

ASI Research Newsletter Spring 2026



THE Alzheimer
SOCIETY OF IRELAND



Dear @FIRSTNAME@,

Welcome to the Spring edition of your ASI Research Newsletter!

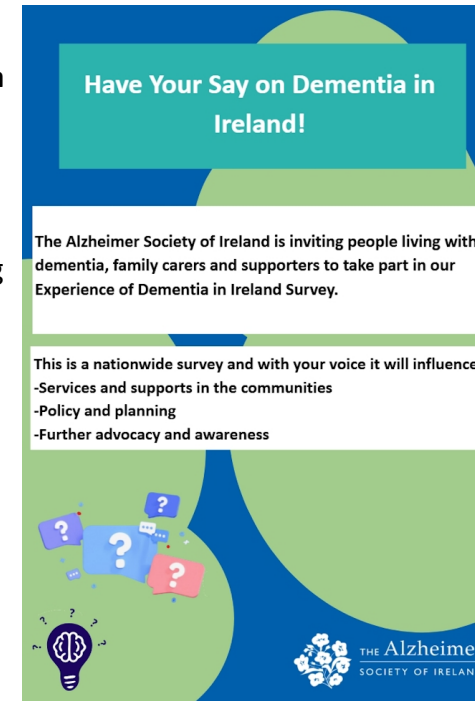
Below you will find insights on our recent research activities, some exciting research participation opportunities through our TeamUp for Dementia Research service, and an amazing update from the members of the Dementia Research Advisory Team.

Grab a cup of tea and enjoy!

Have Your Say: Experience of Dementia in Ireland Survey

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is delighted to announce the upcoming launch of the second **Experience of Dementia Survey**. First carried out in 2023, the survey was a huge national project that highlighted the voices of people living with dementia and their carers in Ireland. We invite everyone who has been affected by dementia (people living with dementia and informal carers / supporters) to keep an eye on our social media channels (links at the bottom of the newsletter) in the coming weeks for the **Experience of Dementia in Ireland 2026 survey launch**.

By sharing your experiences, you help shape the services and supports available across the country, guide future policy and planning, and strengthen advocacy and awareness efforts that improve life for everyone affected by dementia.



Brain Health and Dementia Research Event - Tallaght



Over 200 people gathered at the Civic Theatre in Tallaght on 25th of February for our community-focused research event dedicated to **Brain health, dementia, local services and lived experience perspectives**. The day brought together researchers, healthcare professionals, carers, and people living with dementia to share knowledge, stories, and local supports.

Professional spokespersons from Tallaght University Hospital opened the event with an engaging overview of dementia and the preventative measures that can support long-term brain health. We also had the presence of Maynooth University who presented a captivating talk on *“Walking Back into Memories”*, exploring how reminiscence can reconnect people with meaningful moments.

A highlight of the day was the panel discussion featuring members of the **Irish Dementia Working Group** and **Dementia Carers Campaign Network**, who spoke candidly about their lived experiences as people affected by dementia. Their discussion emphasised the importance of community, togetherness, and being heard.

The event's core message was clear: sharing experiences, accessing support, and staying connected are vital for people living with dementia and those who care for them. The strong turnout reflected the community's commitment to learning, supporting one another, and building a more dementia-inclusive Ireland.

Click [here](#) and keep an eye on our YouTube Channel where we will be posting recordings of the presentations in the coming weeks!

Dementia Research Advisory Team: A Strong Start to 2026

The **Dementia Research Advisory Team** (DRAT) has marked an exceptional beginning to 2026, contributing to **three published research articles in the first quarter alone**. The DRAT is our dedicated Person Public Involvement (PPI) panel where members (people living with dementia and family carers) work with researchers nationwide to co-develop impactful research.

Recognising PPI Contributors as co-authors is a powerful demonstration of PPI becoming deeply embedded into everyday research. Their participation is not only shaping study design and interpretation, but also shifting the wider understanding of what meaningful PPI looks like. The growing commitment across the research community to engage in authentic PPI has been very successful, and researchers continue to recognise the value and insights that they bring.

Below you will find the 2026 publications where you can click on the images to have a read!

STUDY PROTOCOL

Open Access

SENSE-Cog Residential Care: hearing and vision support for residents with dementia in long-term care in Ireland—protocol for a pilot cluster-randomised controlled trial

J. F. Cronin^{1*}, E. Boland², Brenda Buckley³, Niall Curley⁴, Ann El Refaie⁵, Miriam Galvin⁶, Matthew Gibb⁷, Liz Gahan⁸, Brendan Lennell⁹, Aislinn Lopez Vidales¹⁰, Ann Michelle Mullaly¹¹, Nicole Noller¹², Janice Nolan-Palmer¹³, Gerald O'Neil¹⁴, Clara O'Reilly¹⁵, Valeria Raath-Roth¹⁶, Helen Neill-Bennett¹⁷, Katy Tobin¹⁸, Helen Torney¹⁹, Dominic Tierney²⁰ and Trucena Leno²¹

Abstract

Background: Hearing and vision loss is highly prevalent in residents with dementia (RDs) living in long-term care (LTC) facilities. Sensory loss often has a negative impact on quality of life and other dementia-related outcomes. Optimising sensory function may improve dementia-related outcomes in LTC facilities. The SENSE-Cog Residential Care pilot trial will evaluate whether a multi-faceted hearing and vision intervention for RDs and concurrent sensory loss is suitable for definitive testing in a large-scale cluster-randomised controlled trial (RCT) in Ireland and how this can best be achieved.

Methods: This is a 6-month feasibility pilot, multicentre, cluster RCT. Between eight and 11 LTC facilities (with an average of 10 RDs) recruited per home will be randomly assigned to receive either care as usual (CAU) or a multi-component sensory intervention comprising (1) personalised resident hearing and vision support, (2) staff training in sensory health, (3) fostering a sensory-friendly environment, and (4) mapping sensory care provision with community-based audiologists and opticians. The intervention's feasibility, acceptability, and tolerability for residents and staff will be examined. In addition, a battery of exploratory outcome measures will be evaluated for suitability for the definitive trial and to inform the choice of primary and secondary outcome measures.

Discussion: If the SENSE-Cog Residential Care pilot trial demonstrates that the sensory support intervention for residential care is feasible and tolerated in LTC facilities in Ireland, a larger definitive trial to evaluate its effectiveness in improving dementia-related outcomes will be conducted. Training materials, resources, and information will be made available to health and social care providers to enable the implementation of sensory support for RDs in routine LTC, potentially improving the quality of such care in Ireland.

Trial registration: ISRCTN, ISRCTN14604272. Registered 24 February 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN14604272>

Keywords

Long-term care
Sensory loss
Hearing impairment
Vision impairment
Full list of author information is available at the end of the article



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RESEARCH PAPER

Co-designing a structured referral template to enhance dementia diagnosis: a modified e-Delphi study

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Abstract

Background: Dementia care is a health and social care priority, with rising prevalence driven by ageing populations worldwide. Timely and accurate diagnosis improves quality of life, enables access to support and is becoming ever more critical due to the emergence of disease-modifying therapies for Alzheimer's disease. Complex referral pathways can contribute to diagnostic delay and under-diagnosis. A structured, evidence-based referral template could enhance diagnostic efficiency and care quality.

Methods: This study was conducted in two phases. First, a two-round e-Delphi survey was used to achieve consensus on items for inclusion in a dementia referral template. In the second phase, a modified Nominal Group Technique was employed with a multidisciplinary panel of public and patient involvement (PPI) contributors to discuss, refine and prioritise items, ensuring clinical relevance and practical applicability.

Results: The consensus process refined and prioritised 76 potential referral items into a final set of 11 essential components. The resulting concise template balances clinical relevance with usability, potentially supporting more efficient referral and mitigating the highest concerns included cognitive screening scores, rapid deterioration, problems with daily activities and patient safety concerns.

Conclusion: The findings demonstrate the value of structured consensus methods in developing a practical, evidence-based referral template, tailored to optimise dementia diagnostic pathways. This is particularly important in the current evolving

Social Health Experiences and Support Needs of People Living With Young-Onset Dementia: A Qualitative Study

Ziyue Wang¹, Andrew Hunter¹, Carmel Geoghegan^{1,3}, Masood Ahmed Qureshi¹, Martina Davis¹, Hayleigh Kicks¹ and Duygu Sezgin¹

Abstract

Young-onset dementia presents unique challenges, including employment disruption, financial strain, and stigma, which affect various aspects of social health, such as social frailty and social isolation. However, little is known about the experiences of people living with young-onset dementia regarding social frailty and social isolation, and support needs to improve their social health. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences and support needs on social frailty and social isolation of people living with young-onset dementia, to inform strategies and interventions to improve social health in this population. A descriptive qualitative design was employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 community-dwelling individuals living with young-onset dementia in Ireland and the United Kingdom. Participants had been identified as socially frail, socially pre-frail, or socially isolated in a prior survey. Data were collected from December 2024 to March 2025 and analysed thematically. Five themes were identified: (1) Perceiving independence and voice, highlighting autonomy and being heard; (2) Challenges in stability, employment, finance, and family, describing disruptions and need for family-oriented support; (3) Impact on support: living with young-onset dementia and finding hope, discussing the social and psychological barriers, and the importance of early and empowering information; (4) Exclusion from inclusion: building a dementia-friendly environment, bridging the need for addressing stigma and advocacy for public awareness; and (5) Gaps: Limited support and challenges, demonstrating age-related and geographic inequalities and

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TeamUp for Dementia Research - Open Opportunities

[TeamUp for Dementia Research](#) connects people affected by dementia with opportunities to take part in ethically approved dementia research. Members are invited to participate in research projects that align with their stated preferences.

Please find below some spotlighted studies currently recruiting through the service:

****In-person programme for 6 weeks****

**Peer support pilot intervention for people living with
Lewy Body Dementia (LBD) and their care partners.**

The purpose of this project is to provide feedback on a peer support programme known as the Lewy Lounge for people living with Lewy body dementia (LBD) or as a carer for someone who has LBD.

To get involved with this study, please contact
teamup@alzheimer.ie

****In-person activity, above the age of 50****

An investigation of sensory processes in dementia



Research Participants Needed

Do you have Lewy Body disease or closely support someone living with the condition? The Emerald Lewy Team in Trinity College Dublin are currently seeking volunteers to complete and provide feedback on a **peer support** programme called *The Lewy Lounge*.

What does it involve?

- Attending and providing feedback on a 6-week peer support programme
- Completing surveys
- Completing an interview

Participation is voluntary
Information shared is strictly confidential.

For further information:
Contact: Dr Emma O Shea
Email: emma.oshea@ucc.ie
Phone: 0857889499

Logos: UCC, HRB Health Research Board, EMERALD, Trinity College Dublin

