



## Welcome message from the President

Dear IPS Members,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the second issue of our new IPS Newsletter. The Newsletter summarises some of the activities that the IPS committee and members have organized or contributed to over the past few months. We have been very active on a number of different fronts – research, education, public outreach and government policy – and it is a testament to the tremendous energy, commitment and multidisciplinary of our members that we are able to have an impact across all of these domains. In addition, there is much to look forward to over the coming months, including of course, our Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) which will be held at NUI Galway on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August. We have assembled a stellar line-up of speakers around this year's ASM theme of post-surgical pain. There is still time to submit an abstract for poster or short oral presentation (deadline 7<sup>th</sup> July) and further details on the ASM programme are contained within the Newsletter.

In keeping with our mission to support and promote Irish pain research and education, we ran a competition recently to award travel bursaries to Irish researchers who have submitted high quality abstracts for presentation at the forthcoming EFIC meeting in Copenhagen this September. We will also be very well represented at the important Societal Impact of Pain conference, taking place in Malta this June, with a number of IPS members in attendance. With approximately 20% of Europe's adult population still affected by chronic pain, resulting in more than 500 million sick days per year in Europe and a cost to the European economy of more than €34 billion, it remains vitally important for us to continue to put pressure on European governments to do more to tackle this major unmet clinical need.

I hope that you enjoy reading our Newsletter and I look forward to seeing you at our ASM in August. Until then, I hope that you have a lovely Summer and that the sun shines on all of us!

Professor David Finn (PhD, BSc)  
*President of the Irish Pain Society*



## Centre for Pain Research Galway Annual Research Day

NUI Galway's Centre for Pain Research held their annual Research Day on the 10th of March. In addition to a very interesting programme of talks and posters, this year's event also marked the **10-year anniversary of the Centre for Pain Research**, and hosted a workshop by the Irish Pain Research Network (IPRN).

Following opening remarks by Professor David Finn, the day began with a pre-clinical session. Dr Cyril Herry (INSERM, Neurocentre Magendie, University of Bordeaux), the first invited keynote speaker of the day, gave a talk on neuronal circuits mediating fear memory of painful events. This was followed by short presentations on pre-clinical work within the Centre for Pain Research, by PhD candidates Louise Corcoran and Jessica Gaspar, and postdoctoral fellow Dr Álvaro Llorente-Berzal.

The second keynote, Dr Deirdre Desmond (National University of Ireland, Maynooth), presented before lunch on rehabilitation of musculoskeletal injuries, kicking off the clinical portion of the day. Following a lively poster session over lunch all returned for the final two short presentations on clinical work within the Centre, by Dr Christopher Dwyer and PhD candidate Angeline Traynor.

At this point, Prof Brian McGuire concluded the presentations with the prize-giving, awarding Orlaith Mannion and Mehnaz Ferdousi for Best Clinical Poster and Best Non-Clinical Poster Presentation respectively, and Louise Corcoran with Best Short Oral Presentation.



*From left, Prof. Brian McGuire, Dr Deirdre Desmond, Orlaith Mannion, Mehnaz Ferdousi, Jessica Gaspar, Prof David Finn.*

The final activity of the day was the IPRN workshop given by Dr Jenny McSharry (Health Behaviour Change Research Group). This was a very well attended and invaluable session on how to plan and carry out a systematic review.

Prof. David Finn closed the day with final thanks to all the speakers and attendees, and an invitation back to Galway for the Irish Pain Society Annual Scientific Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> August to continue the Centre for Pain Research's 10-year anniversary celebrations.

# ***‘SAGE with IASP ‘Pain Management in Nursing Practice’ (S. Wright) Book Royalties Award’***

I was a Lecturer in Psycho-oncology in the School of Nursing and Human Sciences in DCU when, early in 2011, SAGE Publishers kindly invited me to write a textbook. I had substantial academic years of experience teaching an options module ‘Pain management in nursing practice’ mostly at undergraduate level but also at post graduate/diploma level in several Irish universities. This made me acutely aware that the module learning content, based on the curriculum of the International Association for the Study of Pain was scattered across numerous text books and journals, and, therefore, often problematic for students to access. I also fervently believe that ‘Pain management’ should be incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum of nurses and all healthcare professionals. In response to their invitation I suggested to SAGE that a comprehensive undergraduate textbook on ‘Pain Management in Nursing Practice’ was urgently required and, taking a leap of faith, enquired if it would be possible to collaborate with the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) to write the IASP nursing curriculum into book format. To my delight the Editors of SAGE (Mr Alex Clabburn) and IASP (Professor Maria Adele Giamberardino) agreed to discuss the idea of collaboration on the first book format of an IASP Curriculum.

After a two-year negotiation process between the Senior Editors and Editorial Boards of publishers SAGE and the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP), again I was delighted when, in the last week of December 2012, Professor Maria Adele Giamberardino, Editor in Chief of IASP indicated by email that I could proceed with this very prestigious book project.

From January 2013 towards end of 2014 I just relished writing this textbook. I had highly prized- and very much availed of- access to DCU and TCD libraries and when relevant and necessary book content was not available I purchased the required book. This resulted in my accruing a most up-to-date pain book collection, which has recently been donated to DCU Library. Through an Irish agent for Nuance I trained in Dragon Medical Speech Recognition to prevent repetitive strain injury and to facilitate meeting of deadlines. Each chapter, addressing a specific pain topic, was peer reviewed with an opportunity to amend. Word count was denoted by book word limit. The project was stimulating, challenging and rewarding and review feedback has been very positive. I was especially honoured to have the ***book launched at the Irish Pain Society 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting (IPS15ASM) 26<sup>th</sup> September 2015 in Dublin by Professor Rolf-Detlef Treede, President of IASP.*** The book is available through SAGE Publishers at <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/pain-management-in-nursing-practice/book242125#description>.

From the project’s inception it has been the intention to ***donate the book Royalties to a fund for Continuing Nurse Education.*** Textbooks do not generate large Royalties so the fund is modest, enough to ***fund one Postgraduate Pain Nurse’s Registration Fee to attend the IASP World Congress.*** A call will be put out at this year’s IPS17ASM (a year before the 17th IASP World Congress in Boston, Massachusetts USA September 12-16, 2018), followed by an email to IPS nurse members closer to the IASP Congress registration date. Only IPS nurse members are eligible to apply for the fund and respondents will be asked to submit a brief (200-300 word max) outline of how their attendance at the IASP World Congress would impact/improve their pain nursing practice. Applications will be assessed by a panel of non-nurse members of the Irish Pain Society Committee. The winner will be notified before the early bird registration deadline of the IASP conference and will receive the award fund electronically, through the IPS Treasurer Dr Hugh Gallagher, which will cover their registration fee for IASP (this is usually about €700-€800).

I would like to thank the Editors and Boards of SAGE and IASP, past President of IASP Professor Rolf-Detlef Treede, past IPS President Professor Laserina O'Connor, IPS President Professor Dave Finn, Officers and Committee of the Irish Pain Society for their very amicable support and encouragement for this prestigious book project which was a huge privilege for me.



Launch of SAGE with IASP collaborative publication 'Pain Management in Nursing Practice' at the Irish Pain Society 15th Annual Scientific Meeting 26th September 2015.

From left to right:

Dr Shelagh Wright, book author

Professor Rolf-Detlef Treede, President IASP

Professor Laserina O'Connor, President IPS at the time

More good news for Shelagh as at the British Autogenic Society (BAS) AGM, Saturday 13th May, Friends' House, Euston, London, UK, she was awarded the ***BAS Postgraduate Certificate in Autogenic Training***.

*Photo: Shelagh Wright with BAS Chair Judith Wren at the BAS AGM Saturday 13th May 2017*

**Shelagh comments:** I owe my completion of my British Autogenic Society (BAS) PGC-AT to the outstanding support of Chronic Pain Ireland (CPI). My thanks especially to Chairperson John Lindsay, National Co-ordinator Christina Donnelly and CPI members who kindly participated in my Autogenic Training courses in Carmichael House, Dublin, in the past year. My thanks to BAS for a valued place on the very enjoyable BAS PGC-AT course in London, from March 2016 to end April 2017, to my supervisor Senior BAS Tutor Jane Bird and BAS Chair Judith Wren. The helpful support of Carmichael House staff, my family, colleagues on the Committee of the Irish Pain Society, ISAX fellow alumni and others is gratefully appreciated.







## *Student spotlight*

*The effectiveness of Exercise combined with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Chronic Pain. A Randomised Controlled Trial.*

*Máire-Brid Casey, Physiotherapist, HRB Clinical Research Fellow, PhD candidate, University College Dublin.*

Having worked for the last number of years as a physiotherapist in the Department of Pain Medicine of the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, I was delighted to be awarded a research training fellowship grant by the Health Research Board in 2016. This three-year fellowship has afforded me the exciting opportunity to pursue a PhD and contribute to the body of evidence in pain research, while working with and learning from many experts in this field.

The idea for the ExACT Trial emerged from pilot research undertaken by the multidisciplinary pain team, led by Dr Conor Hearty in the Mater hospital. This pilot study evaluated the impact of a multidisciplinary Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) pain management programme on patients with chronic pain and showed positive results on outcomes such as pain interference, mood, self-efficacy and physical activity. ACT is a form of cognitive behavioural therapy, which is showing promise for people with chronic pain. The approach aims to enhance psychological flexibility and engagement in valued activity. While the construct of ACT appears well suited for chronic pain, there are relatively few high-quality studies and further RCTs have been recommended, in particular with active treatment comparisons. To our knowledge, the ExACT trial will be the first RCT to examine the effectiveness of exercise combined with ACT for chronic pain.



The overall aim of the study is to assess the effectiveness of a combined Exercise and ACT programme, compared to a standalone supervised exercise intervention for chronic pain. 160 patients, aged 18 years and over, who have been diagnosed with a chronic pain condition by a medical doctor will be recruited to the trial. Participants will be individually randomised to one of two group interventions. The combined group will take part in eight, weekly psychology sessions based on the ACT approach, in addition to supervised exercise classes led by a physiotherapist. The control group will also attend weekly supervised exercise classes but will not take part in psychology sessions. The primary outcome will be pain interference at three month follow up measured using the pain interference subscale of the Brief Pain Inventory. Secondary outcomes will include global impression of change, pain severity, self-efficacy, depression, anxiety, catastrophizing, pain acceptance, committed action, quality of life, fear avoidance and health care resource utilisation. Physical activity patterns will be measured objectively using FitBit Zip activity trackers. Both groups will be followed up post intervention and again after three months. We also plan to undertake a qualitative study in order to explore the experiences of participants of both interventions.

Trial recruitment commenced in February this year and is expected to continue until November 2018. In addition to co-ordinating the trial itself, I have availed of many education and training opportunities within UCD and I attended a five-day course on RCT methodology at the University of Oxford. I am thoroughly enjoying the fellowship so far and I am very grateful to the HRB for this opportunity. I would also like to thank the trial participants, my supervisors, Dr Catherine Doody and Dr Keith Smart, and all my colleagues in the Mater Hospital, particularly Dr Damien Lowry and Dearbhail Flanagan for their ongoing commitment with delivery of the trial interventions. We anticipate that this research will help inform clinical practice in the management of chronic pain and we look forward to sharing the findings of the ExACT trial in the not too distant future!

## ***Congratulations to Joanne O'Brien for publishing her article on 8% capsaicin in Clinical Nurse Specialist!***

**Joanne O'Brien**, RANP Pain Management in Beaumont, and her collaborators at the Beaumont Hospital & RCSI School of Nursing and Midwifery, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland recently published the results of their longitudinal study evaluating the effectiveness of Capsaicin 8% administered in an outpatient clinic without physician supervision to treat neuropathic pain in the journal *Clinical Nurse Specialist*.



The article, titled “**Advancing Nursing Practice: Management of Neuropathic Pain With Capsaicin 8% Without Physician Supervision**” can be found at [http://journals.lww.com/cns-journal/Abstract/2017/05000/Advancing\\_Nursing\\_Practice\\_Management\\_of.7.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/cns-journal/Abstract/2017/05000/Advancing_Nursing_Practice_Management_of.7.aspx)

**Spoiler alert:** The findings reveal a significant reduction in pain, both during rest and movement in the 3-month follow-up period and the treatment was well received by patients, as illustrated by high levels of pain satisfaction and willingness for repeated use of the treatment.

## ***The Irish Pain Society at the Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) Conference***

Several members of the Irish Pain Society were attending and involved with the Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) conference. This year the conference took place from June 7-9, 2017 in Malta. Created in 2009, SIP is an international platform and represent a joint initiative of the European Pain Federation EFIC® and the pharmaceutical company Grünenthal GmbH. IPS finds it important to continue our active involvement with SIP to improve pain management and research across Europe. More information on SIP can be found on <https://www.sip-platform.eu>



*Photo: Dr Brona Fullen, EFIC representative at SIP*

# Professor David Finn speaks in Dáil Éireann to advise on Medical Cannabis

President of the Irish Pain Society Dr David Finn, in his research capacity as Professor and Co-Director of the Centre for Pain Research and Professor of Pharmacology and Therapeutics in the School of Medicine, NUI Galway, spoke in Dáil Éireann on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of April and emphasised the need to consider people living with chronic pain in the ongoing debate on the status of medical cannabis and cannabinoids in Ireland.

Minister for Health, Simon Harris, TD, has announced that he has decided to establish an access programme for cannabis-based treatments in Ireland. The announcement followed the publication of a report from the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) entitled *Cannabis for Medical Use – A Scientific Review*.

The HPRA report advised that, if a policy decision was taken to permit cannabis under an access programme, it should be for the treatment of patients with 3 indications only: (1) spasticity associated with multiple sclerosis resistant to all standard therapies and interventions whilst under expert medical supervision; (2) intractable nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy, despite the use of standard anti-emetic regimes whilst under expert medical supervision; and (3) severe, refractory (treatment-resistant) epilepsy that has failed to respond to standard anticonvulsant medications whilst under expert medical supervision.

Controversially, the HPRA report recommended against the use of medical cannabis for the treatment of chronic pain, despite an acknowledgement within the report that chronic pain is the most researched indication for cannabinoids and despite the fact that the majority of clinical studies, meta-analyses and systematic reviews cited in the report conclude that cannabis or individual cannabinoids afford benefit to patients with chronic pain. In fact, three of the most thorough and exhaustive scientific reviews to have been published on the subject in recent years all concluded that there is good or substantial, high-quality evidence that medical cannabis or cannabinoids are efficacious in chronic pain in adults (Hill, 2015; The National Academies of Sciences, 2017; Barnes & Barnes (UK Barnes Report), 2016). Chronic pain conditions that are responsive to cannabinoids include, but are not limited to, neuropathic pain and cancer pain. Moreover, in other countries where medical cannabis has been authorized in recent years (e.g. Canada, Australia, Germany, ~30 US states, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Croatia etc), chronic pain is typically the number 1 indication.

The striking reality is that despite the availability of current pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments for chronic pain, 13-to-35 per cent of the population still suffer from chronic pain at a cost of €5.34 billion per year to the Irish economy (2.86 per cent of GDP) and, in the largest study ever to look at the prevalence and impact of chronic pain in Europe (46,394 patients), 40 per cent of patients reported that their pain management is inadequate (Breivik et al., 2006).

Speaking at the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health and at a presentation within the AV room of the Dáil, Professor David Finn emphasized that chronic pain represents a very significant unmet clinical need, particularly conditions such as low back pain, neuropathic pain, fibromyalgia, post-surgical pain, arthritic pain and severe cancer pain. Chronic pain is the most researched indication for cannabinoids, and the majority of clinical studies, meta-analyses and systematic reviews conclude that there is a good or substantial body of evidence that cannabis or cannabinoids afford benefit to patients with chronic pain. The evidence suggests that medical cannabis and cannabinoids, introduced in a careful, controlled, well-regulated manner as per the other 3 indications in the HPRA report, could alleviate some of the unmet clinical need in chronic pain. Professor Mike Barnes of Newcastle University, Consultant Neurologist and author of the UK Barnes Report, a comprehensive review of the scientific evidence for medical cannabis, also presented in the Dáil, conveying the same messages as Professor Finn and very strong support for use in chronic pain. And at their recent AGM, the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) passed a motion in favour of medical cannabis for indications where there is an evidence base.

Importantly, the HPRA report was very supportive of further research within Ireland and internationally on medical cannabis and cannabinoids, including for chronic pain, and this support is welcomed by Professor Finn. Over the past 12 years, the Centre for Pain Research and Galway Neuroscience Centre at NUI Galway has developed a very active research group with a focus on cannabinoids and the endocannabinoid system. In work funded from a variety of peer-reviewed grant sources including Science Foundation Ireland, the Health Research Board, the Irish Research Council, the International Association for the Study of Pain and others, the researchers have published over 50 peer-reviewed scientific publications demonstrating a key role for the endocannabinoid system in stress-induced modulation of pain, descending control of pain, cognitive and affective aspects of pain, and neuroimmune signalling and its relevance to pain, affective disorders and neurodegenerative disease. Continued support of such research into cannabinoids and the endocannabinoid system alongside the careful, controlled and regulated introduction of medical cannabis in Ireland for chronic pain and other indications for which there a strong evidence base will be key to ensuring that Ireland can move forward in an informed manner and can lead internationally in this area.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017, the IBS Executive Committee issued a statement on medical cannabis which you can read at:

## IPS ASM 2017 Update

Our Annual Scientific Meeting in 2017 will take place on **Saturday August 26, 2017** in the Bailey Allen Hall at the National University of Ireland, **Galway**. In line with the IASP's Global Year Against Pain After Surgery this year's ASM will focus on talks on the topic of *post-surgical pain*.



Our keynote speakers are:

**Pain Medicine:** *Dr. Patricia Lavand'homme*,

Professor of Anesthesiology the Department of Anesthesiology; Université Catholique de Lovain (Belgium)

**Basic Science and Pharmacology:** *Dr. Esther Pogatzki-Zahn*, Professor of anaesthesiology and critical-care medicine at the Department of Anaesthesiology in the University of Münster (Germany)

**Nursing:** *Dr. Alison Twycross*, Head of Children's Nursing and Professor of Children's Nursing at London South Bank University (UK)

**Physiotherapy:** *Dr. Niamh Moloney*, Lecturer in Physiotherapy at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

**Psychology:** *Dr. Rachel Powell*, Lecturer in Health Psychology at the University of Manchester, UK.

Similar to last year, after the keynote presentations, 2.15 – 3.15pm IPRN will organize the 'Data blitz' session featuring short talks of research ongoing across Ireland.

After the keynote presentations, two parallel masterclasses will run from 3.15pm – 4.45pm:

- 'Ultrasound Guided Regional Anesthesia' Masterclass with demonstrations by Dr. Alex Mudrakouski and coordinated by Dr. John McDonnell, Dr. Tadhg Lynch and Dr. Hugh Gallagher.
- 'How to get published' Masterclass coordinated by Prof. Brian McGuire and Prof. David Finn.

Abstract submission for poster or short oral presentations now open, with a submission deadline of **July 7, 2017**. See <http://www.irishpainsociety.com/index.php/date-for-your-diary-asm-saturday-26th-august-2017/> for more information!



**Save the date !**



See <http://neupsig2017.kenes.com> for more information on the scientific programme and registration.



See <http://www.ispp2017.org> for more information on the scientific programme and registration.



See <http://crpscork2017.com> for more information on the scientific programme and registration.



See <http://www.efic2017.kenes.com> for more information on the scientific programme and registration.

# NSUKI ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING OXFORD 2017

Joint Meeting of NSUKI and the IASP Neuromodulation Special Interest Group (11-12 November, 2017), see <http://www.nsukiasmoxford2017.com> for more information