



**GRADUATE
ENTRY
MEDICAL
SCHOOL**
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
SCOIL LEIGHIS IONTRÁLA
IARCHÉIME OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

GRADUATE ENTRY MEDICAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Award for UL Surgeon

Calvin Coffey, Professor of Surgery at the GEMS has recently been awarded a prestigious Travelling Fellowship by the James IV Association of Surgeons. These Fellowships target outstanding young surgeons and promote the international exchange of surgical knowledge. Prof Coffey intends to use the Travelling Fellowship to visit centres of surgical excellence across the US, Canada, Europe and Asia. Professor Coffey acknowledged the importance of the award saying that "This fellowship is a key piece in the jigsaw as we continue to develop educational programmes at the highest level possible for undergraduate students and postgraduate surgical trainees".

Prof Colum Dunne, Graduate Entry Medical School at University of Limerick, added "Prof Coffey and his surgical colleagues at each of the clinical sites affiliated with UL have created an effective and enjoyable learning experience for GEMS students. We welcome the opportunity to disseminate the knowledge generated by these teams in surgical teaching and research, and like all learning organisations look forward to implementing new approaches that may result from this fellowship".

The James IV Association of Surgeons, Inc. was founded in 1957 by three distinguished surgeons from England, Scotland and the United States so that surgeons from around the world could be brought together to exchange ideas and techniques regarding surgery. The aim of the Association is to foster the exchange of knowledge among distinguished surgeons in countries where English is freely spoken. The Association was founded in 1957 by Ian Aird of London, John Bruce of Edinburgh and J. William Hinton of New York who choose the name of the new surgical association in honour of the fourth Stuart King of Scotland who was noted for his interest in scientific affairs.



Year 1 Students 2011/12



The GEMS reached another milestone in August 2011 when for the first time it reached 'steady state' in terms of student intake. Most of the 126 new students are pictured above. All are heartily welcome to the GEMS.

Research Updates

€1 million Research Funding Milestone

Director of Research at the Graduate Entry Medical School, Professor Colum Dunne welcomed the development; "Achieving €1million in research funding is a specific initial milestone for GEMS. It represents progress in implementing what is an ambitious research strategy for Ireland's newest and largest provider of graduate-entry medical places". The School has pursued recruitment of experienced professorial leaders across the clinical specialities who are actively engaged in relevant top-tier health-oriented research. GEMS has succeeded in attracting competitive research funding from Irish agencies such as the Health Research Board (HRB), Health Services Executive (HSE), and The Children's Medical & Research Foundation.

QS Stars™: Award for 5 Star – Innovation

UL was recently awarded a five star rating for Innovation by the international, independent ratings company, QS Stars™. The QS audit for Innovation examined the University's records for patents, spin-off companies and industrial research.

Research & Commercialisation

Research activity at the University of Limerick

follows an ethos of innovation, industry collaboration to translate fundamental research which will tackle real challenges for society as a whole. The University has been granted €41.3 million in research funding for the past calendar year and continues to outperform international benchmarks for delivery of commercial licences and spinouts per euro invested. Our commercialisation success has led to 114 new invention disclosures, 53 patent applications, 27 licence agreements and 8 campus companies in the past 5 years. In 2010 alone, four new University patents were granted by the European Patent office and the US Patent Office.

News & Events

- GEMS Open Evening is taking place on Wednesday 23rd Nov. 2011 from 7 -9pm
- GEMS Annual Research Forum is taking place on Wednesday 18th Jan. 2012
- Seminar with Barry McMahon, Associate Professor Medical Physics & Bioengineering at 6pm on 16th Nov. in the John Holland Theatre



Clinical Placements Update

This Academic Year, there are a total of 145 GEMS students on Clinical Placement across Years 3 and 4. These students are connected via 12 video-conferencing sites which allow students to link into weekly teaching sessions. While teaching can be delivered from any of the 12 video-conferencing sites, the main base for hospital teaching is the Post-Graduate Centre at the MWRH. The GEMS has recently installed a high end Polycom VC unit with dual camera control, a ceiling microphone and a high speed internet upgrade which enables us to lead the way in the use of video-conferencing for education.

GP Placement

Breakdown of students at each site

Educational Hub	No. of students
Limerick	19
Clare	9
Clonmel	8
Killarney	9

Hospital Placement

Breakdown of students at each hospital

Mid-Western Regional Hospital

Total Students 59

	Year 3	Year 4
Medicine	11	5/6
Surgery	11	5/6
Psychiatry	-	9/10
Paediatrics	-	5/6
Ob/Gynae	-	9/10
Total	22	37

Note: Number variation is dependent on number of student in groups due to leave of absences

Clinical Tutors:

Medicine: Drs. Shane O'Hanlon and Rosa McNamara
Surgery: Dr. Peter Coyle
Psychiatry: Dr. Lisa McLoughlin / Dr. Maeve Leonard
Paediatrics: Dr. Orla Coyle
Ob/Gynae: Dr. Ibrahim Idoos
Snr. Administrator: Ms. Gillian Madigan

Portiuncala Hospital, Ballinasloe

Total Students: 10

	Year 3	Year 4
Medicine	3	1
Surgery	3	1
Psychiatry	-	0
Paediatrics	-	2
Ob/Gynae	-	0
Total	6	4

Clinical Tutors: Dr. Olivia Dunne
Snr. Administrator: Ms. Mary Whelehan

South Tipperary General Hospital, Clonmel

Total Students: 8

	Year 3	Year 4
Medicine	3	1
Surgery	3	1
Psychiatry	-	0
Paediatrics	-	0
Ob/Gynae	-	0
Total	6	2

Clinical Tutors: Dr. Claire O'Leary
Snr. Administrator: Ms. Christina Moylan

St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny

Total Students: 6

	Year 3	Year 4
Medicine	2	1
Surgery	2	1
Psychiatry	-	0
Paediatrics	-	0
Ob/Gynae	-	0
Total	4	2

Clinical Tutors: Dr. Ben Defalla
Snr. Administrator: Ms. Brid Fitzgerald

Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore

Total Students: 8

	Year 3	Year 4
Medicine	3	1
Surgery	3	1
Psychiatry	-	0
Paediatrics	-	0
Ob/Gynae	-	0
Total	6	2

Clinical Tutors: Dr. Mary Ward
Snr. Administrator: Ms. Marie Gunning

Kerry General Hospital, Tralee

Total Students: 6

	Year 3	Year 4
Medicine	1	1
Surgery	1	1
Psychiatry	-	0
Paediatrics	-	2
Ob/Gynae	-	0
Total	2	4

Clinical Tutors: Dr. Claire O'Brien
Snr. Administrator: Ms. Eileen Cooper



Present at the donation of the painting 'The Gynaecologist' to the UL Medical Art Collection were: Dr Maeve Leonard (GEMS); Prof David Meagher (GEMS); Mr Tim Mulcahy (Lundbeck); Ms Eithne Boyan (Managing Director, Lundbeck); Ms Yvonne Davis (Curator of Art Collections, UL); Mr Pat Campion (Lundbeck); Ms Mairead Waters (GEMS); Mr Fergus McCormack (Lundbeck); Prof Paul Finucane (GEMS).

Medical Art

As with an increasing number of medical schools the world over, the GEMS encourages its students to study the arts (including the visual arts) so that they might gain insight into how people experience and react to illness and disease. To this end, the School provides a Special Studies Module (SSM) in Year 3 which has a specific focus on the 'Humanities in Medicine'.

As part of its focus on the Humanities, the GEMS is compiling a 'Medical Art Collection' which contains works of art that have some reference to health and illness. In time, this collection will be housed in the Medical School building on the UL campus, where it will be on view to the campus community and to the public. There are currently over 40 paintings in the Collection, which grows year on year. Images of the work in the collection can be seen on www.ul.ie/visualarts

The Collection has mainly been build up through generous donations and loans and contains works by such eminent artists as Robert Ballagh, Sean Keating, James le Jeune, Donal O'Sullivan, Thomas Ryan, John Schwatschke, Stella Steyn and John Butler Yeats. It also contains a very fine painting by Dr Gerry Burke, Consultant Obstetrician/Gynaecologist at the MWMH. Recently, the GEMS was delighted to receive the donation of a large painting entitled: 'The Gynaecologist' from Lundbeck Ireland Ltd as an addition to the Medical Art Collection. This acrylic painting is the work of Brendan Lawless and was produced in 2002.

Also through the generosity of Lundbeck Ireland Ltd., the GEMS this year appointed Professor Daniel Duffy as its first Visiting Fellow in the Humanities. Prof Duffy is a professional fine artist who also holds an academic post at the Paier College of Art, Hamden, Connecticut. He trained at the Pratt Institute, New York (1979-1981), at the Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and at the School of Visual Art, New York. He has exhibited throughout the world including at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. While at UL, Prof Duffy will work with students and faculty to develop their appreciation of the visual arts through formal lectures, drawing classes, art appreciation workshops, etc. The GEMS feels privileged to have been able to attract a person of the calibre of Prof Duffy as the first ever Visiting Fellow in the Humanities in any Irish medical school. Prof Duffy will be on faculty until February 2012.

Yoga Nathan Velupillai

Dr. Yoga Velupillai moved to Ireland in 2008 with his wife, Mary and their three children (Ciara 13, Patrick 8 and Cian 6) from the NHS in Glasgow, Scotland where he was the Project Manager for a Research Project entitled "Psychosocial and Biological Determinants of Disease" (pSoBid).

In Ireland he was instrumental in coordinating the Masters in Public Health Programme in UCC where he was employed as a Senior Lecturer in the Public Health department. At the same time Yoga was a PBL Tutor in GEMS UL part-time and was involved in planning and delivering the Public Health lectures. He was appointed as a full time Senior Lecturer in Public Health in GEMS UL in October 2010. He is also an honorary clinical teacher with the division of community-based sciences in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Glasgow. Yoga was awarded an Honorary Membership of the Faculty of Public Health UK (Hon MFPH) in 2009 for his work in promoting the Public Health agenda in UK. Yoga trained as a doctor from 1969-74 and was awarded MBBS by the Karnatak University in India. After practising as a GP in Malaysia he went to Lebanon to work as a volunteer working in Refugee Camps (training

hospital doctors) with a London based charity (Medical Aid for Palestinians – MAP) from 1990 to 95 where he met Mary (who was training the nurses). They returned to Glasgow in 1995 where he completed a Master of Public Health (MPH) and went on to do a PhD (Medicine – Community based science) in 2004 from Glasgow University. Yoga's research interests are in the psychosocial and biological determinants of illness, Health Needs Assessment (HNA), Refugees health, Palliative care, Health inequalities, Deprivation, Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Quantitative & qualitative methods and medical education (the PBL methods & its assessments).



Sterling debut from UL team in Milligan Debate

Students from Ireland's newest medical school beat five other colleges to secure the runners-up slot in the recent College of Psychiatry Spike Milligan Intersvarsity Public Speaking Competition. The team from the University of Limerick (UL) were pipped at the post by a team from UCD who were the overall winners of the competition, which is now in its 11th year.

The competition aims to raise awareness of mental health issues among medical students and the topic of this year's event was 'Mental illness – Making the invisible Visible'.

Dr Colette Halpin, Chair of the College of the College of Psychiatry's Public Education Committee said: "We are delighted that a team from the most recently-established medical school, UL, joined the competition this year and are the runners up. The entertainment, standard of delivery and content from all seven teams were excellent once again. Congratulations to the winners UCD who really gave us a lot to think about."

The winning team were Michael Conroy and Donal Hanratty from UCD. The runners-up from UL were Mary Randles and Shane Moore. The Award is named in recognition of the late Spike Milligan's work in destigmatising mental illness.

Resus 2011 By Judith Ellen Gilmore (Year 2)

The international resuscitation conference and skills showcase, Resus 2011, was held at the Radisson Blu hotel in Limerick on April 1 and 2. The theme of the conference was the new ILCOR guidelines for basic and advanced life support, with additional sessions on topics including stroke, education, acute coronary symptoms and advanced care. The conference was opened by Mr Tom Mooney, Chair of the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council and Cathal O'Donnell, Conference Chair and new Medical Director of the National Ambulance Service.

Dr Ruud Koster, Co-Chair of the ILCOR 2010 BLS taskforce introduced elements of the new basic life support protocols. The main changes are that a pulse check is no longer advised, breathing assessment time is reduced to less than 10 seconds, and the relaxation of the chest is emphasised during compression. Even slight lean on the chest during decompression reduces venous return to the chest, but hand placement itself must not alter and this will be important in future BLS training. Compression only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CO CPR) is recommended to be taught and may be used, although outcomes are not the same as for CPR using both compressions and ventilations. Oxygen provision remains a critical element in BLS for all cardiac arrests, especially for non-cardiac caused arrests and paediatric patients. The Irish Defence Forces performed an inspiring demonstration of a casualty evacuation from

a hostile situation. Two Air Corps helicopters took part, as did a MOWAG and two ground vehicles. Judging by the number of cars pulled up outside and slowing traffic on the road, the public were also attracted by the activity. The difficulties of providing medical care under fire were clear, and the cramped conditions in which medical personnel in the military operate make it even more impressive.

Sessions on stroke and acute coronary syndromes (ACS) illustrated the impact of evidence based medicine on improving treatment of these critical conditions. Standardised responses to ACS, whether ST elevated myocardial infarction (STEMI) or non ST elevated myocardial infarction (NSTEMI) were explored. PPCI (Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention) is the gold standard treatment for ACS, but requires a specialist centre that is staffed and available 24 hours a day. PPCI is also recommended only within 2 hours of the onset of symptoms. In that respect the geographical distribution of suitable centres is not ideal for national coverage, since transport time from parts of the north-west is over 3 hours. In such situations, thrombolysis becomes the more viable option.

Students from the University of Limerick Graduate Entry Medical School took part in a paper presentation session.

Student Elective in Zambia By Sinead O'Sullivan (Year 4)

This summer, Ger Duff and I set off for Zambia's capital, Lusaka – as the first of many medical students to do an elective through UL GIVE's elective abroad programme. Our time in Africa was to be spent in two very diverse clinical settings – initially at Our Lady's hospice in Kallingalinga, a palliative care facility and outpatients clinic for those with HIV/ AIDs and then at the Neri Clinic, a primary care facility that provides access to health care to the people of Linda, a compound rife with poverty, on the outskirts of Lusaka city.

Prior to arriving at Our Lady's hospice, I can safely assure you that the only medical knowledge I had about HIV and AIDS, was that which was contained in the few pages of my Oxford Handbook- hastily re-read on the plane on the way over, but the real learning was soon to follow. It was in the outpatient's clinic where we got the opportunity to take focused histories and exams that we learnt rapidly about this illness - by assessing the patient's current health status, screening them for common symptoms associated with HIV and AIDS related illness, discussing their medications with them for possible side effects, as well as clinically staging them in accordance with WHO classification.

Sadly however, we also often found ourselves having to admit patients with HIV or who had progressed to AIDS that were clinically very unwell, some having gone into acute renal

failure, others with respiratory difficulty due to large pleural effusions or severe pneumonia and often those with decreased levels of consciousness due to opportunistic infections. During our time on the wards, we examined these patients and more - with conditions such as Kaposi's sarcoma and Stevens-Johnson syndrome - manifestations of HIV that we had previously only ever seen in textbooks.

Our next placement was something completely different and my first day at the Neri primary care clinic is certainly one I shall never forget. Unwittingly, we had arrived on the day of the "Under 5's clinic" – the busiest day of the month. We spent the next few days helping out any way we could – be it work in the dispensary and give out medications or take vital signs, and on our last day we were asked to see the patients ourselves. Despite the vast differences in patient demographics (the average life expectancy in Zambia for men and women is 40 years) and disease epidemiology - we quickly found ourselves working under the same principles as we had in our primary care rotations in Limerick.

My experience, with great thanks to the GIVE committee for their appreciated efforts, was an entirely positive one and I would strongly encourage any UL GEMS student that is interested, to fundraise with GIVE and do an elective abroad next summer – your money and time will be well spent.



Student Life Events

Congratulations to the below students on the arrival of their bundles of joy

Cara Weldrick on the birth of her son James

Els Gillis on the birth of her son Jonas

Frank McKenna and his wife Alison on birth of their son Luke

Eoghan Hearne and his wife Irene on birth of their son Tom

Also a big congratulations to Alice Neylan who got married in July

GEMS on Winning Team at IMO Debate by Eibhlin Healy (Year 4)

The IMO's inaugural medical student debate, as part of the Doolin lecture series, took place at the RCSI's Albert Theatre on December 10th, 2010. The motion - "This house believes the current system of entry to medical schools ensures the best doctors for the future" - was debated by two teams representing medical schools in the Republic, and Queen's University in Belfast. Trinity College, Queen's and the University of Limerick argued vigorously against the motion. Proposing were UCD, UCG and RCSI. By sheer coincidence, it was a case of Boys - vs - Girls: No prizes for guessing the victor. Trinity was represented by Niamh Irving, Queen's by Amy Barber, and I represented GEMS. Michael Conroy, Darko Skrobo and Tom Branigan represented UCD, UCG and RCSI respectively.

The debate was joint-chaired by Dr. Ronan Boland and Prof. Sean Tierney, and adjudicated by Dr. Kate Ganter, past-president of the Irish Medical Organisation, Mr. Fergal Bowers, Health Correspondent, RTE and Mr. Ray Gordon, Managing Director, Gordon MRM.

Whilst the proposing team acquitted themselves well, and certainly scored points for bravado, they were outclassed by the opposition in terms of content and coherency. After the speeches, we adjourned to the outer hall for some well deserved refreshments and to await the deliberation of the judges. UL, TCD and Queen's were declared the winners, with Amy Barber taking the Best Speaker prize for her erudite yet razor sharp rebuttal of the propositions final remarks.



This event is to become an annual occurrence for the IMO to encourage medical students to further engage with the organisation prior to qualifying as doctors.

Study of Risk in Children of Parents with Early Heart Disease

Researchers at the Graduate Entry Medical School, University of Limerick (GEMS) and the Department of Paediatrics at University Hospital Limerick have launched a study to evaluate risk in children of parents with early heart disease. The research study will search for evidence of early heart and vessel disease in children and teenagers whose parents have had either heart attacks or heart bypass surgery at young ages. The research is supported by The National Children's Research Centre and www.cmf.org Children's Medical & Research Foundation (Crumlin).

Professor Clodagh O'Gorman, Lead Researcher and Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Limerick and University Hospital Limerick explains the significance of this study; "This research is the first of its kind to evaluate risk in children whose parents had early heart

disease. We are interested in identifying and monitoring indicators of early acquired heart disease in young children. Potentially, we can follow these children for progression of heart disease. And, if appropriate, we may consider treatments to alter the process of acquired heart disease".



Another First for GEMS! by Prof. William O'Connor

Last year over fifty graduate students enrolled for the GEMS United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Preparation Programme. This is the first initiative of its type undertaken by an Irish medical school and is in recognition of the major importance of the USMLE to our International Students in securing overseas residency training following graduation. The USMLE is a three-step licensing examination that includes a series of computerized multiple-choice questions (MCQs). In order for an individual to receive a license to practice medicine in the USA, the individual must pass all three steps of the USMLE.

The GEMS USMLE Preparation Programme is coordinated by Professor Billy O'Connor, Head of Teaching and Research in Physiology, in association with Kaplan. The School has purchased a wide range of relevant Kaplan course books and e-learning materials for each

student including over 400 hours of online video tuition. In addition, the School provides a series of weekly MCQ exam workshops hosted by Dr. Elizabeth O'Mahony and Dr. Brian Casserly.

While this programme is targeted at International Students (and particularly those in Year 2) within the GEMS, Irish/EU students are also invited to participate. It should also be emphasised that the GEMS USMLE Preparation Program is quite distinct from the GEMS problem based learning program. Teaching sessions are held outside of normal school hours - mostly in the evenings and occasionally at weekends.

At the time of writing this article one of our GEMS students has just achieved a score of 252 out of a possible 300 marks - setting the bar high for those considering enrolling this year.

GEMS Building Programme

by Paul Finucane

Work has recommenced on the construction of the 4,000m² medical school building on the UL campus. The initial contractors withdrew from the site earlier this year when the building was at the half-way stage. PJ Hegarty & Sons won the tender to complete the project. The building will be ready for occupation by July 2012 - one year later than what was originally envisaged. While the delay in the construction of the medical school building has been a significant source of frustration for students and staff alike, once we access the new building I expect that such frustrations will quickly be forgotten.

The tendering process for the new Clinical Education & Research Centre (CERC) at the Dooradoyle site has also been completed and the construction phase of this project will soon begin. The facility will be over 2,000 m² in size and will cost some €9 million. This cost is being shared equally by UL and by the HSE. The new building will be on four levels and will be located in close proximity to the new Critical Care Block.

It is expected that these major developments at the MWRH will coincide with the renaming of the facility as a University teaching hospital.

Prof. Daniel Duffy



Prof. Daniel Duffy is the first GEMS Lundbeck Visiting Fellow in the Humanities.