



## University of Limerick President Announces Outstanding Research Collaboration Winner

A decade long partnership between the University of Limerick and the HSE has won the first ever-outstanding research collaboration award, President Kerstin Mey has announced. Following the establishment this year of the President's Research Excellence and Impact Awards, Professor Mey announced the winner of the inaugural Outstanding Research Collaboration Award. The award recognises the long-standing partnership between UL and the HSE, which has benefited patients dealing with multidrug-resistant infections, patients with cystic fibrosis and those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Led by Professor Colum Dunne, Director of Research at University of Limerick's School of Medicine, the collaboration involves a truly transdisciplinary team of microbiologists, designers, engineers, nurses, physiotherapists, paediatricians, respiratory specialists (see link for full list). The powerful collaboration involves strong links between UL and UL Hospitals Group as well as an array of partners and collaborators in the UK, across Europe and the United States.

"The President's Research Excellence and Impact Awards recognise outstanding contributions which are making a real difference in the world," said Professor Mey. "The Outstanding Research Collaboration Award acknowledges research partnerships across all disciplines, career stages, organisations and countries. Understanding infectious disease outbreaks and the microbial causes of infection leads to new prevention and control interventions,



Prof Colum Dunne

education programmes and innovations in medical device and testing technologies."

"Collectively, this team has delivered research findings that would not have been possible except for their shared aspirations, multidisciplinary knowledge and resources. It is in forging partnerships such as this where real innovation will be found and the University of Limerick is at the forefront of this nexus of discovery and impact. It gives me great pleasure to announce the winner and my sincere congratulations go to Professor Dunne and the team," she added.

The awards were organised and adjudicated by the Research Impact Committee chaired by Professor Helena Lenihan, Kemmy Business School. The committee were impressed with the

quality of the applications, however, one clear winner emerged.

Professor Dunne said, "The establishment of the School of Medicine in UL brought new and innovative resources to Limerick. These included new ways of teaching, and new research capabilities. Amongst these were new research-active leaders, Professors and Lecturers, like myself who provided a diversity of views and expertise that complemented those of clinical colleagues in Limerick's hospitals.

Since 2010, I've been privileged to have the support of the University of Limerick and HSE in building a hugely interactive team of clinical, scientific and engineering researchers in the University Hospital Limerick Group and UL, all searching for solutions to real-world infection prevention challenges.

This has resulted in support for early career doctors, PhD and Masters students whose diligence and enthusiasm have improved protection for patients, in Limerick and elsewhere, at risk of infection while in hospital, new ways of working and novel medical devices.

This President's Medal is very much recognition of teamwork and that team's members are based in universities, hospitals, and industry located in Ireland and internationally. What's most exciting is that this is an ongoing programme of work and the Award will encourage us to continue in our efforts," he added.

To view the full list of Collaboration team members, please follow this [Link](#)

## School Launches new Bachelor of Science Programme in Biomedical Science



Dr Catriona Dowling and Prof Pat Kiely

We are delighted to announce a new interfaculty BSc in Biomedical Science from the School of Medicine with our first intake of students in September 2021. This degree responds to increasing demands nationally and internationally to produce Science graduates with strong expertise in Biomedical Science for the Health area and the Life Science industry. These areas are extremely important to Ireland's economy and Ireland's healthcare system and the future growth of both of these sectors.

The Biomedical Science degree is designed as a 4<sup>th</sup> year exit route option for

students who have entered UL via Science Choice (LM123) in the Faculty of Science & Engineering and taken the Bioscience route through years 2 and 3. Students wishing to exit with a degree in Biomedical Science will transfer to the School of Medicine for their 4<sup>th</sup> year. The Biomedical Science degree will provide students with a fundamental knowledge and skillset to pursue a successful career in the area of Biomedical Science. Graduates of the programme will be well positioned to gain an understanding of the importance of partnerships with healthcare professionals and gain employment in areas that design novel approaches in

the diagnosis and treatment of patients. The students will have opportunities to visit Hospital laboratories and interact with healthcare professionals through lectures and introductory clinical skills laboratory sessions. The students will receive newly designed content from the School of Medicine including modules in mammalian tissue architecture, clinical medicine and clinical skills, diagnostic techniques and practices and drug delivery. The students will also engage in a final year project in the School of Medicine, where they will have the opportunity to interact with School of Medicine based academics.

The students will graduate with a degree in Biomedical Science from the School of Medicine and it is expected they will be very attractive for employment due to their innovative and collaborative learning experiences. These students will also be excellent candidates for MSc and PhD Programmes and for application to the Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery (BMBS) Programme.

The course Director is Prof Pat Kiely. A dedicated design team, led by Dr Catriona Dowling, with strong support from Core faculty, administration and technical staff and the Head of School complemented this.

## President's Excellence Award for Contribution to the Campus Community

Professor Liam Glynn and Dr Michael O'Callaghan were the joint recipients of the President's Staff Excellence Award: Contribution to the Campus Community. In conjunction with colleagues from the School of Medicine, they founded #COVIDWATCHIRL, the social media and web presence, which has tracked the Covid-19 pandemic in Ireland. They have been publishing daily/weekly comparative data since the beginning of the outbreak on #COVIDWATCHIRL and on the University of Limerick website <https://www.ul.ie/covid-home/covidwatchirl>. The focus of this endeavour has been to attempt to drive the behavioural change required of our campus community and country to combat COVID-19.

There was an enormous amount of positive feedback from the campus community and the wider community to this to this highly successful endeavour for the guidance, support and reassurance. In addition, the project has gained a national following and numerous media engagements. Liam and Mike have managed to contribute

to several academic publications on the Covid-19 pandemic in Ireland, including "The Covid-19 pandemic in Ireland: An overview of the health service and economic policy response" <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211883720300952>

They were also part of the team that successfully applied for research funding under the Covid-19 Rapid Response umbrella and have a theme lead role in the SFI-funded COVIGILANT project as well as a collaborating role in the EU NPA funded COVIDWATCH-EU-NPA, an international extension of #COVIDWATCHIRL. <https://www.interreg-npa.eu/covid-19/npa-response-group-and-projects/>

YouTube - <https://youtu.be/Z1pFyNIYoM>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/NorthernPeripheryProgramme/posts/3747069961999058>

Twitter - [https://twitter.com/NPA2014\\_2020/status/1356216123793006593](https://twitter.com/NPA2014_2020/status/1356216123793006593)



Prof Liam Glynn

Professor of General Practice



Dr Mike O'Callaghan

Clinical Lead Research Hub (ICGP) and PhD student (UL)



## President's Excellence Award for Leadership



Dr Khalifa Elmusharaf, Senior Lecturer in Public Health, has received well-deserved recognition of his exceptional leadership as the winner of the President's Staff Excellence Awards in Leadership. Dr Elmusharaf has steered the new School of Medicine MSc Public Health Programme to a very successful beginning in August 2020 and has made a significant contribution to

enhancing education in UL to a model that is student centred, competency and project based, and experiential with collaborative on-campus learning. He designed an innovative curriculum that equips students with marketable and transferable skills which was the first in Ireland to be accredited by the European Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation APHEA.

## Chair of the Irish Global Health Network

Dr Khalifa Elmusharaf has been appointed Chair of the Irish Global Health Network. This Network is a prestigious Irish organisation that is funded by Irish Aid, HSE global Health and ESTHER Ireland. Dr Elmusharaf was first appointed to the Board of the Network in 2020. He has more

than twenty years of experience as a clinician, researcher, lecturer and health system consultant in academia, ministries of health, and international organisations in Africa, Middle East and Europe. His appointment as Chair follows a thorough and comprehensive succession process and will enable an

effective transition of the leadership of the Board. Khalifa acts as an advisor to WHO, UNICEF, and UNDP on maternal, child health and non-communicable diseases. He is an associated editor in BMC Public Health, BMC Health Service Research and International Health Journals.

## UL School of Medicine Students National SimWars Champions 2021



Top row left to right: Danielle Cadoret (BMBS Year2), Anna Demian (BMBS Year 4), Catherine Barrington (BMBS Year 2)  
Bottom row left to right: Michael McElligott (BMBS Year 3), Shane Baistrocchi (BMBS Year 3), John McFarlane (BMBS Year2)

Congratulations to the UL School of Medicine (SoM) team, "Flu Fighters Strike Back" who won the National SimWars Competition on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March, which was hosted by UL SoM. The team included medical students Danielle Cadoret, Anna Demian, Catherine Barrington, Michael McElligott, Shane Baistrocchi and John McFarlane.

Huge congratulations also to the SoM

team, "Public Enemas" who were semi-finalists on the day!

The competition was run online and hosted 20 teams from all the Universities on the island of Ireland and approximately 160 attendees. This year the competition also included students from other health professions.

A sincere thanks to Dr Alan Watts (Consultant/Adjunct SL in Emergency

Medicine UHL/UL) for organising this event this year on behalf of UL and to the team that supported him including technical staff, our clinical colleagues from institutions in Ireland and the UK who participated as judges and students who acted as simulated patients.

The School has now won the event in 2020 and 2021. No pressure to our students to go for the "3 in a row" in 2022.

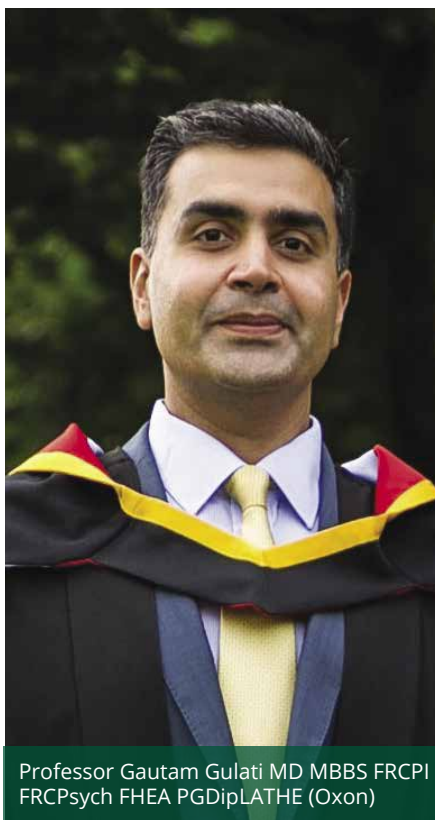
## Adjunct Associate Clinical Professor Gautam Gulati

Professor Gautam Gulati is a Consultant General and Forensic Psychiatrist at University Hospital Limerick and Adjunct Associate Clinical Professor with the University of Limerick's School of Medicine.

Prof Gulati authored a textbook of Psychiatry (Psychiatry, Lecture Notes, 11<sup>th</sup> Edn, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) which remains on the core-reading list for the medical school at Oxford. He was appointed Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist and Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Oxford where he worked until 2014 and he received eight teaching awards during his tenure at Oxford.

Since his return to Ireland in 2015, Prof Gulati has led the Prison Psychiatry service for Limerick prison, and has been awarded Fellowships of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (FRCPsych) and Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (FRCPI). He was subsequently elected Chair of the Faculty of Forensic Psychiatry at the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland.

Professor Gulati teaches on several courses including Medicine, Law,



Professor Gautam Gulati MD MBBS FRCPI  
FRCPsych FHEA PGDipLATHE (Oxon)

Psychology and Pastoral care at the University of Limerick, University College Cork and NUI Galway. He is the national convener of the Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. He sits on the Medical Education and Liaison Group at University Hospital Limerick.

He completed a "Doctor of Medicine" by research at the University of Limerick in 2018, publishing and presenting internationally in the areas of prison healthcare and hunger strikes.

He co-founded the University of Limerick Medico-Legal Research Consortium alongside Professor Colum Dunne (Director of Research, School of Medicine), Professor Shane Kilcommins (Head, School of Law) and Dr Alan Cusack (Director of Post-Graduate Studies at the School of Law).

Prof Gulati recently published a new textbook: Psychiatry for General Practitioners (Psychiatry Algorithms for Primary Care, Wiley-Blackwell, 1<sup>st</sup> Edn, 2021).

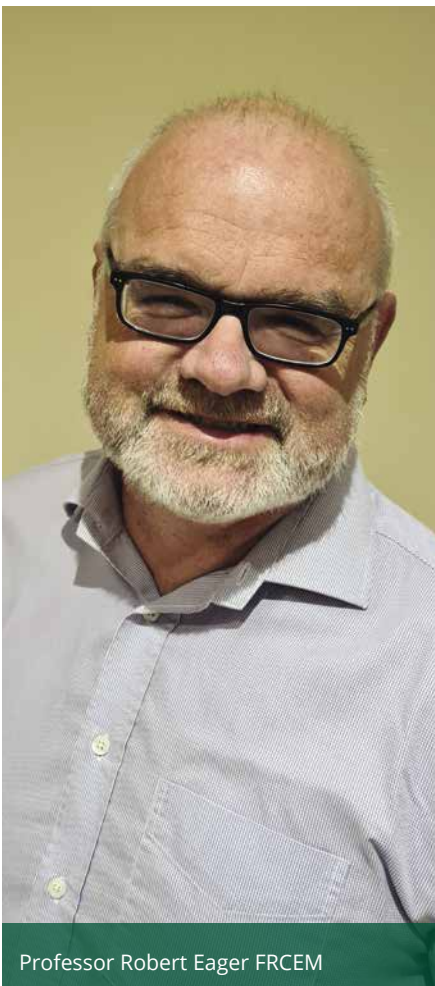
## Adjunct Associate Clinical Professor Robert Eager

Professor Robert Eager FRCEM is a Consultant in Emergency Medicine at the Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore.

A Dublin native, Professor Eager has studied and worked in Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK). After completing the early years of his postgraduate training in Ireland, he moved to Liverpool where he completed his specialist training and was awarded Fellowship of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine in 2004. While in the UK, Professor Eager worked as a Consultant in Emergency Medicine at the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospital NHS Trust and was an honorary lecturer at the University of Liverpool. In his early years as a Consultant, he completed a modular programme in Research Methodology and Data Analysis at the University of Liverpool.

Professor Eager returned to Ireland in 2007 and was appointed as Consultant in Emergency Medicine at the Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore. He has a particular interest in Medical Education, Simulation and Emergency Ultrasound.

Since his return to Ireland, Professor Eager has been an active member of a number of national and regulatory working groups and committees including the Irish Committee for Emergency Medicine Training and the Irish Association for Emergency Medicine and Advisory Group



Professor Robert Eager FRCEM

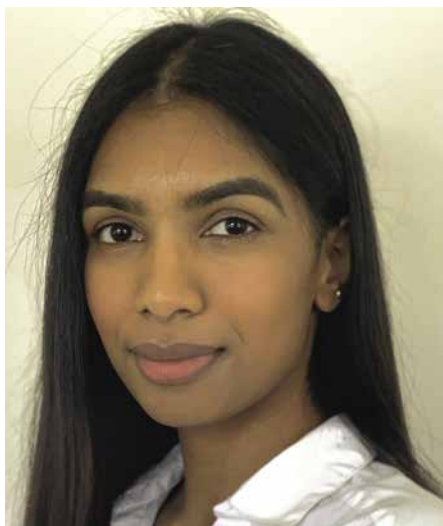
for the Emergency Medicine Clinical Care Programme. He has recently completed his term as chair of the Medical Academic Committee in the Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore and is a member of the Medical Education Liaison Committee between the UL School of Medicine and the Hospital. He has been the chief driving force behind the development of Simulation and Clinical Skills training for Medical Students and non-Consultant Doctors in Tullamore.

Professor Eager teaches on the Human Factors Programme of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and on the Continuous Professional Development Support Scheme. He is an assessor for the Medical Council for Clinical Training Site Inspections and is a member of the Panel of Assessors for Specialist Training. Professor Eager is also one of the National Doctor Training and Planning (NDTP) leads for the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group.

Professor Eager is secretary of Global Emergency Care Skills, an Irish Emergency Medicine charity that provides training to hospital staff in low and middle-income countries. In this role, he has taught in a number of African countries and has presented at the African Conference of Emergency Medicine.



## Hand-hygiene-related Clinical Trials Reported Between 2014 and 2020: A Comprehensive Systematic Review



Thilini Delungahawatta (BMBS Year 3)

Two School of Medicine students, Conor Clancy and Thilini Delungahawatta (BMBS Year 3), under the supervision of Prof Colum Dunne, published a systematic review on hand hygiene in the *Journal of Hospital Infection*.

When we think about combating disease, getting patients home from hospital

earlier and saving healthcare funding, handwashing is less likely to come to mind than novel drugs, modernised facilities and specialised research. Yet, it has been argued that good hand hygiene can achieve what we work so hard to do by every other means – promote patient health and prevent disease.

The systematic review reported that hand hygiene compliance rate in high-income countries averages at around 40%. This means that for every 5 times a healthcare worker (doctor, nurse, healthcare assistant, pharmacist etc.) could be expected to wash their hands, they failed to do so during 3 of those opportunities.

The study corroborated previous evidence that a very small proportion of hand hygiene research takes place in low-income countries, where in some cases, access to a full range of hand hygiene facilities and hand hygiene data is not feasible. Furthermore, despite making up the largest portion of patient interactions out of any single health service component, primary care is featured in only 5% of the papers reviewed. Most clinical hand hygiene research is



Conor Clancy (BMBS Year 3)

conducted in acute medical settings in high-income, western countries.

Common methods for improvement include interventions focusing on: education and training, reminders, infrastructure improvement, feedback, involvement of teamwork and leadership based interventions.

## Irish Global Health Network - Gorey Malawi Health Partnership



Left to right: Isaac Ziba (Director of Social Development, Mzuzu) and Hastings Gondwe (Clinical Officer) with the equipment donated by the School of Medicine General Practice and Public Health Research Group

Dr Joe Gallagher (Adjunct Senior Clinical Lecturer and ULEARN-GP Tutor), spoke at the Irish Global Health Network at the University of Limerick on 1<sup>st</sup> April about the work of the Gorey Malawi Health Partnership is doing in Malawi.

The Gorey Malawi Health Partnership links St John's Hospital in Mzuzu in Northern Malawi with the Palms GP Surgery in Gorey, Co Wexford and focuses on the prevention and management of chronic diseases. With the support of the General Practice and Public Health Research Group in the School of Medicine they have worked to develop pathways for management of conditions such as high blood pressure and heart failure, and more recently, on rheumatic heart disease.

Rheumatic heart disease affects 33 million worldwide, causing significant morbidity and premature death. One significant barrier to its diagnosis is access to cardiac ultrasound. The General Practice and Public Health Research Group in the School of Medicine donated a Butterfly IQ portable ultrasound which has just arrived in Malawi and will allow diagnosis of this condition earlier, with real time education using cloud-based technology to improve training.

## SoloPep International Research Conference Funding for Students

As you may have seen recently, UL spinout company SoloPep Ltd was acquired by an Irish multinational respiratory medical device company in the summer of 2020. The success of SoloPep Ltd in progressing from concept and clinical validation to market launch and subsequent sale in only four years was recognised by the UL Innovation Award 2021 (14<sup>th</sup> April).

The founders and inventors of the SoloPep technology included the School of Medicine's Professor Colum Dunne (CEO, SoloPep Ltd), Professor Deirdre McGrath (Head of School) and Professor Barry Linnane (Consultant Respiratory Paediatrician, UHL).

In line with the University's Intellectual Property Policy, a percentage of the University's revenue from the sale of



SoloPep Ltd was forwarded to the School. Following a request from the inventors, the School of Medicine is delighted to announce the provision of a once-off fund available to the School's undergraduate students (BMBS and Paramedic) and post-graduate research candidates (PhD, MD, Masters).

The funding is €18,000 in total, with €12,000 available to post-graduate research candidates and €6,000 available to undergraduate students (BMBS and Paramedic). This will be allocated on a first come first served basis until the funding has been depleted. The funding will be allocated only for travel to international conferences (once safe travel is again possible) where School research is being presented (oral presentation) and the School of Medicine affiliation is used. The funding can support conference fees, economy class travel and subsistence (for one person only per oral presentation).

Applications for this funding should be submitted for evaluation by the School of Medicine Research Committee to either [patsy.finn@ul.ie](mailto:patsy.finn@ul.ie) or [laura.howard@ul.ie](mailto:laura.howard@ul.ie)

## SoloPep Team wins UL Innovation Award 2021



Congratulations to SoloPep, winners of the 2021 University of Limerick Innovation Award. The Innovation Award is presented to a research team whose research has delivered outstanding impact through successful knowledge transfer to industry #ULInnovationAwards #ULCommercialisation.

The founders and inventors of the SoloPep technology included the School of Medicine's Professor Colum Dunne (CEO, SoloPep Ltd and SoM Director of Research), Professor Deirdre McGrath (Head of School) and Professor Barry Linnane (Consultant Respiratory Paediatrician, UHL).

## Research Culture award



Congratulations to Dr Jon Salsberg who recently received an EHS Research Award for 2020/21. Jon's award was for his work in promoting public and patient involvement in health research and the impact of this on our research culture.



Dr Jon Salsberg, Senior Lecturer in Primary Healthcare Research

## National PPI Ignite Network 2021-2026

The PPI Research Unit is representing UL on a national PPI Ignite Network 2021-2026. Funded by the HRB, the IRC and co-funding from each HEI, the Network is a collaboration between UL, NUI Galway, UCC, UCD, TCD, DCU, RCSI and 10 national partners. It is led from NUI Galway.

Principal Investigator Dr Jon Salsberg and the PPI Ignite Network@UL team will lead a work package on embedding PPI scholarship into postgraduate and undergraduate education. In addition, the team and its local partners will represent UL on national work packages on PPI capacity building, embedding PPI locally and nationally through work on policies and research culture, promoting PPI excellence and

innovation. A key aspect of the work is the development of a strong voice for PPI national and internationally. The UL team can be contacted by email: [pqi-ignite@ul.ie](mailto:pqi-ignite@ul.ie)

Dr Jon Salsberg, Principal Investigator & Senior Lecturer in Primary Health Care Research (PPI)

Úna McInerney, PPI Manager

Professor Anne MacFarlane, Chair of Primary Healthcare Research

Dr Imelda Doolan, Research Office  
Meghan Gilfoyle, PhD student, PPI Research Unit

UL partners are Care Alliance Ireland, Health Research Charities Ireland, the Health Sciences Academy, UL UNESCO Knowledge for Change and Limerick City Community Development Project.



# UL School of Medicine Wins Top Researcher and Student Prizes at the Academic GP Conference



place for oral presentation to Ms Róisín Doogue for her PhD project on, "Towards An Integrated Self-Monitoring Solution for Stroke/TIA: The TASMINS Irish feasibility study and pilot randomised controlled trial"; and to Dr Mike O'Callaghan for his study entitled, "Seroprevalence of SARS-CoV2 infection in General Practice in Ireland".

Kevin Sheridan (BMBS Year 3), under the supervision of his ULEARN-GP tutor in Gorey Co Wexford, Dr Joe Gallagher won the best student presentation award for his project, "Frailty and social supports in a population ages 70 and over attending a chronic disease programme in General Practice".

Representation from our medical students included BMBS Year 2 students, Yasmin Abo Halima, Olivia Hickey and Irene Kiroplis, BMBS Year 3 students, Aubree Worobetz, Kurt Lukas, Aoibhin McCool, Via Alvarez, Gearóid McGeehan and Matthew Laird, BMBS Year 4 students, Anne-Marie Walsh and Patience Mwesigye and 2020 graduate Darragh Rooney. Also representing UL were Morgan Lewis (Year 4 Sport and Exercise Sciences) and Li Jie Helena Yoo (Mid-West GP Specialist Training Scheme). Congratulations to all presenters and award winners!

The Annual Association of University Departments of General Practice in Ireland (AUDGPI) Scientific Meeting was conducted online in March and co-hosted by University College Dublin (UCD) and the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP). Of the 99 conference presentations during the 2-day conference, staff and students from the University of Limerick submitted and presented a total of 26, the highest of any of the institutions across the island of Ireland.

In what was an outstanding display of quality research, the prize for best research project presented at the conference went to, not one but two, representatives of the School of Medicine, both PhD students under the supervision of Professor Liam Glynn. These high quality projects were awarded joint first

## BMBS Alumni Careers Series



Dr Cara Weldrick

The School of Medicine has been working on enhancing engagements with our alumni as we truly value our graduates as having a wealth of knowledge. In order to facilitate this sharing of knowledge and experience, we were delighted to launch the first talk in the BMBS Alumni Careers Series, which we hope will connect current students with alumni.

The first of our Careers Series, "My Medical Career Journey" took place on 25<sup>th</sup> March and was opened by Professor Deirdre McGrath, Head of School. We were delighted to have Dr Cara Weldrick (BMBS Class of 2013) as our first speaker who delivered a fascinating, honest and inspiring presentation that provided invaluable insights into life as a postgraduate trainee and doctor.

We would sincerely like to thank Dr Weldrick, who gave so generously of her time. If any graduate would be interested in participating in our 2021 Careers Series, please contact us at [MedicineAlumni@ul.ie](mailto:MedicineAlumni@ul.ie). #MedicineAtUL

## A Panel Discussion on Domestic Violence for Medical Students



Top to bottom: Dr Nina Monteiro (GP and Lead of the Family Violence Special Interest Group from the Vasco de Gama Movement (VdGM)), Tanya Aziz (BMBS Year 3 student representative of the Health Equity Programme), Denise Dunne (Assistant Director of Adapt Domestic Violence Services, Limerick), Dr Patrick O'Donnell (GP and Clinical Fellow in Social Inclusion), Claire Anderson (Coordinator of Adapt DV Services, Limerick).

In February, students from the School's Health Equity Programme organised a panel discussion on domestic violence for medical students. The panel included Claire Anderson and Denise Dunne (Adapt Domestic Violence Services in Limerick), Dr Nina Monteiro (GP & PhD student from Portugal with special interest in domestic violence) and Dr Sumi Dunne (GP from Ireland with special interest in domestic violence). Topics discussed included the role of physicians in caring for victims of domestic violence, the impact of Covid-19 on domestic violence and the affiliated support services, cultural perspectives on domestic violence, what services are provided by Adapt and resources and opportunities that are available to students and physicians who wish to learn more about this topic. Any students who were not able to attend this event and would like to learn more about this topic are encouraged to message the UL Health Equity Programme page on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ulhep>

## Fulfilling Social Accountability and Creating New Insights: The MSc Public Health Practicum and Research Projects

Students of the MSc Public Health Programme recently completed their 8-week practicum placements at over 15 public health focused organisations and institutions locally, nationally and internationally. These partner sites included the HSE Global Health Programme and National Cancer Control Programme, UL Access Campus, The International NGO KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation and many others.

Working solo or in teams, students gained exposure to the professional environment and further developed their public health-related competencies, whilst producing meaningful outputs to fulfil the partner organisations' objectives. Practicum projects included quality improvement initiatives, primary qualitative research, systematic literature reviews, digital media creation and health promotion activities and more. In addition to being a key learning experience for the students, the practicum placements also help the

MSc Public Health Programme to achieve the social accountability objective of giving service to the public health community at home and overseas.

Now, the students are moving on to their multi-disciplinary research projects, under the supervision of 28 UL staff, as well as 6 of our international Adjunct lecturers. Research project themes include non-communicable diseases, nutrition, environmental health, human rights, reproductive health, gender-based violence, medical education, health services, physical activities and Covid-19. All of the projects have a sustainable development goal focus, mainly targeting SDGs 3, 4, 5, and 10. The UL-based supervisors are drawn from the School of Medicine, the School of Allied Health, the Department of Nursing and Midwifery, the School of Science and Engineering, the Department of Sociology and the School of English, Irish and Communication.

The MSc Public Health team are providing

the students with a full continuum of support, including a series of workshops and webinars, drop-in clinics and action learning sets, to address any research training needs and to ensure the highest standard of outputs. Guided by the School of Medicine Strategy 2020-2025, the research project model was developed to promote research with impact, to enhance international, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research partnerships and to increase the number of top quartile publications.

The MSc Public Health at the University of Limerick is the first Public Health Master's Programme in Ireland to feature an APHEA-validated curriculum and will take on a new cohort of around 60 students in August 2021. The incoming year's students are predominantly non-EU candidates, highlighting international interest in Public Health as a discipline as well as UL as a destination for high-quality Public Health education.



Dr Nuha Ibrahim, Lecturer in Public Health



Dr Steve Macdonald, Lecturer in Public Health, Course Coordinator MSc Public Health Programme



Representative logos of local, national, and international organisations and institutions who acted as partner sites for the MSc Public Health Practicum

## University of Limerick BMBS Year 3 Education Bursaries AY19-20

The School of Medicine continued to donate to student education bursaries for BMBS Year 3 students who gave high performances in the disciplines of Surgery and Medicine in AY19-20. These were funded through the Medical Education Liaison Groups (MELG) in the affiliated hospital sites.

In the Portiuncula University Hospital, Ballinasloe, students Yacoub Hamuth and Larne Jones Whiting were the chosen

recipients of this bursary from their time on clinical placement.

In the South Tipperary General Hospital Clonmel, students Clare Grehan and Aidan O'Dowd were the chosen recipients of this bursary from their time on clinical placement.

In St. Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny, students Jaspreet Padam and Sabina Strashun were the chosen recipients of this bursary from their time on clinical

placement.

In the Midlands Regional Hospital, Tullamore, students Kamyah Mahajan and Ann Marie Walsh were the chosen recipients of this bursary from their time on clinical placement.

In the University Hospital, Limerick, students Aidan Walsh and Jason Aubrey were the chosen recipients of this bursary from their time on clinical placement.



## Teaching Excellence Awards

This year's Teaching Excellence Awards recipients selected by the School of Medicine students are Dr Nazima Abid Hussani (Year 1 and 2) and Prof Dermot Hehir (Year 3 and 4). Dr Lorcán Ó Maoileannaigh who is based at St Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny is this year's recipient of the NCHD Teaching Award. Congratulations to Nazima, Dermot and Lorcán.

## Research Winter Graduations December 2020

Three postgraduate research students graduated in December 2020.

### Amira Mahdi

graduated with a PhD and was supervised by Dr Pat Kiely. Her thesis title was, "The Role of Annexin A2 in the Tumour Microenvironment Mediated Progression of Breast Cancer". Amira is now working as a Post-Doctoral Researcher at Dublin City University.



### Mohamed Elsayed

graduated with an MD under the supervision of Prof Austin Stack. His thesis was, "Comparative Analyses of Mortality and Cardiovascular Morbidity between Peritoneal and In-Centre Haemodialysis. A Propensity Score-Matched Analysis".



### Fintan Feerick

graduated with an MSc under the supervision of Dr Dervla Kelly. His thesis was, "Advanced Paramedics in General Practice in Ireland: An Exploratory Study". Fintan works as an Advanced Paramedic at the National Ambulance Service and contributes to the clinical teaching on the Paramedic Programme.



Congratulations to all three.

## BMBS June 2021 Graduations



BMBS Graduates reciting the Oath

Congratulations to our newest 145 Graduates from the UL School of Medicine's Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery Class of 2021, on the occasion of graduating from their BMBS Programme.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they were conferred in absentia by University of Limerick President Professor Kerstin Mey on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Please follow this link [Here](#) to view the full conferring ceremony. A special thank you to Sinead Loughran for delivering her speech which included an inspiring poem.

## Graduating Class of 2021 Student Medal and Prize Winners

### First Prize for Overall Performance in the Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery Degree Programme

Dr Aidan Walsh

First Prize in the Discipline of Medicine

Dr Aidan Walsh

### First Prize in the Discipline of Surgery

Dr Aidan Walsh

### First Prize in Professional Competencies

Dr Aidan Walsh

### First Prize in the Discipline of Paediatrics

Dr Ann Marie Walsh

### First Prize in the Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Dr Marah Alsayed Hasan

### First Prize in the Discipline of Psychiatry

Dr Niall Heagney

### First Prize in the Discipline of General Practice/Primary Care

Dr Johnny Thornton

### Niall O'Higgins Medal

Dr Aidan Walsh

The UL Hospital Group is partnered academically with the University of Limerick and works closely with the School of Medicine to provide undergraduate and postgraduate education and training across several campuses and in several disciplines. The Niall O'Higgins Medal was established in Professor O'Higgins' honour and symbolises the increasing bonds between our UL Hospital Group and the University of Limerick. The prize is awarded for the best performance in the Medicine and Surgical final clinical exams.

### Reuben Harvey Prize

Dr Marah Alsayed Hasan

The Reuben Harvey Prize is awarded in the Autumn after graduation by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland to the students in each of the Medical Schools in the Republic of Ireland who achieve the highest marks in their class for final year examinations in Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics.

## UL Professor of General Practice addresses the European Parliament Working Group on Cross-Border Cooperation



On 25<sup>th</sup> March, Professor Liam Glynn addressed the European Parliament Working Group on Cross-Border Cooperation, providing unique insights on health and new perspectives on the #Covid-19 pandemic gained from the EU INTERREG funded #COVIDWATCHEU-NPA project. This project was funded as part of the EU INTERREG NPA (Northern Periphery and Arctic) programme Covid-19 rapid response call.

As PI on this project, Professor Glynn formed a representative team from across

the NPA regions and beyond including colleagues from the School of Medicine, Dr Michael O'Callaghan, Prof Cathal Walsh and Ms Monica Casey. Medical student researchers, Olivia Hickey and Dana Pearl, designed, delivered and launched a purpose-built interactive website of weekly comparative Covid-19 case, death and testing data from across the EU and NPA regions: <https://covidwatcheu-npa.shinyapps.io/covid/>

The project has made a significant contribution to the public health effort

in terms of individual behaviour change across the NPA regions and has provided learnings and recommendations to inform countries and regions as they try to navigate their way through the next phases of the Covid-19 pandemic including:

- » High Covid-19 cases correlate with societal restrictions, economic damage and Covid-19 deaths. More sparsely populated regions experienced approximately half the Covid-19 deaths than more urbanised within the same countries.
- » When Covid-19 activity is high, which is more likely in larger and more connected countries, overall negative consequences for the region will be more severe.
- » Important aspects of a country's response include: speed of response, adequate testing and tracing systems, control of borders, involvement of regional health authorities and clear communication to the public.

Perhaps most strikingly, it has provided evidence how NPA regions have often fared better and been more resilient in public health and economic terms during the Covid-19 pandemic. This provides much hope for the future and an opportunity to re-imagine lives and livelihoods in such rural and remote regions.

## BMJ Case Report - Case of Paediatric Catatonia Precipitated by Antipsychotic Withdrawal in a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder



Dr Mohd Faisal, Clinical Tutor in Psychiatry, MD, MRCPsych, MCPSychI

Dr Mohd Faisal recently had a case report published in the prestigious BMJ. The case presents challenges of accurately diagnosing and managing catatonic symptoms in adolescent patients with autism spectrum disorder. The paper also discusses the potential risk of precipitating catatonia following the discontinuation of antipsychotic treatment that has been prescribed for a prolonged duration.

## Dr Jim Slein Research Bursary in Substance Misuse or Health Inequalities/Inequity 2020

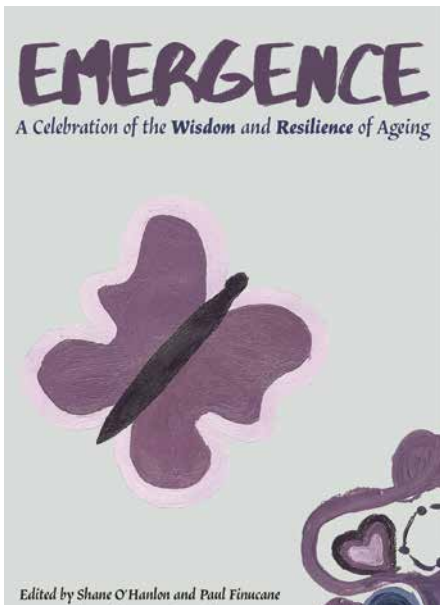
Dr Patrick O'Donnell was awarded the 2020 Dr Jim Slein Research Bursary in Substance Misuse or Health Inequalities by the Irish College of General Practitioners. The prize was awarded based on the manuscript of the latest publication from his PhD on social exclusion and health. The bursary will support publication of that work. Dr Slein was a GP based in Dublin city who had a strong interest in inequities in health and addiction and his family have created this award in his honour. This bursary was previously awarded to Dr Lisa Moran, Senior Lecturer Clinical Skills, for her MD research on opioid substitution treatment.



Dr Patrick O'Donnell, Clinical Fellow in Social Inclusion



## Emergence Anthology



"I'm telling you . . . Joxer . . . th' whole worl's . . . in a terr . . . ible state o' . . . chassis". So spoke Captain Jack Boyle in Sean O'Casey's 1924 play Juno and the Paycock. Almost a hundred years after they were first uttered, Boyle's words still resonate. By any definition, 2020 has been a year of chaos ('chassis') the like of which many of

us will not have previously encountered. Yet, the old, and particularly the very old in our midst, will have seen it all before. An Irish person born in 1924 might well argue that his/her entire life has been conducted against the background of regular 'states o' . . . chassis'. Think of the events that such people will not only have lived through but in which they will have participated: the Great Depression of the 1920s and 30s; the Economic War with Britain; World War II; further economic depressions that resulted in mass unemployment and mass emigration; the threat of nuclear war; domestic and international political instability. Add to these some of the major health issues of the past 100 years: epidemics of poliomyelitis and diphtheria, the scourge of tuberculosis, the threat of BSE and of HIV/AIDS. Further, add the individual and personal losses that no nonagenarian will have escaped, such as the death of parents, spouse, siblings and even of children.

In experiencing and surviving such events, the old and the very old in our midst will as a matter of course have been obliged to come to terms with their life experiences, to develop a sense of perspective and to build resilience. Such resilience generates

the ability not only to survive the chaos, but also to find meaning, satisfaction and causes for celebration in life and in living. As health professionals who encounter older people every day, we are regularly inspired by the stories that they share with us and by their wisdom, patience and tolerance. We've witnessed their times of sadness, loss and pain and have been further inspired by daily examples of courage, acceptance and resilience. For those who choose to see it, ageing and the attainment of old age are matters of great beauty.

Against this background, it struck us as an opportune time to bring together this collection of poetry and prose relevant to ageing. In so doing, we invited geriatricians on the island of Ireland, whether still working or retired, to nominate a poem and a piece of prose for inclusion. This has generated a huge variety of material, reflecting the broad experiences of those contributing. We hope that readers enjoy the anthology as much as we have enjoyed drawing together.

Please follow this link to purchase a copy [www.emergenceanthology.com](http://www.emergenceanthology.com)

Shane O'Hanlon and Paul Finucane

## Health Fusion Challenge by Bukola Bolarinwa

The National Health Fusion Team Challenge final took place on 24<sup>th</sup> of March and I was lucky enough to represent the University of Limerick. The Health Fusion Team Challenge is a challenge that focuses and highlights the importance of the multidisciplinary team, teamwork and communication in the management of health and illness. It involves students from multiple healthcare disciplines working together and coming up with a management plan for a presented case study. This year, the case study focused on an Afghan woman who has gestational diabetes, as well as other psychological and social needs.

In this year's competition, four teams took part, representing various colleges from Ireland, UL, TCD, NUIG and UCC. Under normal circumstances, the competition would have been held face-to-face in front of a live audience. However, due to Covid-19, the competition was moved online. This brought new challenges and opportunities to this very exciting competition. Therefore, instead of presenting the case as would normally happen, the participating teams had to come up with inviting yet informative ways to present their case to an online audience.

In order to achieve this objective, my team and I made use of an animation software



that allowed us to present our proposed management plan as animations that followed our patient as she met and consulted with various members of a multidisciplinary team.

I thoroughly enjoyed my experience in the Health Fusion Challenge. It gave me first-hand experience of patient care and the importance of a multidisciplinary team in the management of patients. This is a competition I would encourage everyone to participate in because as future healthcare professionals, it is important that from early on in our careers, we understand the importance of collaboration, teamwork and patient-centred care.

## 2021 UHL Anaesthesia Prize



Congratulations to Phelim Ryan (BMBS Year 4), who won the 2021 UHL Anaesthesia Prize for his essay titled, "Perceived Injustice and the Therapeutic Alliance in Chronic Pain. A Review".

A sincere thanks to Prof Dominic Harmon and the Department of Anaesthesia at UHL who run this competition each year for our UL School of Medicine students and which attracts a very high standard of submissions.



## Prize Winners: Humanities and Arts in Medicine Module

by Prof James O'Hare, Module Lead, Professional Competencies BMBS Year 3 and 4.



Tatiana's Visual Arts Prize winning sculptures, "Dogs in Medicine, Dogs as Medicine"



Tatiana with her dogs

The winners of the Year 3 AY 2019-20 Humanities in Medicine Arts Student Selected Module (SSM) have been announced. The Visual Arts Prize was won by Tatiana Wagner for her work, "Dogs in Medicine, Dogs as Medicine". The Writing and Performing Arts Prize was won by Liam O'Donoghue for his scholarly essay, "Modernity and Pseudoscience: Poe and Medical Developments and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century".

Tatiana's work is a tableau of three pairs of miniature Papier Mache sculptures depicting beneficial scenes of relations between dogs and humans. The work is charming, touching and skilful. Tatiana learned her media from scratch and by trial and error went on to portray three deep bonds of friendship. The first a medical student and her dog, the second

a child with autistic spectrum disorder joyfully interacting with a dog and the third, a faithful companion accompanying an elderly lady. There is growing scientific literature on the many mental health-supporting roles of dogs as "Medicine". The work shows originality, clear vision and good craftsmanship, achieving an impressive aesthetic whole. Her reflection, which explains her work, is authentic and touching. Her conclusion is, "The love of dogs depicted in my project has healing properties which we can further research, appreciate and use in Medicine as a Medicine".

Liam O'Donoghue's essay is an investigation of Edgar Allen Poe, the American 19<sup>th</sup> Century novelist and poet. The work explores the interface of Medicine and literature in a period of rapid intellectual and professional change. The early 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw the emergence of Medical science and its struggle with pseudo-science (e.g. phrenology). Liam discussed physical and psychological entities described in remarkable detail in Poe's works, including Epilepsy, Porphyria, Marfan's Syndrome and Yellow Fever, before some were clearly characterised in Medical literature. In Liam's words the essay, "provides a glimpse into how developing Medical thought and practice, were interpreted by and influenced the broader population in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century". Liam's essay was lucid, relevant and well researched. The review is particularly relevant, given the re-emergence of the struggle between



Liam O'Donoghue, winner of the Written and Performing Arts Prize for his essay, "Modernity and Pseudoscience: Poe and Medical developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century"

Medical science and pseudo or even anti-science.

The history of Medicine is sometimes thought of as a fusty and redundant topic. However, over the years in the SSM project, students have provided fascinating investigations linking the forgotten past of Medicine to the present and reminding us of our not so respectable intellectual origins as a profession.

The catalogue of student SSMs are currently available on Sulis. A School of Medicine webpage is being planned in order to highlight the many themes and outstanding works of students over the years.