

## Oral Presentations

### 133 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DELAYED HEALTHCARE UTILISATION AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS AMONG OLDER ADULTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN IRELAND

N. Hennesly<sup>1,2</sup>, G. Lalor<sup>2</sup>, S. Gibney<sup>2</sup>, R.A. Kenny<sup>1,3</sup>, M. Ward<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

<sup>2</sup>The Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative, Department of Health, Dublin, Ireland

<sup>3</sup>Department of Medical Gerontology, St James's Hospital, Dublin, Ireland

**Background:** The coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic impacted significantly on the lives of older adults in Ireland, including the cancellation or postponement of healthcare services. This study examined the relationship between healthcare delay and older adults (50 years and over) with chronic conditions in Ireland.

**Methods:** This study used data from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) COVID-19 study and previous waves of TILDA. The COVID-19 study data was collected between July 2020 and November 2020. Taking existing healthcare demand into account,

logistic regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between healthcare delay and older adults with chronic conditions. Additional analysis, using multinomial logit regression, explored the reasons for healthcare delay, whether the delays were on the participants behalf or the health service provider.

**Results:** In total, 31.6% of participants reported healthcare delay. Older adults with two or more chronic conditions were more likely to experience healthcare delay than those with no chronic conditions. In the second analysis, older adults with two or more chronic conditions were more likely to have healthcare delayed by the provider and were also more likely to delay their own healthcare than those with no chronic conditions. Additionally, some other groups were more likely to experience healthcare delay such as: people aged 70 years and over, females, those with problematic alcohol consumption, those with third-level education, those who had visited the GP and those who reported polypharmacy. While older adults living with others and those living outside Dublin were less likely to experience healthcare delay.

**Conclusion:** The findings suggest that some groups of older adults may have been impacted more than others by healthcare delay during the pandemic. Policy and practice should focus on effective strategies to support the healthcare needs of these older adults going forward. Additionally, future research should examine the implications of healthcare delay on health outcomes.