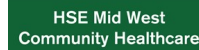


Health Sciences Academy Newsletter

Bringing together research, innovation and clinical practice



The COVID-19 crisis has meant that we have to work in a different way, and the challenges we have to overcome are enormous. But it has presented a remarkable opportunity for us to work and think differently.

This newsletter is our update to you on the extraordinary collaborations that have been developed between University of Limerick, UL Hospitals Group and the Mid West Community Healthcare Organisation over the past month.

UL Arena - New Intermediate Care Facility

In early March, the President of University of Limerick, Dr Des Fitzgerald, first came up with the idea of a Field Hospital at the sport arena at UL. He brought this to the UL Hospital Group who felt that the development of an Intermediate Care Facility as a “step down unit” to facilitate early discharge from the acute hospitals and with a special emphasis on rehabilitation, would be the best way to use the UL facility. It is now also possible that this unit may be asked to assist the nursing homes in accommodating some of their patients.

The project team, under the leadership of Prof Paul Burke, Chief Academic Officer, has progressed this rapidly from concept to costing, and is now moving to prepare for a fully functional care facility. It will deliver multi-disciplinary team services for approximately 116 patients. Facilitating their recovery and ongoing care out of the acute hospital will allow patients move to receive the most appropriate care for their needs, and support availability of beds in the acute hospitals.

This collaboration symbolises a relationship that extends far beyond one of academic partnership; during times of adversity, together we are better/stronger [Read article](#)



Rapid Innovation Unit

Professor Leonard O’Sullivan, of UL’s School of Design and the Health Research Institute based at UL and Mr Tony Moloney, Consultant Vascular Surgeon, with their respective colleagues, collaborated to design solutions to three critical clinical challenges facing the clinicians due to the pandemic. These include (1) capacity to manufacture 100,000 face visors for HSE front-line staff, (2) refinement of a shield concept to protect anaesthesiologists during patient intubation for ventilation, and (3) design of adapters for respiratory technologies to undergo a clinical trial. In the space of 10 days, they moved this project from concept to production, with close support of local industry, an incredible achievement. [View video](#)



Contact Tracing Project

The University, in partnership with the HSE, has set up the UL Virtual Hub with over 50 senior health sciences students trained to engage in contact tracing. The students, from medicine, allied health and nursing, are making calls to inform people that they have tested positive, as well as providing health advice. In addition 70 staff from Revenue, who were trained in UL, are responsible for follow-up calls to identify contacts of the person who has tested positive. With staff members such as Ann Marie Kennedy from the Faculty of Education & Health Science working closely with the HSE behind the scenes, Aelish Nagle from the President’s Office, managing the operations of the project, as well as the involvement of the many other staff members and volunteers, their contribution to supporting the efforts of the health staff in addressing the COVID-19 crisis is a vital collaboration. [Read more](#)

Patient & Family Communication

The PALS team in UHL and the Health Sciences Academy have developed an innovative process using **technology** to support communication between patients and families. The aim is to facilitate video communication at end-of-life when visiting is very limited, and also more general patient-family communication in non-critical situations. This project has involved input from PALS staff (former and present), IT, patient, family & staff and colleagues at Lero in UL to design a robust and effective service. This was implemented initially in UHL and has subsequently been rolled out across the group. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, allowing families to say goodbye to their loved ones.



Current CRU COVID-19 Research

- **SPRINT SARI** - Observational study of patients in ICU with Severe Acute Respiratory Infection
- **Solidarity** - International randomised trial of standard of care and 4 additional treatments in hospitalised patients with COVID-19
- **All Ireland Infectious Disease Cohort AIIL** - Prospective cohort study of patients attending clinical services relating to Infectious Diseases including COVID-19 (Study has been ongoing and COVID-19 patients now added)
- **REMAP CAP** - Randomized multifactorial trial of community acquired pneumonia Looking at various treatments now to included COVID-19
- **YEARS COVID-19 INITIATIVE** - Review of a pre-existing YEARS algorithm for patients with suspected pulmonary embolism and

Staff Training in Croom Hospital

Conversations at end-of-life with patients and families can be challenging for staff. Recognising this, the Health Sciences Academy has worked collaboratively with colleagues in Croom Hospital to deliver a bespoke programme for effective communication. This combined [National Healthcare Communication Programme](#) with coaching tools to support staff to have empathic and effective conversations at end-of-life with patients and families.

Education & Training

CERC has been a hive of activity over the past number of weeks, with training carried out to upskill and support staff during the Covid19 crisis. The CERC facility has proved to be an ideal education and training centre with a variety of tutorial rooms and the auditorium to support social distancing whilst enabling training.

Current training includes: Tracheostomy, NIV, PPE, Blood gas, IV, Occupational health, Haemovigilance, Attendant and PDA/KIOSK.

Mairead O Connell
@MaireadOConnell3

Follow

Our Respiratory specialist nurses sharing their expert Knowledge and skills Collaborating with Physio and Dietician colleagues Thank you for all education in last few weeks
@PaularyanmPaula @SteedFiona @hseie @Bermurphy6 @cdonmmg1

Rachel Kennedy
@RachyKennedy

Excellent multidisciplinary education sessions taking place in @ULHospitals over the last few weeks. Examples include NIV by resp CNS team + physios & NG feeding by dieticians.
#informationsharing #collaboration #teamwork #socialdistancing

Scientists at UL have created a testing solution for COVID-19

Colette Cowan @colettecowan1 · Apr 6

Scientists at UL make solution to aid more testing. Bravo 🙌🙌🙌🙌 wonderful colleagues @UL - this is a huge assistance to us @ULHospitals

Scientists at UL make solution to aid more testing
Scientists at the Bernal Institute at the University of Limerick have responded to the shortage of reagents by preparing a testing solution ...
rte.ie

University Of Limerick @UL · Apr 7

WATCH: Scientists at UL have responded to the shortage of reagents by preparing a testing solution now being used at the city's acute hospital.

A University of Limerick #COVID19 action group has been established to co-ordinate our research activities in response to the pandemic.



CERC for Staff:

As well as being the hub of education activity, CERC is also a hub for staff support:

- The sleep pod in the library can be used by staff to recharge, the library to open for use to support study,
- 'Food for Heroes' deliveries are being accommodated in the foyer.

For latest news and updates on current projects, please visit our website: www.HealthSciencesAcademy.ie or contact Miriam McCarthy, Health Sciences Academy Manager: 087 6362733

* miriam.mccarthy1@hse.ie * miriam.mccarthy@ul.ie