



Irish College of
Ophthalmologists
Eye Doctors of Ireland
Protecting your Vision

Newsletter

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Message from the President

Dear Members,

Welcome to our latest edition. As we near the year end, we reflect on what has been both an exciting and challenging year and also look to the future of our specialty, as we eagerly await the publication of the HSE Primary Eye Care Report in the coming weeks.

The 2nd Annual ICO Winter Meeting on December 1st will be an opportunity for members to discuss the report, and the future plans for the integration of hospital and community care.

It will coincide with the publication of the Model of Eye Care document. The College is anxious for a commitment from Government and the Department of Health that the appropriate funding will be allocated to allow for implementation of the recommendations set out.

It was wonderful to see Ireland host two significant international ophthalmic meetings in Dublin this year. Congratulations to Donal Brosnahan and Kathryn McCreery on their coordination of BIPOSA in October and to Dara Kilmartin and Conor Murphy with regards to the 9th International Symposium on Uveitis last August.

The ICO also commend Marie Hickey-Dwyer on her superb organisation each year of the Adare Retinal Meeting which goes from strength to strength. Congratulations to trainees Sinead Connolly and Reinold Goetz on receiving the ICO/Novartis Bursary Award for 2016. The College is enthused by the outstanding calibre of entries each year for consideration. Congratulations also to Elizabeth McElnea and Andrea Ryan, the winners of the inaugural Bayer/ICO Clinical Fellowship.

This edition of the newsletter also highlights just some of the wonderful work by our members both at home and abroad at making a real difference to eye health care delivery in communities.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with many of you at the Winter Meeting in December.

With best wishes
BILLY POWER



ICO Winter Meeting 2016

The ICO Winter Meeting will be held on Thursday December 1st in The Gresham Hotel, Dublin. Mr Brian Murphy, Head of Planning, Performance and Programme Management in the Primary Care Division in the HSE will give a talk on the Primary Care Review Report, followed by a discussion session with our members on the planned integration of hospital and community care.

Guest speaker, Mr Andy Cassels-Brown, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon at the Leeds Teaching Hospital Unit and Leeds Community Eye Health Programme Lead will give a talk on the experience in Leeds of implementing and

delivering an integrated care model.

The College's Ethics Committee will present on their work on the development of a series of patient information leaflets which are aimed at supporting both doctors and patients during the consent process. A separate guideline document on the process has also been drafted. These documents will be available on the ICO website for patients to access and also to our members as a template for their use.

The RAMI Winter meeting will follow during the afternoon.

In Trinity College that same evening, Mr Frank Larkin,

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Frank Larkin, Consultant Ophthalmologist in the Cornea and External Diseases service at Moorfields Eye Hospital, will give the annual Montgomery lecture at Trinity College Dublin on December 1st.



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Irish College of Ophthalmologists
121 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.
Tel 01 402 2777 · info@eyedoctors.ie
www.eyedoctors.ie · t: @eyedoctorsirl

If you would like to make any suggestions for future issues of the College Newsletter please contact
Siobhan on
siobhan.kelly@eyedoctors.ie

Consultant Ophthalmologist in the Cornea and External Diseases service at Moorfields Eye Hospital, will give the annual Montgomery lecture.

Mr Larkin's Lecture 'Accepting the unacceptable: Prevention and treatment of rejection of donor cornea' will illustrate the varied appearances of corneal transplant rejection, immune privilege of donor cornea and its erosion, pathways to rejection, and the management of high rejection risk patients in 2016. He undertakes or supervises over 150 transplants annually.

Mr Larkin's research has mainly concerned corneal transplantation, ranging from the pathways to immune rejection in experimental models and biology of the corneal endothelium to graft outcomes in patients. He has published over 100 papers in peer-reviewed journals, edited four books and written 12 book chapters. More generally he is an advocate of research in cornea and external eye diseases, both by supporting trainee clinicians from numerous countries in full-time research and in his role in the UK's National Institute for Health Research Biomedical Research Centre for Ophthalmology, of which he has deputy director since 2007 and director of the NIHR Moorfields Clinical Research Facility since 2008. The BRC has become the major UK government resource for translational research and its corneal theme encompasses limbal stem cell therapy, imaging, pathogenesis studies in inflammatory disorders and transplantation.

Please note that this year's Montgomery Lecture and meetings are being held on a Thursday not a Friday as is usual - this is to avoid a clash with the Joint Irish & UKISCRS Refractive Surgery Meeting.

The International Symposium on Uveitis



Dara Kilmartin, Conor Murphy, and Professor Janet Davis, President of the International Uveitis Study Group pictured at the 9th International Symposium on Uveitis which took place in Trinity College Dublin from the 18-21 August.

The four day event welcomed an international audience of ophthalmologists, researchers and practitioners from other fields including immunology, genetics and rheumatology who participated in discussions of new topics in experimental and clinical uveitis, mechanisms of the disease, and innovative therapies.

The programme presented a mix of basic science and clinical research addressing many of the questions affecting specialists in ocular inflammation and aimed to provide grounding for continued discovery and innovation in the field for years to come.

Rotary Ireland Conference



Kate Coleman, founder of research and NGO 'Right to Sight' was invited to speak at this year's Rotary Ireland Conference. Over 400 international and national delegates gathered to discuss some of the key social and humanitarian issues which Rotarians play a role in tackling and supporting people in need.

Winners of ICO/Novartis Eye Research Bursary 2016 announced at Annual Adare Retinal Meeting

Potential new areas for therapeutic treatment of Primary Open-Angle Glaucoma and Dry Eye Disease in Sjögren's Syndrome focus of awarded studies

Two research projects have been awarded funding from the ICO/Novartis Research Bursary 2016-17. The winners were announced at the Adare Retina Meeting which took place in Adare, Co Limerick on Thursday, 29th September.

The first study, led by Sinead Connolly, is focused on developing new therapies for dry eye disease in Sjögren's syndrome, an auto-immune condition characterised by severe dry eye.

The second study, led by Reinold Goetz, is examining potential new areas for therapeutic targeting in the treatment of primary open angle glaucoma. The research goal of Reinold's study is to determine what is happening on a molecular and biochemical level to cause these fibrotic changes at the trabecular meshwork (TM) and fibrotic changes at the lamina cribosa LC.



Pictured (L-r): Alexander Fraser, Deirdre Townley, Frank Kinsella, Patrick Talty, Marie Hickey-Dwyer, Geraldine McBride, Catherine Cleary, Patricia Quinlan and Dara Kilmartin.

Speaking at the announcement of the winners in Adare, Marie Hickey-Dwyer, commented that "the standard of research projects submitted to the ICO for consideration for the award has been outstanding each year, 2016 being no exception. After a very

competitive interview process, Dr Connolly and Dr Goetz were deemed worthy recipients of this year's award.

"The ICO commend these young doctors for their outstanding commitment to examining potential future therapies for eye conditions, and their focus on improving the quality of life for patients."

Sinead Connolly's research is being carried out under the supervision of Conor Murphy at the Ocular Immunology Group at the Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics, Royal College of Surgeon's Ireland.

Commenting on the significance of being awarded funding for her project at the presentation in Adare on September 29th, Sinead Connolly said: "The ICO-Novartis Research Bursary will allow me to validate my initial nanoparticle work. I hope to then move on to explore the role of some of the other microRNAs found to be dysregulated in our



Reinold Goetz and Sinead Connolly pictured with Marie Hickey-Dwyer and Jennifer Coppins, Medical Advisor, Novartis Ireland at the announcement of the winning projects for the ICO/Novartis Eye Research Bursary 2016-17 at the Annual Adare Retinal Meeting.

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cohort of patients with Sjögren's Syndrome. It will also facilitate the running of a research clinic to expand the number of patients and patient samples in our biobank, and promote further high-quality research in an often-overlooked condition."

Speaking at the presentation of his award, Reinold Goetz said, "Winning this bursary will allow me to perform important research in glaucoma, which is the leading cause of irreversible blindness in the world. Without this funding, we would not be able to carry out these experiments. Our goal is to find out what causes the intra-ocular pressure to go up and what causes the optic nerve damage in glaucoma, but on a molecular level. This will hopefully allow scientists to target glaucoma in a new way, creating novel treatments for this blinding disease. I could not be more grateful for this opportunity."

This research is being carried out in the Catherine McAuley Research Laboratory in Dublin under the supervision of Colm O'Brien, Professor of Ophthalmology UCD and at the Biosciences Laboratory University College Cork under the supervision of Prof. Tom Cotter, Professor of Biochemistry UCC.

Dr. Simon Schmid, Medical Director, Novartis Ireland said, "Novartis is delighted to support research and education in ophthalmology in Ireland. We are particularly proud to fund this bursary, which helps support the development of the future leaders in ophthalmology. This year's entries were of a very high calibre and I'd like to congratulate the winners and wish them well in their research and future careers".

The winners of the ICO/Novartis Eye Research Bursary will present an update on their work at the ICO Annual Conference 2017.

DR SINEAD CONNOLLY **"Design of Nanoparticle-based MicroRNA Therapeutics in Sjögren's Syndrome"**

Dry eye disease (DED) is a highly prevalent age-related ocular condition associated with reduced quality of life and high health care costs. Current therapies, including artificial tears and anti-inflammatory agents, have been largely inadequate and there is an unmet need for new therapies.

Sjögren's Syndrome (pSS), is an inflammatory disease, which primarily affects mucous membrane epithelia leading to severe dry eyes and dry mouth. Dysregulated expression of Type 1 IFNs and pro-inflammatory cytokines is associated with pSS. Recently, non-coding microRNAs (miR) have been shown to regulate inflammation, suggesting that miR-based strategies hold diagnostic and therapeutic potential in DED. We hypothesise that a panel of miRs which we have identified to be dysregulated in the conjunctival epithelial cells (CECs) of pSS patients may contribute to disease pathology by influencing cytokine expression.

Having demonstrated that one of the miRs which was found to be dysregulated in pSS patients directly interacts with Pellino 3, an interferon-regulating gene, we propose that it regulates a pathway of pathogenic significance in pSS and is thus a plausible target for the development of a novel therapeutic agent.

A nanocarrier formulation based on the biodegradable cationic polymer chitosan has been optimized to encapsulate and deliver antagomir. These nanoparticles offer a biocompatible and efficient means of delivering antisense oligonucleotides to primary expanded conjunctival epithelial cells to modulate miR expression, in so doing translating microRNA research to the clinical

setting. Preliminary real time PCR results demonstrate efficacy of these nanoparticles decreasing miR expression and increasing expression of its anti-inflammatory gene target Pellino 3.

DR REINOLD GOETZ **"Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS), fibrosis and NOXs in Glaucoma"**

Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the world, affecting millions of people. The most common type of glaucoma, primary open angle glaucoma (POAG), features raised intraocular pressure (IOP), degeneration of retinal ganglion cells, optic disc changes and visual field loss. Though the exact molecular link between raised IOP and consequent retinal ganglion cell degeneration is ill-defined, IOP has been the main therapeutic target in glaucoma. We now understand that fibrotic changes at the level of the trabecular meshwork (TM) contribute to the raised IOP seen in POAG. We also know that fibrotic changes at the lamina cribosa (LC) block axonal transport of neurotrophic factors which leads to retinal ganglion cell degeneration. Our research goal is to determine what is happening on a molecular and biochemical level to cause these fibrotic changes at the TM and LC. NADPH oxidase 4 (NOX4) has been implicated in numerous fibrotic diseases. Upregulation of NOX4 causes abnormally high levels of reactive oxygen species (ROS) which leads to fibrosis. In our research we will culture human TM and LC cells, add pro-fibrotic stimuli and then determine if NOX4 is up-regulated. By demonstrating the pathway through which fibrosis occurs both at the TM and the LC, we may open up entirely new areas for therapeutic targeting in glaucoma.

Minister for Health formally opens new dedicated Eye Emergency Department at the Mater Hospital



Minister for Health, Mr Simon Harris is pictured with David Keegan and Tim Fulcher at the official opening of the new Eye Emergency Department at The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin on September 6th.

A new Eye Emergency Department (EED) was formally opened by the Minister for Health, Mr Simon Harris, at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital in Dublin on Tuesday 6th September.

The opening of the EED represents Phase 1 of the planned development of the ophthalmology department at the hospital. Phase 2 of the development, which has been approved by Ireland East Hospital Group (IEHG), is to build an expanded outpatient department, a diagnostics department, a new ophthalmology ward (to include in-patient beds, a day ward, an injection suite and laser rooms) and a new operating suite.

Opening the new EED, Minister Harris said "The opening of this Eye Emergency Department is testament to the determination of staff and management at the hospital to move forward, to continuously improve, and to deliver the best outcomes for patients. I know it will have a major positive impact for other hospital departments and I'm very glad to attend today's event."

Speaking at the launch, Tim Fulcher, said, "We are delighted to have this much needed new facility up and running at the Mater Hospital. The Eye Emergency Department sees

over 12,000 patients per year, a figure which has been increasing year-on-year. To date, these patients have been seen in the setting of the ophthalmology outpatient department which has resulted in serious overcrowding issues. The opening of this new facility has immediately resulted in a significant decongestion in the outpatients department."

Tim highlighted that among the improvements to services at the new facility is the development of an electronic patient record for the EED visit, resulting in reduced administrative burden and facilitates audit. The electronic patient record also automatically generates a discharge letter which is sent to the referring GP.

The Eye Emergency Department at the Mater Hospital is open from 8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Outside these hours, patients present through the main emergency department or by prior arrangement with the on-call doctor.

ICO Communications

A reminder to all members that the College is always very happy to receive any news in relation to eye health developments (local or national) that could be shared with media contacts and/or via the College website, newsletter and social media.

We endeavour to keep the ICO website www.eyedoctors.ie updated with events and news but we have no doubt there is more information to be shared. Please feel free to get in touch with ICO Communications Manager ciara.keenan@eyedoctors.ie with any stories of interest to our members and/or external audiences. You can also keep up to date with ICO news on Twitter [@eyedoctorsirl](https://twitter.com/eyedoctorsirl)

Medical Ophthalmology EU Directive Confirmation

The ICO is pleased to advise our members that as of the 24th May this year, the Medical Council has confirmed that Medical Ophthalmologists trained in Ireland can now apply for a Certificate of Specialist Doctor in order to move freely within EU-EEA member states.

The relevant updated annex can be viewed on the www.eurlex.europa.eu website.

Doctors trained in Ireland and registered in the speciality of ophthalmology on the specialist division of the register can now benefit from automatic recognition of their specialty qualification across the EU member states.

Report by ChildVision



The following report prepared by ChildVision for the ICO Newsletter outlines the scope of services and highlights the evolving nature of the organisation in response to the needs of children referred with multi disabled visual impairment (MDVI) and the support available to families. Ophthalmologists play a crucial role in the referral process, allowing for early intervention services which aim to minimise the disabling impact of visual impairment, and maximising each child's potential.

ChildVision, the National Education Centre for Blind Children is a dynamic organisation, evolving and developing as the needs of the children and families who use our services change. Fifteen years ago the emphasis was to support children living away from home attending primary or secondary education designated for those with a visual impairment. The residential service facilitated their quest for academic excellence and the independence skills that would enable progression into further or third level education and employment. Most had a visual impairment only, ranging from partial sight to total blindness and those with additional medical, physical, sensory or cognitive needs were a tiny minority. To some extent this image of our service has remained, however the reality is very different.

The children who use the service:

ChildVision works with children and young adults from birth to twenty-two years of age.

The profile of children using the service has changed from visual impairment only to children with a diverse range of needs and abilities; cultural, social and economic backgrounds. It is widely

acknowledged that there is an increase in the number children born prematurely who present with a range of profound and complex disabling conditions in addition to varying levels of sight loss. These children could be described as multi disabled visually impaired (MDVI).

ChildVision uses the criteria of visual impairment and two other disabilities to consider that a child is MDVI. This visual impairment may be ocular or neurological. The other disabilities may be any combination of two or more of the following sensory (hearing), physical, medical, speech and language, intellectual/ cognitive disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) with varying levels of severity. The most important consideration is the impact of the combination of disabilities on the child's learning and development. Each child is unique, as a result addressing their educational, social, emotional, physical and medical needs has been a challenge to the established services. ChildVision has had to be proactive and imaginative to address the changing profile of its service users.

Children at ChildVision present with many conditions including cortical visual impairment (CVI), optic nerve damage and visual loss due to tumours, accompanied by a

wide variety of other disabilities including, diabetes insipidus (water), diabetes mellitus (sugar), Aperts Syndrome, Reynaud's Syndrome, neuroblastoma and opticblastoma, nephritis, hydrocephalus involving VP shunts, epilepsy, hydrocephalus and autism.

Figures available from the 2010 to 2014 Annual Reports of the National Physical and Sensory Database Committee (Health Research Board) identify that approximately 70% of children with a visual impairment have medical needs or an additional disability and that 33% of children with a visual impairment have two or more additional disabilities, and meet the criteria of MDVI. Our experience of the children using our services confirms these findings and is illustrated in the following tables describing the children in our Preschool in 2016. Visual impairment is considered to be the child's primary disability and the other disabilities included; cognitive impairment, physical impairment, autistic spectrum disorder, medical condition/needs, other sensory impairment. Children with a visual impairment only are a relatively small percentage of our service users while most children have between one and four additional disabilities.

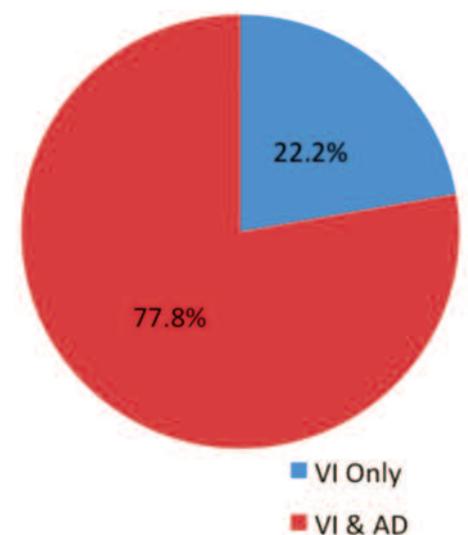


Table One: Children with a visual impairment only, compared to children with a visual impairment and additional needs

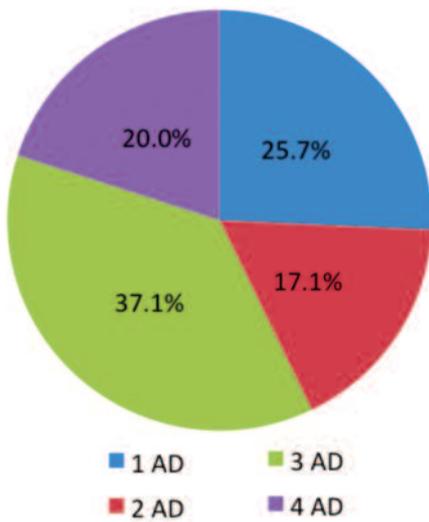


Table Two: Children with visual impairment and additional disabilities: breakdown of the number of additional disabilities

Enabling each child to reach his or her unique potential is at the core of ChildVision services. As the needs of the children using our services have changed so too have our services and the range of professionals providing them.

Children are supported by an interdisciplinary team comprising of Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapist, Nurses, Preschool Teachers, Habilitation Specialists (Orientation and Mobility, Independence Skills, Functional Vision Skills), Vocational Education Trainers, Social Care Staff, a sessional Psychologist, these are in turn supported by Family Resource, Library, National Braille Production, Equine Therapy Centre and Training Department. No single person or profession has all the answers to working with children with complex needs but by working together we provide a holistic approach, which seeks to maximise each child's learning experience and quality of life.

ChildVision's Assessment Service is an excellent example of our holistic approach. It is a national service available to children from all over Ireland. The assessment team uses a multidisciplinary play or task based approach, depending on the age and abilities of the child. The assessment looks at the impact of the child's visual impairment on all areas of his or her development. Following the assessment, a detailed report with recommendations is provided to

parents and other services the child may attend to maximise his or her potential.

How can parents apply for the assessment service?

They can apply directly to the Assessment Officer, or can be referred by another service.

We would like to encourage Ophthalmologists to refer children and provide a current ophthalmology report. Current visual information such as diagnosis, visual acuity and visual field, provides the assessment team with a valuable starting point for their functional assessment i.e. how the visual impairment impacts on the child's development and how they manage in their day to day lives. There has been a significant increase in the number of children with a diagnosis of cortical visual impairment presenting for assessment and using our services, therefore we welcome referrals from Neurologists also.

Following the referral, parents are asked to complete a background information form, which asks them to describe the needs of their child in detail, this is supported by reports from other professionals. Ophthalmologists can greatly assist this process by providing as much visual information as possible.

ChildVision recognises the importance of early intervention in minimising the disabling impact of visual impairment, and maximising each child's potential to achieve. As a result we operate special preschools in Dublin and Cork which provide visual stimulation programmes to enable the children to learn to use their vision to the best of their ability. Preschool also prepares children for mainstream or special education with pre-braille and mobility skills.

We also provide support services to primary and secondary schools based on or close to our campus. Children in these schools can avail of our therapies and nursing support. A residential Vocational Education programme for students in the 16 to 22 year age group, who have a visual impairment and additional disabilities, teaches QQI approved

modules over a four year period. Vocational students may have attended mainstream or special schools and come to develop skills and knowledge which will enable them to attain greater independence and move onto further education or training or employment.

Our National Braille Production unit produces all of the text books required by children with a visual impairment attending mainstream and special schools. Books are produced in braille, large print and DAISY files. Our new library provides works of fiction in alternative formats and also houses an excellent resource library for parents and professionals.

We run a number of accredited courses; our highly successful QQI Level 5 Learn Braille course in reading and writing braille by sight has been running for nine years. The braille unit has noted a significant increase in the demand for school texts in braille since the course started; the teachers and special needs assistants who have completed the courses are able to support the children in their classrooms learning braille. Our Certificate in Higher Education: *Working with People with a Visual Impairment* has been running for four years now.

We work closely with Temple Street Hospital, housing Low Vision, Ophthalmology and Prosthetic Eye Clinics on our site in Drumcondra.

We welcome visitors to our campus, particularly children with a visual impairment, their families and any professionals who are working with them. We are happy to show what services are on offer to children from all over the country. Visits can be arranged by contacting Doreen Smyth on 01-8373635 or by emailing info@childvision.ie



ChildVision

National Education Centre for Blind Children
Gracepark Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9,

Ph: 01-8373635,

Website: www.childvision.ie

BIPOSA 2016

The 2016 British Isles Paediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (BIPOSA) meeting was held in The Printworks, Dublin Castle from the 12-14th October and was attended by over 300 ophthalmologists and orthoptists.

Prof Sir Peng Khaw who outlined the significant developments in the management of paediatric glaucoma, which have resulted in better outcomes, delivered the Claud Worth medal lecture. The principles of safe surgery techniques were outlined and the role of anti-metabolites and tube drainage devices in paediatric glaucoma.

Vision scientist Prof Anthony Norcia, Stanford University, delivered the Roger Trimble lecture. Prof Norcia's lecture 'The Stereoscopic Brain' reviewed the cortical basis of early visual development and how disruption of this maturation process might impact on visual development.

There were symposia on retinopathy of prematurity, inherited retinopathy, oculo-plastic surgery, congenital cataract surgery, strabismus surgery complications and also on suppression.

Kathryn McCreery presented new

data on recent developments on the treatment of Retinopathy of Prematurity. New therapy with intravitreal injection of anti VEGF agents such as Bevacumizab (IVB) has greatly helped in the management of ROP and is part of the therapeutic protocol in the Coombe Women's Hospital since 2011. Kathryn covered current evaluation and screening, newer classification systems and therapies available in 2016.

Irish trainees were well represented in the free papers and posters. Emma Duignan presented results of genotype-phenotype correlations of Usher syndrome patients in an Irish cohort. The data was collected as part of the Target 5000 project, which aims to collect the genotype-phenotype information on all Irish patients who have inherited retinopathy.

Claire Hartnett presented data demonstrating less myopia in



Professor Anthony Norcia, Professor of Research and Vision Scientist at Stanford University, USA, presenting the Roger Trimble Lecture at the British Isles Paediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus Association (BIPOSA) Annual Conference in Dublin, 12-14th October 2016.

neonates whose retinopathy of prematurity was treated with intravitreal bevacuzimab compared with diode laser.

Orbital Rhabdomyosarcoma – a 40 year review at a tertiary referral center' was presented by Conor Malone. The paper outlined the changing trends in management, biopsy rather than total excision, increased use of chemotherapy, radiotherapy and proton beam therapy. The results indicate excellent outcomes with low mortality but significant morbidity, which require ongoing management.

Michéal O Rourke presented a series of children undergoing surgery for cataracts, which were associated with uveitis. The results indicate that with appropriate immunosuppression and 'quiet eyes' that it is reasonable to consider intraocular lens implantation.

A review of cataract surgery in infants less than 7 months was presented by Lisa McAnena. All patients had follow up of 4 years. Visual acuity, incidence of glaucoma were similar whether intraocular was implanted or left aphakic and rehabilitated with contact lens. There was a slightly higher rate of reoperation where intraocular lens was implanted.



Donal Brosnahan, pictured with Val Trimble and Professor Anthony Norcia, at the British Isles Paediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus Association (BIPOSA) Annual Conference in Dublin. Professor Norcia presented the Annual Roger Trimble Lecture.



Donal Brosnahan, Conference Co-ordinator.



Delegates pictured during a lecture at the British Isles Paediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus Association (BIPOSA) Annual Conference in Dublin, 12-14th October 2016.

Stephen Farrell presented the ocular findings of patients with cystinosis attending the metabolic clinic at Temple Street Children's hospital. Alan Scott has pioneered the injection of bupivacaine into extraocular muscles to treat small angle strabismus. Ed Loane presented the outcomes of 53 patients whose strabismus was treated with intramuscular bupivacaine. The mean correction post injection was 5.5 prism diopters. He concluded that this technique is a useful adjunct in the management of small angle horizontal strabismus.

A prospective review of 1,000 consecutive referrals to the orthoptic clinic at the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital was presented by orthoptist Tony McAleer. It was found that 95.57% of those under 2 were found to be normal and 95.48% of those under 1 were normal. The workload implications involved in having to process such high numbers of 'normals' was discussed and the findings reinforced the imperative of developing a more extensive network of community based clinics.



Professor Anthony Norcia, Val Trimble, Kathryn McCreery, and Donal Brosnahan.

ICO delegates pictured with guest speaker Professor Anthony Norcia (L-r) Aisling Foley Nolan, Stephen Farrell, Donal Brosnahan, Edward Loane, Val Trimble, Professor Anthony Norcia, Michael O'Rourke, Emma Duignan, Marie Hickey-Dwyer, Conor Malone, Pat Logan, Kathryn McCreery, John Stokes, Lisa McAnena, Claire Harnett.



ICO at Medical Careers Day 2016 "Building your Future"

National Doctors Training & Planning Strategic Plan 2016-2020 launched



Professor Freddie Wood, President of the Medical Council, Professor Ellen O'Sullivan, Chairperson of the Forum of Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies, Mr Simon Harris, Minister for Health and Professor Eilis McGovern, HSE National Programme Director for National Doctors Training and Planning pictured at the 4th Medical Careers Day, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin.

The Medical Careers Day 2016 for medical interns and students took place in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin on Saturday, 10th September.

Now in its 4th consecutive year, the aim of the event is to provide an opportunity for medical students and interns to obtain career advice and guidance on the range of post-graduate training and career opportunities available to medical graduates in Ireland. The event is a joint initiative between the HSE, Forum of Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies and Medical Council.

Caroline Baily, Ophthalmology SpR gave a talk to students on a career in ophthalmology and the ICO training programme during the specialty talk session, while ICO Communications Manager Ciara Keenan was available to answer student's queries at the ICO stand. The ICO was one of thirteen medical training bodies to participate in this year's event.

Minister for Health Mr Simon Harris, who was a guest speaker on the day, launched the National Doctors Training & Planning Strategic

Plan 2016-2020.

Minister Harris said "The Strategic Plan which I am launching today aims to ensure that our young doctors receive the highest quality training in keeping with best international standards."

Speaking at the event, Professor Freddie Wood, President of the Medical Council said: "In my opinion, the intern and postgraduate training years are crucial in shaping the future of our doctors. At the Medical

Council, it is our mission to improve the standards of specialist training. Through our survey of trainee doctors, Your Training Counts, we are putting the voice of trainees at the heart of discussions with the aim of enhancing the trainee experience for the benefit of doctors and, of course, their patients"

Among the positive developments in the last two years in the area of doctors training and planning has been the introduction of the NCHD National Employment Record (NER), a web based system to address the paperwork burden NCHDs are faced with when rotating through clinical placements. The NER was successfully launched for the Intern Intake in July 2015 across the country and has subsequently been rolled out to all NCHDs from July 2016. As the NCHDs rotate to their next placement their scanned documents will become accessible through the NER to the next site, eliminating the need to resubmit paperwork and evidence required for personnel processing. The feedback on the new system has been extremely positive from NCHDs and Medical HR staff.

NCHDs, individually and as a group, form an essential component of



ICO Communications Manager Ciara Keenan pictured with final year medical students and interns at the Medical Careers Day 2016.

the healthcare system. They also represent a valuable resource in the management and leadership structures of hospitals. As part of a range of initiatives taken to improve NCHD recruitment and retention in the Irish public health system, and with a view to enabling NCHDs to engage in a structured manner with health service management, HSE-

NDTP (in collaboration with the National Clinical Director Programme) implemented a Lead NCHD role into the public health in 2014.

In July 2016, Dr Catherine Diskin was appointed the First National Lead NCHD/NDTP Fellow, a position supported by NDTP in collaboration with the Clinical Director Programme

and QID. Dr Diskin is actively involved in supporting the continued progression of the Lead NCHD role, such that NCHD leadership is promoted at all levels within the HSE.

The role also encompasses the fostering of NCHD engagement with collaborative working to improve NCHD training and working conditions.

Oireachtas Committee on Health discusses practice of Open Disclosure in the Health Service

On October 12th, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health met with Dr. Tony Holohan, Chief Medical Officer and Department of Health Officials to discuss the practice of open disclosure in the health service and the legislative provisions to support it in the forthcoming Department of Justice and Equality's Civil Liberties (Amendment) Bill.

In his opening address to the Committee, Dr Holohan confirmed his Department's full commitment to progressing the programme of major patient safety reforms agreed by Government last November.

The open disclosure provisions form part of a number of initiatives to improve the management of patient safety incidents. These measures include legislation, the establishment of a national patient advocacy service, introduction of a patient safety surveillance system, extending the clinical effectiveness agenda, a national patient experience survey, a National Patient Safety Office in the Department and the setting up of a national Advisory Council for Patient Safety. Within the programme of legislation, the intention is to progress the licensing of public and private hospitals under the Health Information and Patient Safety Bill and include provisions for Open Disclosure.

Dr Holohan said "the legislative provisions are being drafted to ensure that there is clarity for everyone involved in the open disclosure process and that there is appropriate consistency across the various parts of the health system in how open disclosure is understood and delivered... The provisions are intended to support an environment where the patient's information needs can be addressed as soon as possible."

The provisions are designed to give legal protection for the information and apology made to a patient when in line with the legislation, i.e. the apology cannot be interpreted as an admission of

liability and cannot be used in litigation against the provider. This is to enable a positive voluntary climate for open disclosure and will support the National Policy on Open Disclosure which was developed jointly by the HSE and the State Claims Agency in November 2013.

Dr Holohan said, "Our goal from the outset has been to create a safe space where there can and should be full disclosure of the facts surrounding a patient safety incident and of the

implications, if any, for the patient's care and treatment."

At this year's ICO Winter Meeting on December 1st, the College's Ethics Committee will present on their work on the development of a series of patient information leaflets which are aimed at supporting both doctors and patients during the consent process. A separate guideline document on the process has also been drafted. These documents will be available on the ICO website for patients to access and also to our members as a template for their use.

The full text from Mr Holohan's report to the Joint Committee on Healthcare is available at www.oireachtas.ie

Micro Surgical Skills Course Monday 26th September



Pictured at the Micro Surgical Skills Course at the Kiran Pathak Laboratory, RCSI were: Paul O'Brien, Robert Brady, Emer Doolan, Patrick Murtagh, David Gallagher, Shane Whitlow, Ghaleb El Farouki, Denis Ga'an, Elaine Harris, Brendan Cummings, Ann Rafferty, Conor Lyons, Tim Fulcher

The course is organised and given by Tim Fulcher and Paul O'Brien each year for 1st year trainees. Denis Ga'an, Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital and Ghaleb El Farouki, assisted Tim and Paul.

ICO trainee participates in rural Malawi multi-surgery eye camps initiative

Report by trainee, Melissa Murphy

Two charities, Child Legacy International and the Sponsel Eye Foundation, collaborated to provide one of the first multi-surgery eye camps in Sub Saharan Africa in September 2016. Malawi is the third poorest country in the world and a significant proportion of the population are blind, mainly due to cataracts but also due to untreated glaucoma, trauma and local witch-doctor remedies causing corneal scarring.



On the first day more than ninety patients were screened for surgeries during the week. Most of the disease was extremely advanced as none of the patients had been previously treated.

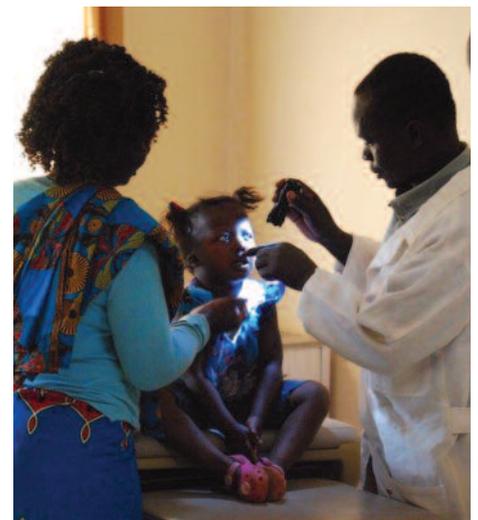
Cataract was the leading cause of bilateral blindness in most cases, particularly for the older patients. This is a huge issue as the elderly are not taken care of to the extent they are in the developed world, especially if they are not contributing to the household, so a significant proportion of these patients were also homeless.

End-stage glaucoma was very common and unfortunately beyond treatment in a lot of cases. One 17 year old girl was completely blind in one eye and had only one quadrant of visual field in her other eye requiring urgent shunt surgery.

Surgeries were conducted with two surgeons per theatre room (one Irish, one American; two Malawian) as per other high volume cataract camps. These were mostly cataracts

although multiple shunt surgeries and cyclotherapy for glaucoma were also performed.

Overall outcomes were a large success and the post-operative clinic was highly emotive with some people seeing again for the first time in years. It is hoped this camp will be repeated regularly in the future.



ICO Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Healthcare

On Friday, August 26th, the ICO made its submission to the Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Healthcare, outlining key recommendations aimed at achieving an improved future eye health service in Ireland.

The establishment of the Committee was formally announced by the Department of Health in June 2016. The Committee is charged with achieving a cross-party consensus on a long term vision for health care and the direction of health policy in Ireland.

The ICO has requested to meet with the Committee to discuss eye care requirements ahead of the publication of the Committees final report, due in January.

Executive Summary & Recommendations outlined by the Irish College of Ophthalmologists in its Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Healthcare:

- The most appropriate health care model for Ireland is one that provides a continuum of quality health services spanning health promotion, prevention, self-management support, primary and specialist, to the whole population.
- There is a need to move away from an over-reliance on care delivered in the acute sector. A regionalised community based care model, with clear pathways of referral into acute care services and back to the community where clinically appropriate is suitable.
- Electronic patient records are an essential feature of care provision. Its use will have a very significant role in reducing unnecessary duplicated testing in patients and will be the bridge linking hospital and primary care/ community care services. If rolled out in conjunction with an appropriate telemedicine program, it will facilitate access to senior medical opinions thereby cutting out unnecessary travel on the part of many patients.
- The true cost of illness and disease must be understood when making decisions on the investment required to treat and manage those illnesses.
- Education of the public on the role they as individuals can play in proactively looking after their eye health is an essential part of reducing the prevalence of debilitating vision loss and alleviating future dependency on health care services.
- Changing skill-mix will not necessarily result in cost savings. Role substitution without acknowledgement of the differences in the depth and breadth of knowledge will not result in automatic savings.
- Quality needs to be a fundamental priority in the health system and on-going audit of practice is essential.
- Training and research must be embedded and protected in the health service.
- A caring, supportive and encouraging environment must be created for patients but also for staff members. Acknowledging the contribution of staff will enhance and facilitate progress towards an integrated health care model.

ICO Trainee organises Local GAA Health & Wellness Day



Áine Ni Mhealoid pictured at the health, wellness and fitness day in her local GAA club in Donaghmore/Ashbourne.

On August 27th, ICO trainee Áine Ni Mhealoid organised a health, wellness and fitness day in her local GAA club in Donaghmore/Ashbourne as a fundraiser to raise money for the club.

Áine coordinated an eye health stand alongside over 40 other exhibitors including physiotherapy, general practice (BP and BM checks), acupuncture, massage, as well as participation from a local pharmacist, reiki practitioner, nutritionist, and personal fitness trainers. Classes and demos throughout the day in crossfit, bokwa, yoga, zumba, karate and hip hop for kids meant there was something for everyone and all levels of fitness. Talks on stress management, gut health, the GAA healthy club programme and diet also featured in the programme.

Congratulations to Áine in her efforts to focus attention on health, particularly in light of the Healthy Club initiative currently being rolled out in GAA Clubs across Ireland as part of the Government's Healthy Ireland programme. At the eye health stand, Áine gave general eye health advice (with the aid of the ICO 'Your Sight, Our Vision' booklet and leaflets from Fighting Blindness and Diabetic Retina Screening), checked distance and near visual acuities, colour and 3-D Vision. The local NCBI also had a stand.

Áine has helped to create a template for future similar events and would be delighted to share information with fellow ICO members should they wish to run a similar initiative in their locality.

AMD Awareness Week 2016



Mark Cahill speaking at the launch event for AMD Awareness Week 2016 at The Science Gallery, Trinity College Dublin on Monday, 19th September

The 9th annual AMD Awareness Week, a nationwide health initiative supported by the ICO, took place from the 19-25th September.

Throughout the week, adults over 50 were encouraged to consider their eye health and avail of free AMD testing at locations nationwide. There was a strong emphasis on engagement at community level this year, with the NCBI hosting coffee mornings at many of their stores nationwide and the increased involvement by retirement groups Active Retirement Ireland and Age Action.

Research conducted through an online survey across a nationally representative sample of 1,010 adults aged 18+ in August 2016 revealed that half (50%) of adults surveyed were unaware of AMD, despite the fact that 7,000 new cases are diagnosed each year, and almost 100,000 people are currently living with the AMD in Ireland. The research also found that almost two-thirds of all adults (65%) claim to have their eyes checked at least once every 2 years. Those aged over 55 exhibit highest levels of check-ups at this interval (78%).

The aim of the *Never Miss The Wonder* campaign theme was to improve the public's knowledge and understanding of AMD and to reinforce the importance of early

diagnosis and treatment to aid preservation of eyesight.

The winners of the campaign photo competition were announced at the launch event to kick start AMD Awareness Week on Monday,

September 19th at the Science Gallery, Trinity College Dublin. A specially-designed photobook was created using entries from all over Ireland and the finalists' entries were displayed at an exhibition on the day.

Speaking as the ICO representative for the awareness campaign, Mark Cahill gave an overview of the condition to the audience and reinforced the message that AMD is a manageable and treatable eye disease, with a greatly improved outcome for patients when compared to a decade ago, as a result of earlier diagnosis and new treatments.

Annette Hannery gave an account of her experience as a patient receiving treatment for AMD, highlighting that her sight has been preserved as a result of reacting to a change in her vision and receiving early medical intervention. She spoke of her on-going treatment and how grateful she is that her vision is stable as a result.

Long-term supporters of AMD Awareness Week also shared their wonders including RTE presenter Mary Kennedy, Met Eireann and RTE weather presenter, Evelyn Cusack, and award winning, best-selling authors Sheila O'Flanagan and Sinead Moriarty.



'Never Miss the Wonder' photography competition runner up, Clodagh Watkins, is pictured with her son Jack and AMD Awareness Week ambassador, RTE Presenter Mary Kennedy at the launch event on September 19th.

Winners of Inaugural Bayer/ICO Clinical Fellowship Announced

Congratulations to senior trainees Elizabeth McElnea and Andrea Ryan on being jointly awarded the Bayer/ICO Clinical Fellowship in Ophthalmology. The bursary is sponsored by Bayer Pharmaceuticals and is in its inaugural year.

Elizabeth McElnea will commence a fellowship at Macclesfield District General Hospital in Cheshire in 2017, to complete comprehensive training in ophthalmic plastic, lacrimal, orbital and reconstructive surgery in order to prepare for a future career in this subspecialty.

Speaking about the opportunity to undertake the fellowship programme, Elizabeth said, "This position offers what I hope will be unrivalled exposure to the clinical and surgical management of ophthalmic plastic, lacrimal and orbital disease. It also presents the opportunity to attend multi-disciplinary meetings and teaching sessions in three further centres in the United Kingdom – the Royal Liverpool Hospitals NHS Trust, The Central Manchester Foundation NHS Trust and The Christie Hospital as well as the chance to produce a body of research work that is of high quality and adds to the evidence based practice of this ophthalmic surgery subspecialty."

Elizabeth added, "I am very grateful to both Bayer and the Irish College of Ophthalmologists for the generous funding provided and indeed am very excited about the invaluable training opportunity it will enable me access. I am very much looking forward to taking up my fellowship post and using the skills and experience gained to the benefit of the Irish healthcare service thereafter."

Andrea Ryan, joint recipient of the Bayer/ICO Clinical Fellowship, has begun her fellowship in medical retina at Moorfields Hospital in London and commented, "The key objective of the fellowship is to move towards becoming competent to specialist level in the assessment, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of patients with medical retina disease including retinal vascular, genetic and uveitic disorders. The fellowship offers exposure to novel retinal imaging techniques, electrodiagnostics, research

opportunities and extensive teaching sessions under the supervision of experts in the field. I am extremely grateful to the Irish College of Ophthalmologists and Bayer for the funding provided which allows me to access this invaluable training opportunity in one of the world's leading eye hospitals. I hope to bring the expertise gained to the Irish

healthcare system to benefit the large and growing population of Irish patients affected by these disorders."

The formal announcement and presentation will be made at the ICO's Winter Meeting, which takes place in Dublin on Thursday 1st December.

Katy Carroll, Business Unit Manager of Specialty Medicine at Bayer, said, "Bayer are delighted to be able to support the ICO with the funding for the Bayer Clinical Fellowship in Ophthalmology. We look forward to a longstanding partnership with the ICO in furthering education of future leaders in Ophthalmology"

We wish Elizabeth and Andrea every success in their chosen fellowship programmes and extend our thanks to Bayer for their recognition and support of ophthalmic training.

AAO Report

The AAO 120th Annual Meeting, featuring more than 350 instruction courses, 56 surgical skills labs, and 51 symposia, took place in Chicago from October 14-18th with over 25,000 eye doctors in attendance. Yvonne Delaney, who was nominated by the ICO and AAO to join the AAO's Leadership Development Program XV111 Class of 2016, attended the meeting and provided the following update.

Population growth and the challenges of delivering and targeting large volumes of eye care was a subject of discussion across both the well-attended subspecialty days as well as the more intimate 'breakfast with the experts' and Academy Café sessions. Different models of care as well as how innovations in technology may assist in directing care were explored. Such technology includes mobile phone apps to measure visual acuity and iPad apps for VF testing, with the latter currently being explored in Australia, Canada and the US. While comparatively they are not able to compete with the current gold standards used in the clinical setting they may clearly soon have a role where there is no alternative – not just in the developing world but in some areas of the developed world where access to eye care may be limited. Pilot projects in tele-glaucoma and tele-diabetic retinopathy in Philadelphia and Canada respectively were well received outlining both the technological and medical challenges in this type of eye care model.

At the Glaucoma Specialty Day,

uncertainty regarding the real value of OCT imaging of the optic nerve head continued to divide specialists. An excellent counterpoint session on whether OCT changes of the optic nerve head alone are relevant or indeed reliable when considering changes in glaucoma management served as an excellent opener to the day. The enormous changes in the over 65 year population in USA brought to the fore the challenges of delivering glaucoma care to an increasingly older population. The role of trabeculectomy surgery in the very old and its contribution to quality of life was debated in a robust session between Steven Vold and George Spaeth. In terms of new glaucoma devices, the role of MIGs continued to take up plenty of discussion time but with little agreement as to which one, how many and by whom – cataract surgeon or glaucoma specialist.

The city of Chicago served as a wonderful backdrop to the AAO meeting and will certainly act as an additional attraction to entice us back when the AAO meeting returns there in a few years' time.



Paralympic champion, Jason Smyth pictured with David Keegan and Aodhán O'Riordain.

The annual Fighting Blindness Retina Conference will take place on Friday, November 11, in the Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Golden Lane, Dublin 8.

The Retina Conference brings together leading international and Irish figures in the global effort to find treatments and cures for conditions causing sight loss. Among the many international speakers at this year's event are Prof Andrew Lotery (University of Southampton), Dr Shaomei Wang (Cedars-Sinai, Los Angeles) and Dr David Gamm (University of Wisconsin, Madison).

Prof Lotery's clinical specialty is medical retina with major research interests in age-related macular degeneration, retinal degenerations, ophthalmic genetics, gene and stem cell therapies. Dr Shaomei Wang's research focus is understanding the underlying pathology of retinitis pigmentosa, age-related macular disease and optic nerve neuropathy and developing therapeutic approaches to ameliorate these blinding diseases. Dr Gamm diagnoses and manages a wide range of paediatric eye and vision disorders. His presentation will discuss the advantages and drawbacks of 3D

retinal organoid technology in the development of therapeutics for retinal degenerative diseases.

The programme includes a 'Breakfast with the Prof' session for junior doctors and junior researchers and postdocs, which will take place on Friday 11th November from 8am – 9pm.

There are four topics, with space for eight people at each table:

Prof Robin Ali: *Getting Published: tips on writing papers;*

Dr Joseph Carroll: *Networking in Science;*

Dr Bart Leroy: *Connecting Clinical Practice with Research as a Clinician-Scientist;*

Dr Elfride De Baere: *Funding Opportunities for Young Scientists.*

Attendees at Retina 2016 will receive 10 external CPD points from the Irish College of Ophthalmologists. For more information please visit www.Retina.ie or contact Fighting Blindness on 01 6789 004 or research@fightingblindness.ie.

Retirement from the RCSI Department of Ophthalmology



Dr Marilyn Harris, Clinical Lecturer in the Department of Ophthalmology has recently retired from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Marilyn originally worked in Tropical Medicine with RCSI in Mercers Hospital but has been based at the Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospital as a clinical lecturer in Ophthalmology since 1994, originally with Professor Louis Collum and his team and in more recent years with Professor Conor Murphy.

Marilyn has contributed immeasurably to the development of Ophthalmology teaching in RCSI over the past twenty two years and has always been a pleasure to work with. We will miss Marilyn's wisdom and experience but wish her a very happy and healthy retirement.

New UHW Eye Department Website

A new, user-friendly website for the Department of Ophthalmology at University Hospital Waterford has been launched. In addition to listing the medical and surgical services available within the eye department, the website includes details of the current medical team, the academic and training function of the facility (including course listings for trainees and CME) and the clinical trials and research underway. The department is a training centre for both surgical and medical ophthalmology and one of the founder units for the national diabetic retinopathy screening programme. A section on 'Patient Information' provides explanations on the most common eye conditions for the public. UHW is a regional cancer centre and the eye department provides a periocular/lid cancer service with close liaison with dermatology, Oncology and ENT via the Head & Neck Cancer and Melanoma MDT Group. The website was designed and developed by Gareth Higgins who would be happy to offer any guidance to ICO members interested in creating a similar online service. www.universityeyedepartmentwaterford.ie