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## 01

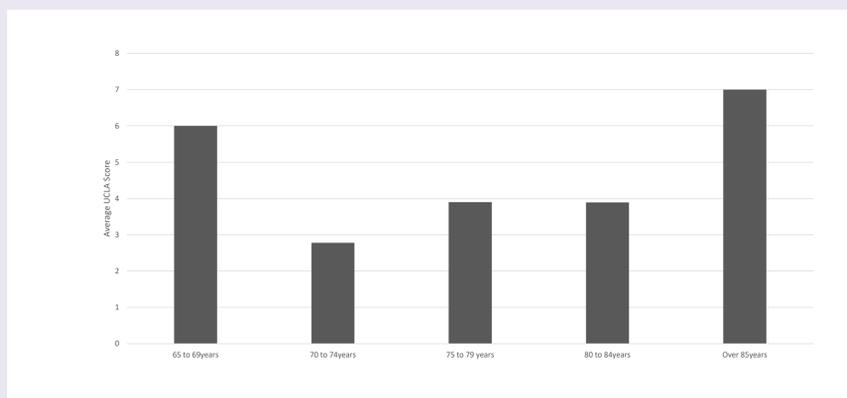
### INTRODUCTION

Loneliness and social isolation have been linked to poorer health outcomes, reduced quality of life and cognitive decline. It is estimated that one third of over 60s will experience a degree of loneliness. Government advice to older adults in Ireland in 2020 to reduce their social activity in light of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to compound this issue. Preliminary findings of an ongoing study investigating loneliness, social isolation and related factors in older adults referred to a Mental Health Service in the North-West of Ireland in 2020 are presented below. The primary study aim is to establish the prevalence of loneliness and social isolation in older adults referred to a Psychiatry of Old Age Service in the North West of Ireland.

## 03

### RESULTS

#### 1. Loneliness Analysis



**Figure 1. Average UCLA score across age groups.** The average perceived loneliness score was 3.62 (maximum score = 10). Higher the score the lonelier the individual. 83.3% of participants (n=40) reported some degree of loneliness (score > 0) and 4.1% (n=2) reported the highest level of loneliness (score of 10).

## 04

### CONCLUSION

Preliminary results illustrate the majority of older adults referred to this mental health service over a time period spanning the COVID-19 pandemic are lonely and socially isolated. This is likely compounded by changes to daily routine during COVID-19 pandemic. This is very concerning given the associated adverse health implications. We hope final results will guide enhancement of clinical care through linkage of mental health services with local agencies, social care supports and use of e-health technologies.

## 02

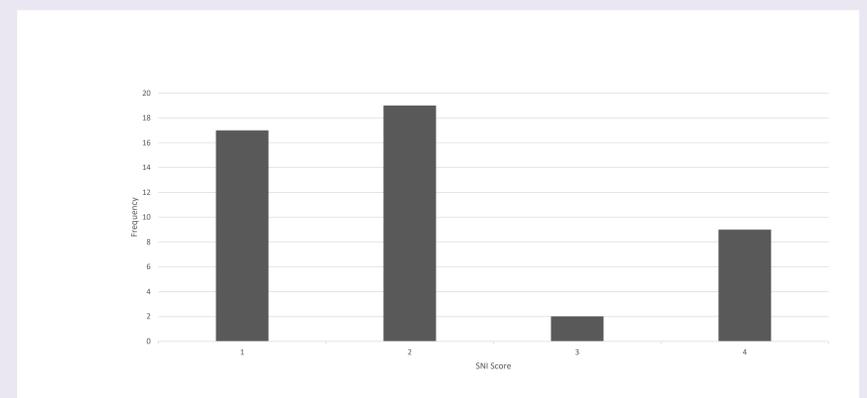
### METHODS

Using a cross-sectional study design, 48 participants were asked to complete UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale, capturing data on perceived loneliness and a social isolation measure; Berkman-Syme Social Network Index, during psychiatric assessment. Information was also captured on other personal, clinical and social factors.

## 03

### RESULTS

#### 2. Social Isolation Analysis



**Figure 2. Distribution of Social Network Index across study population.** A score of 1 denotes mostly isolated individual, score of 2 denotes a moderately isolated individual, a score of 3 denotes a moderately integrated individual and a score of 4 denotes a mostly integrated individual.

75% (n=36) were socially isolated; with 35% (n=17) being 'mostly isolated' and 39% (n=19) 'moderately isolated'. Gender differences were found in the 'mostly isolated' categories with females more isolated than male participants.

## 05

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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