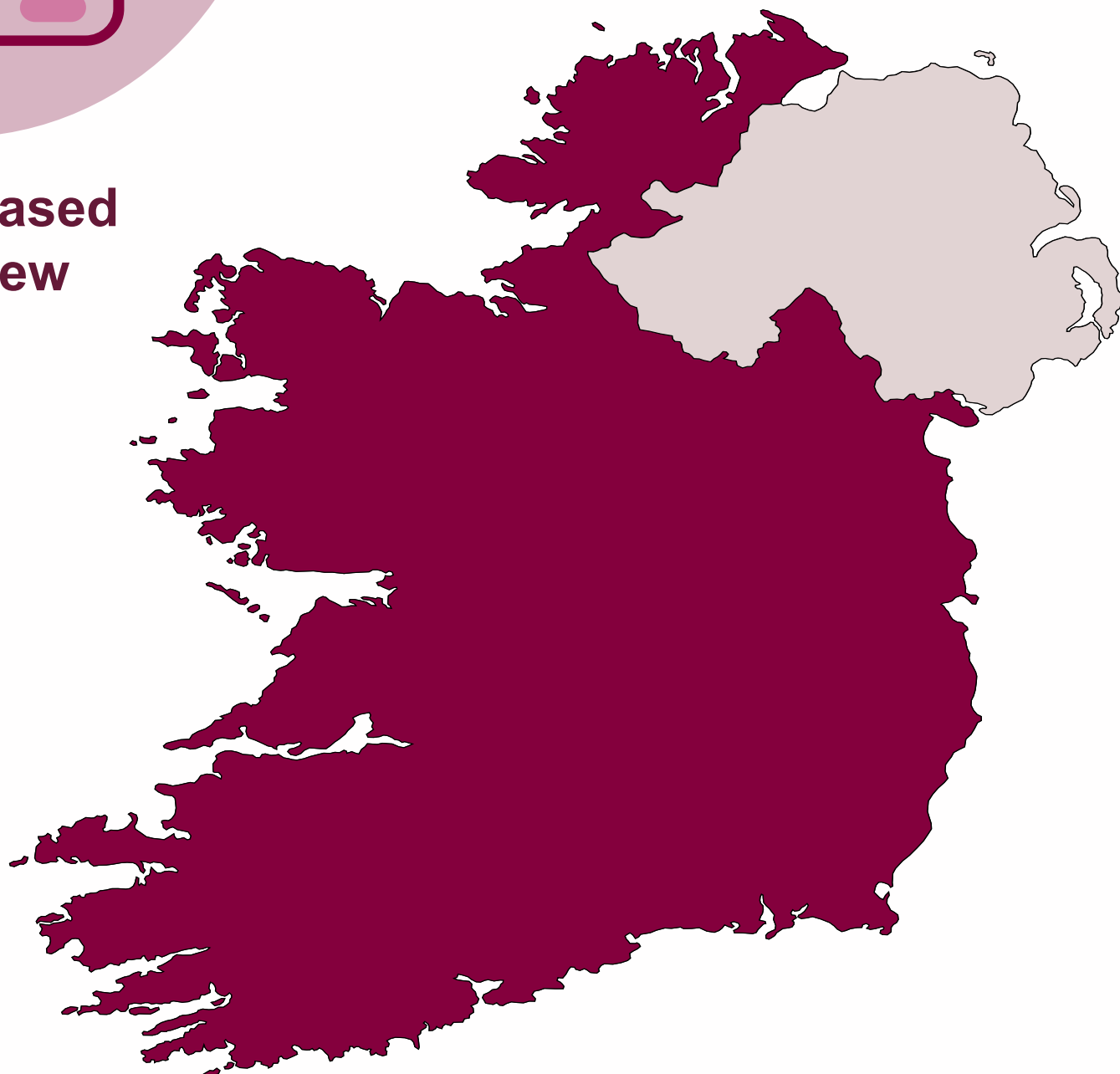
Iterative
refinement of
survey tool



Tablet-based
interview



Trained
investigators



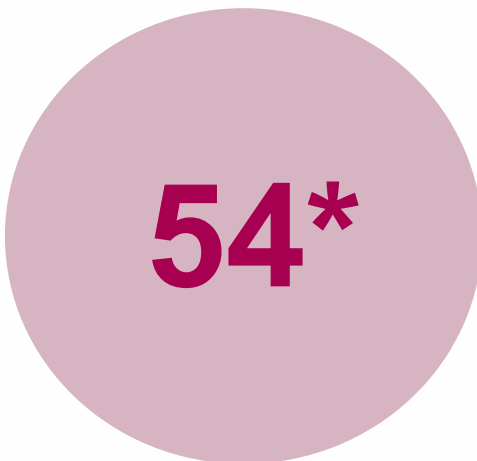
Thematic
domains



Age group



Quota-sampled
participants



Duration of
interview (minutes)



Voucher
reimbursement

Key takeaways

- **Participation** approach throughout INISH project
- **Structured but flexible engagement** allowed public views to shape the research priorities
- Stakeholder **input successfully integrated** into survey design
- **Ongoing engagement** helped maintain interest and sense of ownership

My experience on the panel has been great...
It's wonderful to feel like you have a voice on a topic you're so passionate about!

.. this has served as a safe space where individuals with different back-grounds and perspectives can come together and discuss the stigmatised topic of sex ..

Testimonials from Panel Members



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Thank you

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For more information on the INISH study, please visit
<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/inish/>
or scan the QR code

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