

The Cochrane Review by Prof Colum Dunne

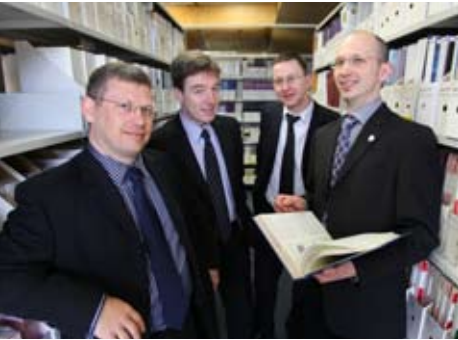
A collaborative team, based at the University of Limerick’s Graduate Entry Medical School, has been successful in its bid for a HRB award to complete a Cochrane Review on the benefit of ‘psychosocial interventions’ for problem alcohol use among problem drug users. The review, which involves collaborations with the UCD School of Medicine and Medical Science and NUI Galway and will be conducted over two years, will improve our understanding of whether interventions that are based on behavioural, motivational or social theories of change and could be effective in treating alcohol problems are also effective for people with coexisting addiction issues.

The award will fund a ‘Cochrane Fellowship’, the aim of which is to build capacity in conducting systematic reviews in the health and social care field in Ireland by freeing up protected time for applicants to conduct

a systematic review of an important health issue. The Cochrane Collaboration is a not-for-profit and independent organisation dedicated to making up-to-date, accurate information about the effects of healthcare interventions readily available worldwide. It produces and disseminates systematic reviews of healthcare interventions in over fifty topic areas and makes them available as The Cochrane Library www.thecochranelibrary.com. In 2002, Ireland became the first country in the world to provide free national access to the Cochrane Library, an initiative co-funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and the Research and Development Office in Northern Ireland.

The team at UL includes Mr Jan Klimas, Prof Walter Cullen, Prof Clodagh O’Gorman, Dr Jean Saunders, Prof David Meagher & Prof Colum Dunne (all Graduate Entry Medical School) with colleagues Ms Catherine-Anne

Field & Prof Gerard Bury (UCD) and Dr Eamon Keenan (HSE Addiction Services, Dublin) and Dr Liam Glynn (National University of Ireland, Galway).



L to R: Prof Colum Dunne, Prof Walter Cullen, Prof David Meagher and Mr Jan Klimas are members of the team completing a Cochrane Review at UL’s Graduate Entry Medical School.

A Thank You from the Paediatric Unit MWRH

On behalf of the children, parents and staff of the Paediatric Caterpillar Day Unit MWRH Dooradoyle, we would like to sincerely thank the organising committee of last year’s Annual GEMS Medical Ball held in the Strand Hotel, Limerick, for their fund raising efforts. With funds raised, the committee purchased child-friendly electronic equipment including a portable DVD player, a flat screen TV and a Play Station 3. All this equipment is kept in one of the isolation rooms in the Caterpillar Day Unit for the exclusive use of paediatric patients with oncological conditions attending the unit on a regular basis for new onset or relapse disease management. In addition, they purchased 50 games and DVDs for the enjoyment of all Day Unit attendees.

The Caterpillar Day Unit sees 3,000 cases per year, approximately 30 of which are children with active oncological conditions requiring regular reviews, blood sampling,

blood and blood product transfusions and chemotherapy. These patients have a Consultant Paediatrician under whose care they are managed locally. Care is combined (“shared”) with a Consultant Paediatric Oncologist from Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital, Crumlin.

Depending on their treatment requirements, oncology children can spend up to 6-8 hours at a time in our isolation room as their movement through the rest of the Day Unit must be restricted in order to minimise cross-infection with other non-oncology patients. Having ready access to the games and other entertainment makes the children’s stay a little less stressful, really helps pass the time, and often relieves their frustration at this difficult time.

Feedback from staff, parents and the children themselves has been overwhelmingly

positive about the equipment which has been in constant use! The GEMS Medical Ball organising committee should be justifiably proud that their fundraising efforts have certainly made a difference to the experience of children with oncological conditions attending the Caterpillar Day Ward. This equipment will continue to provide entertainment to the children for many years to come.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. John Twomey, Dr Siobhan Gallagher, Claudine Herbert, Rita Spaight, Aishling Breen (Staff Nurses) Caterpillar Day Ward, MWRH, Limerick

New Cardiac First Responder DVD

The Statutory Regulator in Ireland responsible for standards and education in pre-hospital emergency care is the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC). PHECC recently commissioned the Academy of Emergency Medical Education within GEMS to produce new cardiac first response education materials to incorporate the new resuscitation guidelines as prescribed by the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR). The package includes

a student handbook, an instructor manual, a classroom based DVD programme and an interactive online basic life support simulator. The project is due for completion during May 2011, and will represent a national programme for the instruction of life saving techniques. Pictured is Paramedic David Caplice (programme narrator) filmed during a video shoot in Eindhoven, Holland.



Dave Caplice, Advanced Paramedic, at the video shoot for the new Cardiac First Responder DVD.



GRADUATE ENTRY MEDICAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

First Ever Graduates of UL Graduate Entry Medical School

History was made on June 14th 2011 when the first cohort of GEMS graduates were conferred with their BM BS degrees at the University of Limerick. All 32 students who were admitted to the course in 2007 proceeded to graduation. Often referred to as ‘The Pioneers’, the GEMS confidently predicts that they will make their mark in medicine and in Irish society in the years to come.

The first postgraduate of the University of Limerick Graduate Entry Medical School has been conferred with a Master of Surgery Degree. Dr Francis O’Neill from Garryspillane, Co Limerick was conferred with his research masters degree as part of the January Conferring Ceremonies at the University of Limerick.

Dr O’Neill undertook research in the area of orthopaedic surgery under the supervision of



Those present at their Conferring Ceremony were: (Left to Right) Back Row: Pat Kennelly, John Kealy, Damien Ferguson, Brian King, David Sheehan, Kevin Glynn, Daniel O’Hare, Michael O’Callaghan, Cormac O’Connor. Middle Row: Iain Feeley, Mary Sweeny, Noel Mulligan, Bridget Minihan, Dermot Bowden, Charlotte Coyle, Niall Feeney, Eimear O’Malley, Bernard Kenny, Anne Grace, Lee Yap, Eric Landymore. Front Row: Saoirse Kelly, Judi Lynch, Roisin O’Sullivan, Claire Kehoe, Siobhan Hinchy, Pamela Davoren, Sinead Carr, Kate-Marie Boyle, Neasa Starr. Conferred in absentia were David Mitchell and Sam Thomas.

Mr Finbarr Condon, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at Mid-Western Regional Orthopaedic Hospital, Croom and Dr Michael Walsh, from the Materials & Surface Science Institute (MSSI) at UL and has had a number of research papers accepted by leading medical peer reviewed journals. Dr O’Neill plans to go on to further training with the Higher Surgical Training Scheme with a view to becoming an Orthopaedic Surgeon.



L to R: Professor Colum Dunne (Director of Research), Dr Francis O’Neill, Professor Calvin Coffey (Chair of Surgery)

Updates on GEMS Facilities

- In May 2011, the Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly, officially opened the UL GEMS teaching and education facility at South Tipperary General Hospital, Clonmel. This facility will allow students to participate in lectures, has dedicated study space and is equipped with video-conferencing facilities to link with students on placement elsewhere.
- The Clinical Academic Liaison building adjacent to the MWRH campus came into use in April 2011. This now houses three GEMS administrative staff (Ms Mary Gamble, Ms Sharon Nolan, Ms Gillian Madigan), a Senior Technical Officer (Mr Niall Collins) and provides office accommodation for a number of senior

academic staff. It also contains a meeting room with full video-conferencing facilities.

- In August 2011, Kerry General Hospital in Tralee will become a teaching hospital of the GEMS. Beginning with just four GEMS students (two in Medicine and two in Surgery), it is expected that the level of engagement between the hospital and the GEMS will increase over time.

- Work has been completed on the plans for a new Clinical Education & Research Centre at the MWRH, Dooradoyle site and the project went to tender in March 2011. It is expected that the contract for the 2,000 sq.m. facility

will be awarded by mid-year and that the building will be ready for use by late 2012 or early 2013.

- Work on the new Medical School building on the UL campus was suspended in March 2011 and the main contractor subsequently withdrew from the site. A new contractor is about to be appointed and it is expected that work on the building will recommence over the coming weeks. In the meantime, the GEMS continues to be housed in temporary accommodation on campus.

Professor David Meagher

The graduation of our first medical doctors this Summer will mark the realisation of many dreams – not only for these hardworking and capable students, but also for all the dedicated staff at ULGEMS and clinicians in the region as a whole. This educational programme is of the highest standards which gives me every confidence that our graduates will contribute substantially to healthcare both in Ireland and Internationally.

Personally, it is a privilege and an honour to have been part of this wonderful journey. As head of teaching and research in Psychiatry, I have had the opportunity to work with colleagues to enrich the programme with the considerable (and in many respects, unique) role that mental health contributes to the overall healthcare spectrum. Psychiatry can make a special contribution to the development of broader professional competencies by virtue of its multidisciplinary nature and emphasis on teamworking and communication skills. I believe that our programme can not only produce doctors with superior knowledge of mental health problems, but is also designed to foster an awareness of the psychological elements that are part of all illness.

The quality of our students has made for an enjoyable journey that has integrated clinical and academic communities, impressing my colleagues with their enthusiasm and commitment. Moreover, the presence of students has been repeatedly commented



upon and appreciated by patients – perhaps the real acid test of our programme! Of course, it is my hope that positive experiences during clinical attachments will attract some of our students to pursue postgraduate careers in psychiatry, but perhaps even more important is the desire to foster a high level of knowledge of mental health amongst those graduates who will venture elsewhere in the broad church that is medicine.

The development of graduates with clinical expertise has also been enriched by a growing programme of research excellence that focuses upon projects that can inform healthcare policy and development in Ireland and beyond. These represent a powerhouse of activity that is producing an ever-increasing body of exciting and creative research. The recent establishment of the 4i research centre is a natural development of this process and represents an important focus for our energies.

For all involved, the journey has been exciting but promises greater and greater opportunities in the future. Hold on tight, so far there has been a lot of hard work and more than a little fun, but the journey has only just begun!

McAleese Public Lecture by Prof William O'Connor

In February 2011, President Mary McAleese delivered the Third Annual GEMS Public Lecture entitled “Ireland’s enduring contribution to medicine’ to an audience of over 400 invited guests in the Kemmy Business School at UL. This Lecture Series aims to engage the local community with the teaching and research plans of the School. The previous speakers were the then Minister for Health & Children, Ms Mary Harney (2009) and the scientist who identified the virus causing HIV, Dr Bob Gallo (2010).

This year’s attendance included GEMS students, invited guests of the University and members of the public. The event received significant attention from the local and national media.

The President spoke in some detail and with considerable authority about Ireland’s proud history in medical education over the centuries. She expressed her confidence that the UL GEMS would carry on this tradition of excellence in the coming years. She noted that the diverse background of the UL medical students augured well with the current demands for the medical practitioner of the future to function as a sort of ‘neo-polymath’ in a ‘new renaissance’.

The President was respectively introduced and thanked for her speech by two of the Year 4



GEMS students, Ms Eimear O'Malley and Mr Michael O'Callaghan.

The President’s speech was followed by a talk on the topic: ‘Educating tomorrow’s Doctors: Leaders or Followers?’ delivered by Professor Bill Shannon, Director of Education. This was both a happy and sad occasion for the medical students, faculty and staff as Bill with his characteristic wisdom and humour has made an enormous contribution to the Medical School since it’s inception but will retire in mid-year.

Faculty and guests attending the 2011 Medical School Public Lecture entitled ‘Ireland’s enduring contribution to medicine’ were Professor Mary O’Sullivan Dean, Faculty of Education and Health Science, Professor Bill Shannon Director of Education who also spoke at this event, Professor William T. O’Connor, Chair Public Lecture Series Committee, Dr. Martin McAleese, President Mary McAleese and 2011 Keynote Speaker, Professor Don Barry, President University of Limerick and Professor Paul Finucane Head of Medical School.

The Art of Medicine by Valerie Tsang

In March, the UL GEMS hosted an exhibition to display Special Study Module (SSM) projects by Year 3 students. The aim of the SSM project was to explore an aspect of humanities as it relates to medicine. The exhibit was a huge success and featured a variety of art forms including dance, music and visual arts.

For my SSM project, I dusted off my paint brushes for the first time in eight years to create personalized plaster sculptures for women with breast cancer to document their stories.

Annie is a college student in her 20s and the interview was cathartic for her as she was diagnosed with breast cancer only two weeks prior to our meeting. Annie’s sculpture illustrates her emotional turmoil. She was in disbelief that she diagnosed at such a young age and was terrified about losing the symbols of her femininity in her upcoming double mastectomy and oophorectomy.

Lavinia is a mother of three who was diagnosed with breast cancer three years ago. She had a right mastectomy just ten days after her diagnosis. Lavinia described the depression she experienced during chemotherapy and how her husband stood by her, even shaving his head when she lost her hair. Despite being raised as a Catholic, Buddhism has become an integral part of her life. Lavinia calms her anxiety through meditation. She now views breast cancer as a reminder to count her blessings and an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others by establishing a local breast cancer support group.

The women were very appreciative of the sculptures and viewed these physical embodiments of their experiences as a way to recognize what they have overcome. The cast making process has boosted Lavinia’s body image, and she uses the sculpture as a visual tool to share her story with other breast cancer patients and her young children.

My SSM experience has imaginatively placed me in the shoes of the breast cancer patients and given me a newfound appreciation of the human condition. It has reminded me to consider humanity in my daily practice of medicine by taking the time to recognize and to address a patient’s psychosocial needs.



“Transcending Breast Cancer” (Lavinia’s Sculpture)

Inter-Medical School’s debate by James Fitzgerald

This year marks the graduation of the first cohort of doctors from the University of Limerick Graduate Entry Medical School (UL GEMS). Coincidentally, it is the 300th year anniversary of Trinity College Dublin Medical School. To celebrate this milestone in medical education, a debate was held to assess the role the internet plays in the discourse of medicine. It was my privilege to represent the UL GEMS on this historic event. If it is true that the most poignant gesture is a symbolic one then what could be more symbolic than a Cork man engaging in a debate in Trinity College Dublin!

The past century has shown a transformation in medicine unlike any other, with fields such as clinical neuroscience, molecular cell biology and genome wide research studies now tackling the public health concerns of the

modern age. More radically, healthcare delivery systems have changed to an evidence-centred model of medicine. The internet has posed a major challenge to modern clinical training and practice. The present paradigm of education is in a state of transition between an old model of rote learning and a superior evidence based model of problem based learning (PBL).

While the internet quickly allows us to obtain information, deciding what information can be best applied to specific clinical situations still challenges us. Instead of constantly looking into the future to divine what we should do, perhaps we should examine what has worked in the past.

A major medical education revolution occurred over three hundred years ago – the Age of Enlightenment – establishing the value of

UL Graduate (Medicine) International Volunteer Electives (GIVE) by Namtra Yashpal

UL GIVE is a newly established student run organization with a very long name, but two very simple goals. In long hand, GIVE stands for Graduate (medicine) International Volunteer Electives and it’s purpose is as follows: to organize safe and beneficial volunteer opportunities for GEMS students in the developing world and to establish links and develop relationships with various medical facilities so as to provide a consistent quality of experience for GEMS students and benefit for the clinic involved. It all sounds very complicated and lofty, but the truth is that due to a dedicated team of faculty and students, UL GIVE is well on its way to sending off its first group of international volunteers – not 8 months after its formation! This coming June and July, a group of approximately 12 3rd year GEMS students will be making their

way over to clinics and facilities in Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia. Their mission will be to improve their own knowledge and clinical skills, learn about both the challenges and positive aspects of practicing medicine in countries less fortunate than Ireland as well as providing often understaffed medical centers with an extra pair of competent hands.

Along with competency, our volunteers (strongly recommended to be between their 3rd and 4th years) are working hard in their efforts to fundraise for the sites they will be traveling to. The idea is to provide their destination medical centers with either monetary relief or other supplies and equipment that they need and can make use of. Volunteers are required to fundraise a minimum amount, with the remainder provided for by UL GIVE itself. So

great teachers, coupled with a compassion for patients, as the key to medical education. This informs the ethos of medicine to this day. Therefore, what we aim for in medical education can be just as important as the professional ethos that forms its foundation. Thus to paraphrase Foucault, we must conceive of the next 300 years as a professional ethos in which the critique of what we are is one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment of going beyond them. This has become the foundation of medical education in UL GEMS and this model is one that is part of the mandate for progress. The UL GEMS is thus part of a new enlightenment and we are active participants in its conception.

far, fundraisers by UL GIVE have included a social music night at Scholars Pub and a very successful campus wide blood pressure clinic at UL. Individual efforts at fundraising include another blood pressure clinic by a group of 3rd years at the Crescent Shopping Center and a Mystery Tour put on by Aiden Jennings and Conor Judge (a mystery no more – it was to Killarney!).

UL GIVE is made up of dedicated students in their 1st and 2nd years (as well as a few from 3rd and 4th) who firmly believe that with a little bit of hard work, no task is too big.

We’d like to wish the 3rd years doing volunteer electives this coming summer with UL GIVE the best of luck and the safest of travels!!

Canadian Student Electives by Robert Coke

Throughout January 2011, I had an opportunity to carry out a clinical elective in General Internal Medicine at Toronto General Hospital, a University of Toronto teaching centre. As with any elective at another institution, having to adjust to a different system can be somewhat overwhelming in the beginning; one month later, however, what I had was an excellent learning experience.

A typical day started at 08:00, at “morning report”, where an interesting case would be presented PBL style by the admitting team from the previous night. Morning report is interactive, and gives medical students and residents a chance to focus on proper diagnosis and management. Morning report would be followed by a team meeting, where each patient admitted to our service would be discussed with our attending physician. As a 3rd year

medical student, or clinical clerk 3 (CC3), I was responsible for looking after 3 to 4 patients on the list at any given time. CC3s are expected to check on their patients each day, to alter medications, and to order investigations as needed. Emphasis was put on “making the call” appropriately, and this was done under the guidance of the senior resident. Managing patients, discussions with members of the MDT (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, nursing staff, and social work), meetings with families, and reviewing care and treatment decisions, occupied the greater part of each day, apart from 12-1pm where lunch was served during a didactic teaching session.

Every 4th night, our team would be on call, admitting patients to our service after referral from the emergency department staff physicians. Any given night on call, a CC3 is expected to

carry out one or two full admissions, requiring full history, physical exam, ordering appropriate investigations, and recommending a treatment regimen. These decisions would be first discussed with the senior resident, and then all cases would be presented to our team’s attending physician when he arrived at 7am. After being up all night, presenting admission cases, a morning ward round with the team’s attending physician, and an MDT meeting, a CC3 then typically goes home exhausted at 10am.

An elective in Internal Medicine at the University of Toronto was an excellent opportunity to learn about the management of a wide variety of conditions, as well as to meet some amazing people. I would recommend this experience to anyone, no matter what aspect of medicine or surgery they may be interested in.