



APRIL 2025, ISSUE 17

# SPHPSS IN FOCUS

A quarterly newsletter from the UCD School of Public Health,  
Physiotherapy and Sports Science



## WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to Issue 17 of SPHPSS in Focus! We hope you all enjoyed the Easter break and are making the most of the brighter Spring evenings. We welcome Cormac Ryan to the newsletter team and thank Gráinne Bannigan for her contributions to the newsletter over the last 3 years.

Since our last issue we marked the retirement, after 50 years of service to UCD, of Ann O'Hanlon. We wish her all the best for the next chapter. New staff members Dr Praveenkumar Aivalli, Assistant Professor Helen Kelly and Biostatistician Quentin Le Cornu, recently joined the School - best of luck in your new roles!

Congratulations to Michelle Kearns, Nathaly Garzón-Orjuela, and Jack Eoin Rua O'Neill who successfully defended their PhD research - we wish you all the very best for your future endeavours. Well done also to UCD Centre for Safety and Health at Work MSc in Occupational Safety and Health student Madhushree Aradya who won first prize in the Mary Ward Traffic Medicine Essay competition, and Research Masters student Clodagh Landers, who won first prize for her poster at the Cystic Fibrosis Clinical Conference.

Our staff and students have been busy fundraising for the Irish Cancer Society - well done to Healthy UCD, the 4th Year Physiotherapy team and especially the BSc Sport & Exercise Management 2nd year class who teamed up with UCD Rugby Club and raised over €71k. What an incredible achievement!

As we approach the end of another academic year, we look forward to the upcoming graduation ceremonies and the UCD Festival which returns in June!

As always, enjoy reading this issue of SPHPSS in Focus and feel free to circulate it among your colleagues and networks.

**Asst Professor Catherine Phillips**  
Editor of SPHPSS in Focus

## WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- School and Division News
- Research Highlights
- Achievements and Awards
- Teaching and Learning Updates
- Healthy UCD events
- School Committee Updates
- New Appointments
- Recent Publications

## CORE TEACHING PROGRAMMES

- [BSc Sport, Health and Exercise Science](#)
- [BSc Physiotherapy](#)
- [BSc Sport and Exercise Management](#)
- [H Dip in Safety, Health and Well-Being at Work](#)
- [Cert. in Safety and Health at Work](#)
- [MPH](#)
- [MPH \(Nutrition\)](#)
- [MPH \(Global Health\)](#)
- [MPH \(Epidemiology\)](#)
- [MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics](#)
- [MSc Occupational Safety and Health](#)
- [Prof Masters in Physiotherapy](#)
- [MSc Sport Management](#)

# Celebrating the Career of Ann O'Hanlon

On the 4th April, colleagues and alumni from across the University and the Ad Astra Academy Elite Sports Programme, as well as family and friends attended a reception in The University Club to mark the retirement of Ann O'Hanlon.

Ann has been an invaluable member of our School as well as the wider UCD family for many years. Ann first joined UCD in the Mater Hospital, being the only UCD employee based on the hospital site. In the years that followed Ann worked in a variety of roles within UCD, most recently as Manager of the Ad Astra Academy Elite Sports Programme as well as managing our Sport and Exercise Management and Health and Performance Science programmes.

At the event, speeches were delivered by SPHPSS Head of School Associate Professor James Matthews, Associate Professor Catherine Blake, Professor Pat Guiry from the School of Chemistry and of course, by Ann herself!

A wonderful evening was had by all and it was a testament to Ann and her longstanding contribution to UCD that so many people returned to wish her well as she embarks on her retirement and looks forward to new adventures.

Ann will be fondly remembered for her people-centred approach, her generosity and care as well as her passion for fashion!



## UCD Festival, Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025

[UCD Festival](#) is taking place again this year at UCD on 7<sup>th</sup> June from 12pm - 6pm. Join us on our Belfield campus for a free and exciting showcase of UCD's latest research and innovations, with hands-on STEM demos, workshops and live experiments.

UCD SPHPSS will be in the Student Centre with our 'Know Your Numbers!' and 'Unleashing the Power of Performance Testing' stands. Come join us and get a snapshot of your key biometric measurements including height, weight and BMI, plus have your jump height, take-off and landing forces measured and your grip strength assessed. Healthy UCD will be there too to help keep us all healthy this summer!



# Relay for Life - Irish Cancer Society Fundraiser

Congratulations to the '4th Year Physiotherapy' team who have raised over €4,675 as part of the Relay For Life fundraiser for the Irish Cancer Society. Relay for Life is the biggest cancer fundraising initiative across the world. It sees communities across the globe coming together to celebrate cancer survivors, remember loved ones lost to cancer, and stand shoulder to shoulder with those facing cancer. In this 24 hour event teams joined together to walk through the day and night. Members of teams took it in turns to walk a designated distance or time, with someone from the team being on the move at all times in the 24 hour period. Relay for Life UCD was held at the UCD Athletics Track, UCD Belfield Campus on 2nd April 2025 and the event raised over €80,000 in total.



*Pictured: SPHPSS Student Adviser Anna Scully with Evie Jennings, Amelia Shaw, Julie Phillips and Tomás Waldron of the 4<sup>th</sup> Year Physiotherapy team at Relay for Life 2025*

## UCD Walk for Life

Healthy UCD was delighted to be part of the organising team for the UCD Walk for Life event, which took place on April 2nd.

This inaugural event consisted of a 3km lunchtime walk from the UCD Village to the UCD Running Track, where we joined forces with the student-led Relay for Life team, with the joint mission of raising money for the Irish Cancer Society.

We hope to make it an annual campus event. For more info see: [Link](#)

## UCD Walk for Life

in association with



# PhD Viva Success at the SPHPSS

## Jack Eoin Rua O'Neill



*Pictured: Asst Prof Katy Horner, Jack Eoin Rua O'Neill, Prof Clare Corish, Prof Kate Pumpa, Prof Karsten Koehler (Technological University of Munich)*

Congratulations to Jack Eoin Rua O'Neill who passed his PhD viva in March!

His thesis was titled 'Beyond Prediction: Advancing Resting Metabolic Rate Measurement and Its Role in Detecting Energy Deficiency in Athletes'.

Jack is a former graduate of the BSc Health and Performance Science course at UCD, and completed his postgraduate studies in SPHPSS, based at the Institute for Sport and Health.

## Michelle Kearns

Congratulations to Michelle Kearns who successfully defended her PhD!

Her research, supervised by Asst Prof Clare Reynolds, examined the impact of paternal diet on male fertility and offspring metabolic and reproductive health outcomes.

The thesis included a systematic review on the impact of artificial sweeteners on male fertility, analysis of the STEPs cohort study to examine the associations between paternal BMI and diet on offspring outcomes from birth to 5 years and an animal study which looking at the impact of stevia and Ace-k on male reproductive function and metabolic and reproductive effects in the offspring.

*Pictured: Michelle Kearns and Asst Prof Clare Reynolds*



## Nathaly Garzón-Orjuela

Huge congratulations to Nathaly Garzón-Orjuela on successfully defending her PhD on 7th April 2025. Nathaly's PhD was titled 'Optimisation and performance of the CARA infrastructure and dashboards in Irish general practice'.



*Pictured left: Nathaly Garzón-Orjuela, centre: (l-r): Dr Olive Lennon, Dr Sheena McHugh, Nathaly, Prof Brian Caulfield, and right: (l-r): Prof Catherine Blake, Nathaly, Prof Akke Vellinga*

# Welcome New Staff Members!

## New Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Dr Praveenkumar Aivalli recently joined the SPHPSS as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow to work on the AMEN project led by Asst. Professor Catherine Phillips. This SDG Challenge project, funded by Research Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs, focuses on improving maternal nutrition behaviours in sub-Saharan Africa through contextually tailored mobile health (mHealth) interventions.

Praveenkumar is a medical doctor with specialised training in public health. His research interests include digital health, realist evaluation, maternal and child nutrition, implementation science, and systems thinking in global health. He brings substantial experience in health policy and systems research, having led the implementation of maternal and child health programmes in India, funded by the WHO and UNICEF. He has recently completed his PhD, supported by Ad Astra Studentship, at the UCD School of Nursing, Health Systems and Midwifery. His doctoral research employed realist evaluation to examine health system complexities. We wish Praveenkumar all the best in his new role!



*Pictured: Dr Praveenkumar Aivalli*



*Pictured: Quentin Le Cornu*

## New Biostatistician Joins CSTAR

Quentin Le Cornu is a full-time biostatistician and trainer at CSTAR. He holds a Master of Rehabilitation, Disability, and Motor Performance Engineering from the University of Jules Verne Picardie, and a Master of Biostatistics, Public Health Research, and Clinical Research from the University of Paris-Saclay.

Quentin's previous experience includes work with Inserm U1153 and the Clinical Investigation Center (CIC 1414) in France. His primary interests lie in clinical epidemiology and methodology.

Welcome Quentin!

## New Assistant Professor in Public Health

Dr Helen Kelly joined the SPHPSS in April as a Lecturer/Assistant Professor in Public Health. Her research career began at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (UK). Since 2009, she has been involved in global collaborative research studies evaluating the epidemiology, feasibility and implementation of public health approaches to controlling sexually transmitted infection in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), including point of care diagnostics for HIV and syphilis in antenatal care settings, near-to-patient HPV-DNA test for cervical precancer screening among women living with and without HIV, and community-based integrated screening for multiple pathogens (HIV, HPV, female genital schistosomiasis and *Trichomonas vaginalis*) using self-collection and self-testing.

Helen was awarded a PhD in 2017 based on research evaluating the role of antiretroviral therapy on HPV infection and cervical precancerous lesions among women living with HIV in Africa. In 2018, she was a recipient of an EU funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowship to evaluate novel DNA methylation-based biomarkers for the detection of cervical precancer in collaboration with the Catalan Institute of Oncology (Spain) and Queen Mary University (UK). Between 2020-2022, she collaborated with the University of Cambridge and the National Cancer Institute (USA) on a proof-of-concept study investigating the role of reserve cells in the development of cervical precancer at the cervical transformation zone.

Between 2023-2025, Helen worked as a consultant for the WHO Department of HIV, Hepatitis and STIs, where she supported the development of normative guidance on cervical cancer screening and treatment, and provided technical support on the integration of cervical cancer screening within HIV prevention and treatment services globally. Since 2013, she has organised and taught on several MSc modules in international public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. We wish Helen well in her new role!



# Interdisciplinary cross-college event on engaging with education for sustainable development concepts

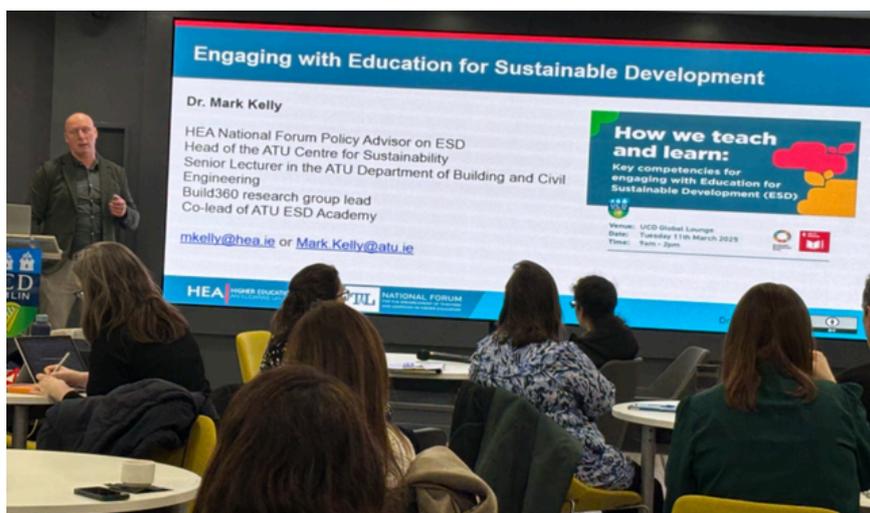
With a cross-college interdisciplinary team, Dr Sarah Browne led a UCD-wide event on the 11th March at the UCD Global Lounge entitled: 'How we teach and learn: Key competencies for engaging with education for sustainable development (ESD)'. The event was part of a project funded by the UCD Sustainability Innovation Seed Fund 2024/2025. The aim was to engage with diverse disciplines across UCD and explore ESD together. Dr Mark Kelly, National Policy Advisor on ESD with the HEA National Forum for Teaching and Learning set the scene as the keynote speaker and UCD VP for Sustainability, Prof Tasman Crowe provided an overview of current UCD activities.



The project team presented case studies demonstrating their process of integrating activities to support ESD cognitive competency development in their respective teaching practice.

UCD Agile facilitated a World Café discussion to explore existing ESD knowledge and skills, supports needed by UCD staff, a vision for the future, and recommended next steps.

The team is now focused on disseminating the learnings from the project, to include recommendations for next steps for ESD at UCD. The project team produced a guiding infographic available on the UCD Teaching and Learning platform under 'Education for Sustainable Development' resources.



More information about ESD and support for educators can be found on the HEA National Forum for Teaching and Learning [webpage](#).

*Pictured: (top) Assoc Prof Celine Murrin, Dr Olga Ionnidou, Dr Leigh Graves Wolf, Assoc Prof Karen Keaveney, Dr Sarah Browne, Ms Nicola Dervan, Prof Emma O'Neill*

# BSc Sport & Exercise Management Class raise over €71k for Irish Cancer Society

Every year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Event Management class in the BSc Sport & Exercise Management course team up with UCD Rugby Club to raise vital funds for the Irish Cancer Society. This year, the class smashed records and raised over €71k. Huge thanks to everyone who supported the class, volunteered and donated!



# Asst Prof Catherine Phillips awarded funding to advance UN Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger



Congratulations to Assistant Professor Catherine Phillips who was awarded funding from Research Ireland and Irish Aid (Department of Foreign Affairs) as part of €2.2 million funding for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Challenge research projects that seek to address the global issues of hunger and food insecurity.

Dr Phillips' project "Personalised mHealth Maternal Nutritional Education for Equitable Nutritional Access and Improved Maternal and Offspring Health Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa" (AMEN), in collaboration with the University of Limpopo, South Africa, addresses critical barriers to maternal nutrition, including socioeconomic inequities, limited health education, and poor access to locally available, nutritious foods. Using a co-creation approach with local stakeholders, a mobile application will be adapted to deliver personalised nutrition education tailored to women's cultural practices, dietary needs, and health status.

Challenge-based funding is a solution-focused approach to research funding that uses prizes, phases, defined timelines, teamwork and competition to direct research activity towards addressing pressing societal and economic problems. Funded research teams will have the opportunity to compete for an overall prize fund of €1 million for the most competitive team as part of this funding programme.

Find out more about the SDG Challenge Programme [here](#).



## Final Year Medical Students' Professional Attachments in Public Health

Final year medical student Aisling Spratt undertook an elective in Public Health Medicine with Professor Patricia Fitzpatrick, as part of Medical Degree Professional Completion module. Aisling worked on the Traveller Cancer Awareness Study and the Irish Comparative Outcomes of Cystic Fibrosis Study (ICOS).

Final year medical student Conor O'Rourke worked with Associate Professor Mary Codd on the Associations of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) Core Curriculum Programme and the WHO Global Competency and Outcomes Framework. Conor will present his work at the upcoming Faculty of Public Health Medicine Summer Scientific Meeting. Another abstract has been submitted to the Irish Network of Healthcare Educators Annual Scientific meeting.

Well done both on professional attachments!



## Graduate Programmes: Apply Now

The UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science offers a wide range of graduate programmes across all of our disciplines and at various levels.

Courses range from short-term Certificates to part-time Professional to two-year full-time Masters programmes.

Full information, including application requirements and deadlines, are available [here](#). International students can find more information about studying at UCD [here](#).

# On-Campus Stop Smoking Programme



**FREE**  
**12 WEEK**  
**STOP SMOKING**  
**PROGRAMME**  
**IN UCD**

**STARTS 13 FEB**

- OPEN TO STAFF & STUDENTS
- FREE NRT

**REGISTER NOW**

**You can**  
**QUIT**



UCD Student Health  
Sláinte Mac Léinn UCD



HSE  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



Healthy  
UCD

Healthy UCD, in partnership with the HSE and UCD Student Health, are delighted to offer a free 12-Week Stop Smoking Programme pilot on the Belfield Campus.

The programme started in February and will run until early May and is open to everyone on campus. Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is included as part of the service, which we aim to continue with next year.

Find out more [here](#).

## Rory Lambe travels to London for Venture Scientist Programme



Rory Lambe, a PhD student of Cailbhe Doherty's at the Insight Centre for Data Analytics, travelled to London at the beginning of April for the start of the venture programme 'Conception X'. Conception X is a nine-month programme aimed specifically at PhD students wishing to develop a deep tech start-up company. Students are given entrepreneurial training, and access to a network of experts in industry and academia, to launch their research-backed start-ups. PhD students from universities across Europe are participating, and several in-person bootcamps will take place. This year, Enterprise Ireland has provided funding for a number of students from Irish universities, with the strong support of NovaUCD.

Rory's research involves the use of wearable devices — such as Apple Watch and Fitbit — in healthcare, with the aim of using wearable data to improve the management of cardiovascular disease. Alongside Ben O'Grady and Daniel Hickey, their start-up 'Clia' combines wearable device data with clinical cardiovascular measurements to support remote monitoring and assessment of heart health. Clia was successful at last year's NovaUCD Student Enterprise Competition, and the team hopes their work will have a tangible positive impact on individuals with cardiovascular disease.

More information about Rory's research and Conception X are available at <https://www.conceptionx.org/about> and <https://rorylambe.github.io>.



*Pictured: Ben O'Grady and Rory Lambe following their Student Enterprise Competition success last summer*

# UCD Awarded Second Place in AIPEC 2025

The UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences was delighted to host All-Ireland Interprofessional Healthcare Challenge for Students (AIPEC) 2025 on 28th March at UCD. This annual intervarsity education competition provides an opportunity for students from all health disciplines to work collaboratively with colleagues from different professions to meet a challenge set around complex care issues.

Teams from Queen's University Belfast, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, Ulster University, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Galway and University of Limerick took part in the 2025 challenge. Team members were from a range of academic backgrounds, with participants representing various fields including medicine, nursing, dietetics, physiotherapy, radiography, pharmacy and social studies. Each team was tasked with presenting innovative solutions to a hypothetical case that centred on improving outcomes for a patient with cardiac heart failure while also providing family support.



*Pictured l-r: Aaron Browne (UCD Radiography), Lucy Power (UCD Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics), Dr Dermot McCaffrey (SVUH Medicine), Goodness Ogundare (UCD Physiotherapy), Dr Julie Broderick (TCD Physiotherapy), Christine Howley (Mater Hospital Nursing), Iesha Moustafa (UCD Medicine), Swathi Kuzhipatt (UCD Medicine), Eala Flannagan (UCD Medicine), Aoife McEvoy (UCD Nursing)*

The judges, Dr Dermot McCaffrey (Cardiologist SVUH), Christine Howley (Clinical Nurse Specialist MMUH) and Dr Julie Broderick (TCD Physiotherapy) brought a wealth of expertise from different disciplines, played a crucial role in providing valuable feedback and in determining the winners of the competition.

After a day filled with insightful presentations and spirited discussions, the competition concluded with UCC taking home first-place prize. The UCD team, two of whom are currently studying in the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science (Goodness Ogundare and Lucy Power), secured second place, delivering a highly commendable performance that showcased this team's talent and dedication. Congratulations to all!

## Asst Prof Alison Connolly awarded funding from the EPA



Congratulations to Assistant Professor Alison Connolly who was recently awarded funding from the Environmental Protection Agency as part of €2 million in funding for projects focusing on policy-relevant environmental and climate research in Ireland.

Dr Connolly's project, Human Biomonitoring for Ireland (HBM4IRE) will collect and analyse samples, including blood and urine, to evaluate chemical exposures among the Irish population.

"HBM4IRE will advance the use of human biomonitoring in Ireland, as well as contributing to ambitious EU goals to reduce pollution to levels no longer considered harmful and create a toxic-free environment", said Dr Connolly.

Find out more about HBM4IRE [here](#).

*Pictured: Asst Prof Alison Connolly*



# 1st Prize at the Irish Cystic Fibrosis Clinical Conference

Ms Clodagh Landers, Senior Dietitian, Cystic Fibrosis Unit, St Vincent's University Hospital and part-time Research Masters student in the SPHPSS was awarded 1st place for her poster "Use of Cardiovascular Risk Scores in Adult Populations with Cystic Fibrosis" that was presented at the Irish Cystic Fibrosis Clinical Conference (Strand Hotel, Limerick, 30th & 31st January 2025). Contributing authors were Dr Jayleigh Lim, Clodagh Landers, Dr Marie Therese Cooney, Prof Clare Corish, Dr Oonagh Griffin, Prof Charles Gallagher, Dr Trevor Nicholson, Prof Edward McKone and Dr Suzanne Carter.

The award was presented to Clodagh by Prof Jennifer Taylor-Cousar, University of Colorado Hospital and Prof Pierre Regis-Burgel, Université Paris Cité and Cochin Hospital Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Paris.

Clodagh's research masters is supervised by Prof Clare Corish, SPHPSS Adjunct Associate Professors Oonagh Griffin and Laura Kirwan, and Dr Susanne Carter, Consultant in Respiratory Medicine (Cystic Fibrosis), SVUH.



*Pictured: Prof Jennifer Taylor-Cousar, Clodagh Landers, Prof Pierre Regis-Burgel*

# UCD MSc OSH Student wins Trinity College Dublin Essay Prize



Ms Madhushree Aradya, one of the UCD Centre for Safety and Health at Work MSc in Occupational Safety and Health international students has won first prize at the annual Mary Ward Traffic Medicine Essay competition organised by Trinity College Dublin in partnership with the International Labour Organisations "Vision Zero" and the Irish national Road Safety Authority.

Her essay was titled: "Is there a role for healthcare professionals in addressing alcohol, drugs and driving?"

Madhushree was invited to the launch of the Medical Fitness to Drive Guidelines at TCD on the 7th April where she received her award and her €500 prize. The whole OSH team is very proud of her achievement.

*Pictured: Madhushree receiving her award from Prof Desmond O'Neill, TCD.*



# Staff Fit February Event



The Fit February Social Event took place in The O'Brien Centre for Science on March 18th and celebrated the biggest ever walking challenge.

60 teams and over 300 colleagues from across UCD took part in this free fitness programme and together walked 1.5 times around the world - UCD really is Ireland's Global University! Healthy UCD was delighted to sponsor the team prizes and delicious, healthy treats.



To learn more about how to increase your activity levels, see [here](#).

# The University Observer's Article on Road Deaths in Young People with Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick nominated for Best Article in Relation to Road Safety



Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick was interviewed recently by UCD student John O'Connor for the University Observer, on road deaths in young people.

The article has been nominated for best article in relation to road safety at the National Student Media Awards.

Read the full article [here](#).

*Pictured: Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick*



## UCD ranked in Top 100 by QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025

UCD has been ranked in the Top 100 universities in the world for Sports-Related Subjects in the QS World University Rankings 2025. Academic programmes are ranked over five indicators to effectively reflect their performance, taking into account academic reputation, employer reputation and faculty research.

Speaking about the ranking, Associate Professor James Matthews, Dean and Head of the UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, said "We are delighted to once again be ranked among the top 100 institutions worldwide for sport-related subjects, one of nine disciplines at UCD to achieve this distinction. This recognition reflects the excellence of our teaching and research, as well as the strong reputation we have built within the global academic community and among the organizations that employ our graduates. We look forward to continuing our commitment to delivering world-class programmes and conducting high-impact research in sport and its related disciplines".

Learn about our Sport & Exercise programmes [here](#).



## UCD Postgraduate Open Day 2025



We were delighted to meet and chat with so many people at the UCD Postgraduate Open Day, held on 26<sup>th</sup> February at UCD O'Reilly Hall.

Representatives from our Public Health, Physiotherapy, Sport Management, Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics, and Occupational Safety & Health subject areas were on hand to answer all of your questions.

For anyone who was unable to attend on the day and/or would like more information about our postgraduate programmes, head over to our [website](#) for course information, including handy FAQs, webinars and alumni testimonials.

# Dr Kaat Philippe Awarded UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences Seed Funding for Research Visit in Paris

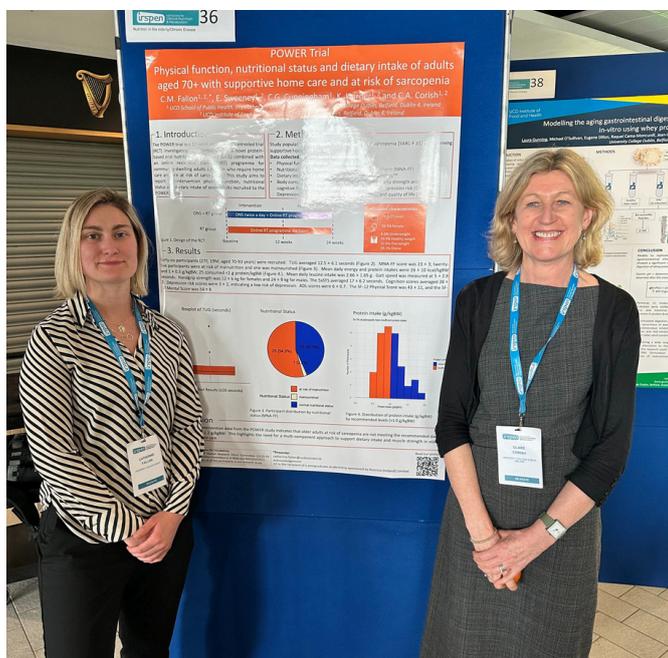
Dr Kaat Philippe was awarded CHAS seed funding to support a research visit with the Obstetrical, Perinatal, and Paediatric Epidemiology (EPOPé) Research Team of INSERM in Paris. The visit took place from 1-9 March 2025 and focused on the elaboration of a collaborative research project.

During her stay, Dr Philippe worked with Dr Adrien Aubert (EPOPé and former SPHPSS staff member) to design a study on eating behaviour in preterm-born children at 3 years of age, using data from the French EPIPAGE cohort. Together, they organised a multidisciplinary meeting with EPOPé staff – including clinicians and researchers – to present and discuss the project. Analyses for the project are currently ongoing.



*Pictured: Dr Kaat Philippe and Dr Adrien Aubert at the office of the Maternity Hospital Port Royal in Paris*

# Irish Society for Clinical Nutrition & Metabolism 2025, Dublin



The IrSPEN 2025 Conference, held on April 8th at the Aviva Stadium, Dublin, brought together leading Irish and international experts in nutrition, dietetics and healthcare. This impactful event explored innovative approaches to nutrition interventions for health gain, fostering collaboration among healthcare practitioners, policymakers and researchers. Key speakers included Professor Carel Le Roux, Niamh Rice, and Professor John Reynolds, who provided valuable insights into strategies for better patient outcomes. Among the many delegates, a poster presentation by Catherine Fallon, titled “POWER Trial: Physical function, nutritional status and dietary intake of adults aged 70+ with supportive home care and at risk of sarcopenia.” This presentation reported on the pre-intervention functional status and dietary intake of older adults recruited to the POWER trial, highlighting the need for a multi-component approach to support dietary intake and muscle strength in older adults reliant on home care.

*Pictured: Catherine Fallon and Prof Clare Corish*

# Engaging Future Students: UCD Sports Science Presentation at Belvedere College

Dr James Timmons had the pleasure of visiting Belvedere College to speak with senior cycle students about UCD’s sport science course offerings. The session provided students with an overview of the diverse academic pathways available in sports at UCD, as well as potential career opportunities following graduation.

The students showed strong interest and engagement, reflecting a growing enthusiasm for pursuing sport-focused studies at third level.

Many thanks to Helen Finn and the team at Belvedere for the warm welcome and the opportunity to connect with such an enthusiastic group of future students.



# Groundbreaking Injury and Performance Surveillance Project

The United Rugby Championship (URC) in partnership with UCD is proud to announce the launch of the Surveillance of Continental Rugby Injury-Illness and Performance Tracking (SCRIIPT) Project. This pioneering initiative is aimed at enhancing player welfare and performance through comprehensive injury surveillance and athletic performance tracking. The URC SCRIIPT Project is designed to provide an accurate, reliable, data-enabled approach to monitoring injuries, workload exposure, and performance metrics, ensuring the highest standards of player care. The project is backed by leading experts in sports medicine, physiotherapy, and data analytics from the UCD SPHPSS. Principal investigators include Dr Nicol Van Dyk and Greg Hawe, supported by an esteemed advisory board comprising World Rugby representatives and key sports scientists.



*Pictured l-r: Prof Eamonn Delahunt, AbdelRahman Babiker, Prof Catherine Blake, Greg Hawe, Dr Nicol Van Dyk, Amy Monaghan, Charl Crous, Dr Sinead Holden, Prof Brian Caulfield, Prof Fiona Wilson*

## A New Standard in Player Welfare

The URC SCRIIPT Project aims to revolutionise injury surveillance by systematically recording and analysing injury trends across all 16 URC clubs. Through rigorous data collection, teams will gain valuable insights into injury risks and performance optimization. Key elements of the project include:

- **Comprehensive Injury and Illness Surveillance:** Accurate tracking of injury incidence, severity, and recovery times to assess trends and inform prevention strategies.
- **Enhanced Data Accuracy:** Standardized protocols for data collection and reporting, with advanced data management processes will ensure consistent and reliable information for clubs and governing bodies.
- **Monitoring Law and Game Evolution:** Assessment of the impact of game law modifications, coaching strategies, and medical initiatives on player safety.
- **Advanced Performance Analytics:** Leveraging cutting-edge technology to monitor player workload and match performance, allowing teams to optimize their success on the pitch while reducing the risk of injury.

Additionally, the integration of AI-driven analytics and wearable technology will enhance the accuracy of injury forecasting and facilitate proactive risk management.

Amy Monaghan, Head of Operations, URC said: "We benefit greatly from the spirit of collaboration from our 16 Clubs and five Unions in their innovative approach and willingness to trial and explore new studies. We look forward to working with Dr Nicol van Dyk and his team on this new project and are excited by the potential of doing more to support our game. The URC is thrilled to be working alongside this highly skilled world-class think tank of experts to enable us to take the lead and set the standards for player injury surveillance in rugby." SCRIIPT'S Lead Investigator Dr Nicol Van Dyk said: "The URC SCRIIPT Project represents a milestone in rugby's ongoing evolution towards greater player safety and performance optimization. The integration of injury, training, and performance data will allow us to leverage data-informed insights. This will lead to significant strides in reducing injury risks and enhancing the longevity of athletes at the highest level."

The project adheres to GDPR and Popi Act regulations and ethical research standards, ensuring full anonymity and protection of players' data. With a transparent and collaborative approach, anonymized data will be shared with World Rugby to contribute to global player welfare initiatives. The Project will roll out in phases over the 2024-2025 season, with clubs actively participating in data collection and analysis. The findings will be consolidated into annual reports, shaping future injury prevention strategies and performance benchmarks.

This initiative marks a significant step forward in the URC's commitment to fostering a safer, more competitive, and innovative rugby environment.

# RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Alice X T Xu, Kevin Brown, Kevin L Schwartz, Soheila Aghlmandi, Sarah Alderson, Jamie C Brehaut, Benjamin C Brown, Heiner C Bucher, Janet Clarkson, An De Sutter, Nick A Francis, Jeremy Grimshaw, Ronny Gunnarsson, Michael Hallsworth, Lars Hemkens, Sigurd Høye, Tasneem Khan, Donna M Lecky, Felicia Leung, Jeremy Leung, Morten Lindbæk, Jeffrey A Linder, Carl Llor, Paul Little, Denise O'Connor, Céline Pulcini, Kalisha Ramlackhan, Craig R Ramsay, Pär-Daniel Sundvall, Monica Taljaard, Pia Touboul Lundgren, Akke Vellinga, Jan Y Verbakel, Theo J Verheij, Carl Wikberg, Noah Ivers, Audit and Feedback Interventions for Antibiotic Prescribing in Primary Care: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Volume 80, Issue 2, 15 February 2025, Pages 253–262, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciae604>

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