



Dear Colleagues

In recent weeks we have published the [2023 Annual Report](#), a memorable year as we marked the 25th anniversary of the Hospital opening. The document also outlines the implementation of the Hospital strategy and the continuing efforts being made to expand our services as much as we can, given our footprint and aging infrastructure.

There is still a lot more work that needs to be done but plans are advancing with the HSE to get our extra beds (196 in total in two phases) and we will also have more space becoming available in the Hospital as paediatric services move to the new Children's Hospital.

These spaces are urgently needed, the summer months did not give any respite to our unscheduled care / scheduled care or infection control prevention teams any break. It was incredibly busy with an unusually high level of outbreaks and attendances. Like your good selves we expect this to be a challenging winter but will work collectively to try and manage same.

Best wishes

Lucy Nugent
Chief Executive
Tallaght University Hospital

GP Study Morning – November 23rd 2024

This half day event hosted in the Trinity Centre for Health Sciences, Tallaght has an extensive line-up to cover a diverse range of topics of relevance to general practice. The programme will run from 8:30am to 1pm and includes a range of focused presentations on the topics of headache diagnosis, treatment approaches in general practice, migraine and women's health, advanced treatments in migraine and migraine self-care. You can register for the event via this [link](#).



Agenda - GP Migraine Meeting: Towards Excellence in Headache Care

8:30am	Registration & refreshments
9am	Introduction & Overview - Dr. Petya Bogdanova-Mihaylova
9:05am	Confidence in Headache Diagnosis - Dr. Mary Kearney
9:40am	Treatment Approaches in General Practice - Dr. Claire Hannon
10:15am	Migraine & women's health: advice on menopause & contraception - Dr. Sinead Hussey
10:50am	Tea & Coffee Break
11:05am	Advanced Treatments in Migraine - Dr. Edward O'Sullivan
11:40am	Migraine self-care: empowering patients - Dr. David Burke
12:15pm	All speaker forum Q&A - Chairperson lead with all speakers
12:30pm	Lunch & refreshments

Pressure Ulcers Explained

Pressure ulcers are debilitating and painful and can have a significant impact on a person's life. Given Ireland's aging population with increasingly complex healthcare needs pressure ulcers are becoming more and more prevalent in the community and in the acute care setting. The prevention of pressure ulcer development will result in avoiding unnecessary pain, unnecessary admissions to hospital and prolonged lengths of stay for patients.

Unfortunately, patients, their family and carers do not always know what pressure ulcers are, or understand their risk of pressure ulcer development until after an ulcer has already happened. A short animated presentation has been developed by TUH, aimed towards

informing and educating patients and their families of who is at risk of pressure ulcer development, how they can monitor their own pressure areas, what they can do themselves to try avoid pressure ulcer development and what to do if they discover a pressure ulcer.

The aim of this initiative is to empower patients and their families into taking control of their own pressure ulcer prevention as appropriate while also offering them resources and supports should they find they need them. Posters have been designed with the below QR code which will link to the programme and these posters will be put up across the Hospital. If you would be interested in downloading one of the posters for your practice please click on this [link](#). Together we can reduce the number of Pressure Ulcers we see and improve the quality of life of our patients!

Green Moment in Surgical Practice

Over the first half of 2024, the Hospital's Urology Department has taken part in an environmental initiative aimed at improving waste management in theatres with the introduction of a cross-specialty "Green Moment."

The project, led by Consultant Urologist Ms. Clíodhna Browne, aimed to encourage members of the urology teams and theatre staff to reduce waste production and correctly dispose of waste generated during procedures.

As part of the initiative, current recycling habits in the urology theatres were recorded. At the end of each urology procedures, the general waste bin in the operating theatre was weighed twice; once as it was found at the end of the case and again after removing all recyclable waste that was disposed of incorrectly. This was done for 20 different cases in accordance with both the Hospital protocol and the Environmental Protection Agency guidelines.

The "Green Moment" was then introduced to staff and integrated into each case's

"Time Out" process and also during the morning multidisciplinary planning meeting involving nursing, anaesthetic and surgical colleagues.

The "Green Moment" prompted the theatre team to be mindful of their recycling habits and emphasised the importance of correct waste segregation and disposal. The data collection was repeated after this intervention and, encouragingly, the "Green Moment" was found to be significantly effective. Before its introduction, 56% of recyclable waste in the urology operating theatres was incorrectly placed in general waste bins. Following the intervention, there was a significant decrease in mismanaged waste to 31%. The amount of recyclable waste that was initially incorrectly put into the general waste bin over the two weeks was about 12kg. After our Green Moment was introduced this was reduced to approx. 6.5kg over the same period.

This dramatic improvement in recycling habits demonstrates the substantial and positive effect that simple actions can have on our recycling behaviours. Undoubtedly, the "Green Moment" has helped mark a significant step towards a more environmentally friendly urology theatre in TUH and has become embedded in the

urology department's daily practice. It is proposed to act as a springboard for future discussions and environmental initiatives and to encourage the adoption of more carbon-friendly practices by all surgical departments in TUH.

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Key players in the Green Moment L/R; Dr. Dearbhla Treacy, NCHD and Consultant Urologist Ms. Clíodhna Browne

Major Milestone for Memory & Cognition



Our Memory Service, recently celebrated a major milestone in their development with a 10th anniversary event hosted in the local Tallaght library.

Now known as the Institute of Memory & Cognition the team have grown and now have over 20 permanent staff with expertise in neurology and geriatric medicine, as well as nursing, social work, occupational therapy, speech & language therapy, physiotherapy, neuropsychology and dietetics. All working together providing a five day a week Interdisciplinary Geriatric Neurology Memory service.

A quarter of the patients attending the specialist memory service are under the age of 65, and this has increased over the last 10 years. Before the establishment of this clinic, younger people with memory symptoms had great difficulty accessing a diagnosis, and it could take years. The average length of time between receiving the referral and seeing someone in the clinic is now around four months, and this can be within the month for urgent referrals.

To mark the occasion the team moved out to Tallaght Library for a few hours on Tuesday, September 17th with information stands from the team and the services they work with in the community including the

Alzheimer's Society of Ireland, the HSE's Memory Technology Resource Room in Ballyfermot, the Integrated Care for Older Persons Team, the National Intellectual Disability Memory Service, An Garda Síochána, the Social Prescribers, South Dublin County Partnership, Ex Well Medical and Citizens Information Tallaght. There was also a series of short talks by various members of the team. The day was an incredible success with engagement from over 200 members of the public and we hope to plan something similar again next year.



Some members of the Institute of Memory & Cognition in Tallaght Library celebrating their 10th anniversary with a community event

GEDI 5th Anniversary

Our Gerontological Emergency Department Intervention (GEDI) team are celebrating their fifth anniversary this year. The GEDI team started in 2019 and comprises of Clinical Nurse Specialists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Medical Social Worker, Speech & Language Therapist and Dietetics along with a Geriatrics Registrar and Consultant Geriatrician. The team were one of the first interdisciplinary initiatives, based within an emergency Department (ED) in Ireland.

In the five years since the team has been established, they have reviewed over 9,800 patients, with the service adapting to support both staff and patients during the pandemic and beyond. The GEDI team have established pathways to support patients upon discharge into the community with links to health and social care colleagues, voluntary and government agencies.

The GEDI team members proactively screen patients aged 75 years and older presenting to the ED. The GEDI team continually aims to meet the needs of a growing frail older population through identification of physical, social and cognitive issues through a Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment on the acute floor.

The role of GEDI team is to improve outcomes and experience for older adults living with frailty presenting to ED through risk stratification, promotion of a holistic model of care which, facilitates Interdisciplinary team working incorporating age-attuned education, expedited patient flow and infrastructural quality improvement. The development of the Age Related Assessment Unit (ARAU) and its dedicated MDT assessment space enabling functional assessments during an unscheduled hospital attendance have added to the positive impact the team can make to a patients care.



Pictured from left to right Kieron Connolly, Senior Physiotherapist; Caitriona Whelan, Social Work Team Leader; Louise Kelly, Advanced Nurse Practitioner; Sarah Keegan, Senior Occupational Therapist; Hollie Martin, Senior Speech & Language Therapist; Clodagh Kieron, Senior Occupational Therapist and Eimear Mullen, Senior Dietitian

GEDI Team 2019-2023

Male patients
4,448



Female patients
5,433



Reviewed during
the week
8,446



Reviewed at
the weekend
1,435

Average age
81 years old



GP Referral
2,150



Self-Referral
6,887

Admitted for
medical care
6,214



Discharged
from the ED
3,667



Arrived by
Ambulance
4,547

Annual Healthcare Innovation Challenge

Students studying a range of Computing, Digital and Data Science courses at TU Dublin recently spent 24 hours brainstorming technological solutions affecting patient well-being during the fourth annual health hackathon in association with Tallaght University Hospital, HSE in the Community and supported by Amazon Web Services (AWS).

The event which was held earlier this month is in its fourth year and for the first time TU Dublin had to open a waiting list for participants. A total of 78 students took part divided into 20 teams who all developed a tech-based solution for five challenges set. Senior Cloud Solutions Architects from AWS also provided guidance, ensuring each group developed ideas that were technically achievable from a technical perspective.

The Best Overall Winner



From left to right Noor Isha Nadeem, Sayali Mote, Niamh Ferris, Healthcare Lead, AWS, Moyin Olusona and Irene Ogbevoen

This team responded to the Pressure Ulcer challenge. They demonstrated a very comprehensive understanding of the challenge, developing a prototype that could be cheap and easy to implement. Taking a holistic to developing a solution. The judges could not find an angle that they had not thought of!

Neurodiversity Friendly Environment

A team led by Dr. Aileen McCabe, Consultant in Emergency Medicine have introduced a programme of change, pioneering efforts to address the challenges of navigating the high stress environment of an ED for neurodivergent individuals.

Recognising the diverse needs of neurodivergent patients, the team, with the support of the TUH Foundation have implemented innovative strategies to support their experience. Central to this initiative is the development of comprehensive guidelines for staff, equipping them with the necessary tools to effectively communicate with patients who identify as neurodivergent. These guidelines encompass a range of communication strategies tailored to individual needs, fostering a supportive and understanding environment from the moment patients enter the ED.

Sensory challenges, such as sensitivity to light and noise, can exacerbate stress and anxiety for neurodivergent individuals in busy ED environments. The sensory room the team have established provides a calming space, offering a respite from overwhelming stimuli and promoting relaxation. This innovative approach not only demonstrates a commitment to accommodating diverse sensory needs but also underscores the Hospital's dedication to enhancing the overall patient experience.

A recent survey conducted within the ED revealed overwhelmingly positive feedback from patients, indicating a notable increase in satisfaction levels since the implementation of neurodiversity-friendly initiatives. Patients reported feeling more understood and supported during their time in the ED, highlighting the tangible impact of creating an inclusive environment. This enhanced patient experience speaks volumes about the efficacy of the Hospital's approach and underscores the importance of prioritising neurodiversity in healthcare settings.

Commenting on the initiative Dr. Aileen McCabe, Consultant in Emergency Medicine, said "Our goal is to ensure that every patient receives the highest quality of care, tailored to their individual needs. By fostering a neurodiversity-friendly environment, we are not only improving patient outcomes but also promoting inclusivity and understanding within our healthcare system."

Indeed, the importance of enabling a neurodiversity-friendly environment extends beyond the realm of individual patient care. It signifies a broader commitment to equity and social responsibility, challenging traditional notions of healthcare delivery and advocating for the rights of neurodivergent individuals.

Fran Kane, a mother of a neurodivergent adult and member of the Hospital's Patient Community Advisory Council who visited the room with her son and provided feedback said "I was delighted to visit this room with my son and give the team feedback on its development. I think the Hospital's proactive approach is to be welcomed and I hope it will serve as a model for other healthcare institutions. This approach should be widespread to better serve the diverse patient populations across the country.

Looking ahead, the Hospital remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing neurodiversity-friendly practices within the ED and beyond. By prioritising education, training, and ongoing evaluation, the Hospital aims to continually refine its approach and ensure that every patient receives the compassionate and inclusive care they deserve.



Pictured from left to right at the launch of the new room were JJ and Fran Kane who provided feedback to the team on the development of the room along with Dr. Aileen McCabe, Consultant in Emergency Medicine at TUH

New Clinic

Olga Hill is an Occupational Therapist (OT) specialising in hand therapy. Olga works in our Orthopaedics Department and treats patients with hand and wrist complaints.

Olga was one of the main drivers in setting up an outpatient OT-led Hand Therapy Clinic for patients at the Hospital. The Clinic which began operating in 2023 was established to help patients avoid lengthy wait times at busy fracture clinics. This meant many people with particular injuries were able to access treatment sooner and didn't need to spend time waiting to see a Consultant.

The Clinic which runs from the Russell Building at Tallaght Cross West has to date seen 350 patients. It was set up with the support of HSE Spark Funding. Olga worked in partnership with St James's Hospital and her OT colleagues in Primary Care in the Community, to form this new service.

Olga says "We successfully established this Hand and Wrist Clinic which has paved the way for integrated scheduled care between the Hospital and Primary care. This means patients with hand and wrist complaints such as **Carpal Tunnel, Osteoarthritis, Cubital Tunnel, Ganglion, De Quervains and Trigger Digits** can be referred in by the GP to our clinic based in the Russell Building. The initiative has seen over 350 patients and has succeeded in improving not just the experience for our patients but also their outcomes. The service has also enabled other OT's to get specialist training in the field of hand therapy."

Commenting on the innovation project Olga said, "I knew this Clinic could help people and I wanted to set it up after witnessing the constant battle to try to reduce waiting lists. From experience, patients traditionally go to the GP who will then refer them to a Consultant in Orthopaedics, Plastics or Rheumatology or to all three departments.

The patient could then wait for up to 18 months in some instances to be seen by the Consultant or a Physiotherapist. At this point, their symptoms may have become worse."

Olga was aware before she set up this clinic that up to 60% of patients with hand and wrist complaints could be taken off the Consultant's waiting list and treated by a specialist OT. She knew that many patients did not need treatment in the Hospital setting and that a community-based facility with experienced clinicians and access to hospital expertise, as needed could help them.



Olga Hill Occupational Therapist



Chronic Kidney Disease Wellbeing Programme

TUH is the second largest site for Dialysis in the country, we treat a lot of patients with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). It has been a long intended plan within the renal team to develop a wellness programme that is focused around group work and peer support.

Caroline Sherlock & Muireann O Sullivan, Social Work Team Leaders, Edel Rochford a qualified yoga instructor with Emer Kenny, Advanced Nurse Practitioner recently piloted the first CKD wellbeing Program. The six week programme consisted of one two hour session a week.

The first hour was structured group work sessions; facilitated by Medical Social Work, covering a range of topics including how to recognise stress, benefits of exercise and art therapy. The second hour of the weekly sessions hosted an hour of chair & floor based yoga with an accredited instructor. The goal for this programme was to empower patients to reclaim some of the normal aspects of their lives that can get lost when you are unwell and to use the techniques provided to help them manage the stress associated with having a chronic illness.

The feedback to the programme has been extremely positive. The team are currently in the process of collating data, but initial screening is telling us that participants reported a reduction in anxiety and depression. Going forward the aim is to offer this programme to all of our CKD patients and if funding became available to also include carers.

Feedback from a participant

"I feel at last I have been listened to and also to share the CKD experience and views of other patients in an open forum was good"



The programme took place in the Training Room in the Vartry Building

A Step in the Right Direction for Alzheimer's Research

Research published in the last few weeks in the international journal "Alzheimer's Research & Therapy" outlines research on the effectiveness of a blood test in identifying the presence of Alzheimer's disease. The research carried out in the Institute of Memory & Cognition at TUH looked at the performance of a new blood test (plasma p-tau217) to detect the "amyloid plaques" that build up in the brain in people with Alzheimer's disease.

As things currently stand, amyloid plaques can only be detected by lumbar puncture (spinal tap) to get a sample of cerebrospinal fluid - which are invasive - and through scans which are very limited in their availability. The use of blood tests has clear advantages over both of these methods (less invasive and more straightforward for patients, easier to scale up and less costly).

The study, led by Dr. Adam Dyer, Geriatric Medicine Trainee (Specialist Registrar/SpR), TUH & Medical Gerontology, Trinity College Dublin examined the performance of this new blood test (plasma p-tau217) by using samples from the "biobank" which has been established at our Institute of Memory & Cognition. As part of this biobank, patients who have symptoms and are undergoing a diagnostic lumbar puncture for the detection of Alzheimer's disease opt to donate cerebrospinal fluid and blood samples for future research. This is crucial in examining the performance of these new blood tests in real-world clinical cohorts. The research was funded by the [Meath Foundation](#) and the [Irish Clinical Academic Teaching \(ICAT\) programme](#).

Diabetes Resource

The first of two new Podcast series from TUH focusing on Diabetes has recently launched. The patient education initiative was produced with the support of the South Dublin County Partnership Health Project, the Let's Talk About Diabetes series launched to coincide with October Health Awareness Month in Tallaght.

The first podcast series opens with an individual episode exploring; **What is Diabetes** with Ann Fitzpatrick an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Diabetes who works between TUH and the Chronic Disease HUB in the community. Ann also contributed to the next episode on **The Reality of Living with Diabetes**, featuring an interview with diabetes patient Michelle Tracey. The third Episode explored **How Patients can best manage their Diabetes Complications** with Fiona Boyle a Senior Podiatrist in Integrated Care, and Clinical Nurse Specialist Fiona Fullam.

The fourth episode focused on **Diabetes Education** with Senior Dietitians Fiona O'Shea and Rachel Sheane, who both work in the Chronic Disease Management Hub in the community. In the final episode TUH Senior Counselling Psychologist Noelle O'Keefe dealt with **How Diabetes impacts the Mental Health of Patients**.

You can listen to this series and the previous series of the Let's Talk About series on the TUH [YouTube channel](#). They are also available on the Apple Podcasts and Podbean platforms, search for TUH Let's Talk About.



Pictured from left to right at the launch of the Let's Talk About Diabetes series were podcast host Dr. Valerie Twomey, Clinical Neuropsychologist at TUH and Ann Fitzpatrick, Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Diabetes who works between TUH and the Chronic Disease HUB in the community



If you would like any more information about any articles in the Connect or have suggestions for future editions please do get in touch
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