

The College of Medicine and Health Research & Innovation Conference 2026



Advancing Health: Translating Discovery to Care

09:00 to 17:00, Wednesday 2nd September,
Western Gateway Building, University College Cork



Programme of Events

Talks take place in WGB 1.07, First Floor, Western Gateway Building

09:00 – 09:10 OPENING REMARKS

Professor John O'Halloran
President, University College Cork

09:10 – 10:30 Session 1

Chaired by Dr Aoife Fleming and Prof Elaine Lehane

09:10 – 09:35

Professor Yvonne Nolan

*Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience, School of Medicine, and
APC Microbiome Ireland
UCC Futures: Food Microbiome & Health and Future Ageing & Brain Science
Lifestyle factors and the gut-brain axis: relevance to Alzheimer's disease*



09:35 – 10:15

LATEST ADVANCES 1

(8-minute research talks, 2 questions)

Dr Morgane E. Le Dréan

APC Microbiome Ireland

Exploring Microbiota-Derived p-Cresol as a Possible Contributor to Gastrointestinal Symptoms in Autism Spectrum Disorder

Dr Valentine Turpin

APC Microbiome Ireland and School of Medicine

Caesarean section remodels neonatal brain barriers and associated neuroimmune pathways

Dr Andrew Willis

School of Public Health

PRECIS-3: A tool to help trialists design more informative trials

Dr Fionnuala Wilson

Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience, School of Medicine

AAV- GDF5 and combination of AAV-GDF5 and GDNF are neurorestorative in an α -synuclein rat model of Parkinson's disease

10:15 – 10:30

ELEVATOR PITCHES 1

(3-minute elevator pitch style talks, 1 question)

Ms Méabh Finucane

Department of Pathology, School of Medicine

Spatial profiling reveals that high IL-36R expression defines an immunosuppressed tumour microenvironment in colorectal cancer

Ms Koushika Chandrasekaran

School of Pharmacy, School of Medicine, and APC Microbiome Ireland

Early-life microbiota sculpts neuro-glia-vascular interactions underlying hypothalamic circuit and behavioural maturation in zebrafish

Mr Anthony Marullo

Department of Physiology, School of Medicine

Muscle, microbiome and metabolism: a feedback loop in Duchenne muscular dystrophy

Ms Ashley Benge

Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience, School of Medicine, and APC Microbiome Ireland

Vaginal Microbiome Dysbiosis Is Associated with Stress, Pain Burden, and Systemic Inflammatory Signatures in Endometriosis: Translational Insights from a Pilot Multisystem Analysis

10:30 – 12:00

COFFEE BREAK + POSTER SESSION + NETWORKING

Catering - Ground Floor Atrium WGB

Poster Viewing 10:50 - 11:50 in WGB G13, WGB G14 & WGB G15

12:00 – 13:30

Session 2

Chaired by Prof John Browne and Prof Anna Olsson-Brown

12:05 – 12:30

Professor Finbarr Allen

Dental School & Hospital

UCC Futures: Future of Health

Why preventing oral disease is essential for general health



12:30 – 13:10

LATEST ADVANCES 2

(8-minute research talks, 2 questions)

Prof Janas Harrington

School of Public Health

From Vision to Delivery: Developing a Resilient, Community-Driven Food Policy for Cork

Dr Maria Inês Clara

School of Nursing & Midwifery

Co-creating an extended reality intervention to increase adolescent and young adult testicular cancer survivors' knowledge of treatment late effects (TRANSCEND-XR): A qualitative co-design study

Ms Madison Curran

School of Public Health

Socioeconomic inequalities in childhood overweight and obesity: A secondary analysis of the Growing Up in Ireland cohort study

Prof Helen Whelton (on behalf of Dr Jodi Cronin)

Dental School & Hospital

Long-Term Associations between Water Fluoridation and Adult Dental Caries

13:10 – 13:25

ELEVATOR PITCHES 2

(3-minute elevator pitch style talks, 1 question)

Ms Sinead O'Riordan

School of Public Health

Preterm delivery and long-term risk of maternal stroke: systematic review and meta-analysis

Dr Barbara Burke

INFANT Research Centre and Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, School of Medicine

Mapping Perinatal Sentinel Events in the Literature to Improve Patient Safety: A Scoping Review of Definitions, Risk Factors, and Predictive Models

Ms Muireann Vaughan

School of Pharmacy

Mapping Workflows in Outpatient Psychiatry to Guide Pharmacist Integration: A Qualitative Study

Ms Sarah Fenton

INFANT Research Centre

Barriers and facilitators to the national scale-up of a preterm standardised parenteral nutrition system: a mixed-methods process evaluation

13:30 – 14:45

LUNCH WITH POSTER VIEWING AND NETWORKING SESSION

14:45 – 16:30

Session 3

Chaired by Prof Gene Dempsey and Prof Josephine Hegarty

14:45 – 15:10

Professor Geraldine Boylan

Department of Paediatrics & Child Health, School of Medicine and

INFANT Research Centre

UCC Futures: Children

AI-Enabled Neuromonitoring for Early Detection of Neonatal Brain Injury



15:10 – 15:50

LATEST ADVANCES 3

(8-minute research talks, 2 questions)

Dr Mark Feighery (on behalf of Dr Ludolf de Kock)

Department of Medicine, School of Medicine

AI-Based Screening for Reduced Bone Mineral Density on Chest Radiographs: Irish and Multinational Validation

Ms Katie E. Johnston

Cancer Research @UCC

From Insight to Impact: Advancing Patient-Centred Supportive Oncology Care through the Linking You to Support and Advice (LYSA) Research Programme

Ms Maria O'Malley

School of Nursing & Midwifery

Exploring the perceived effectiveness, impact, and benefits of a work-based cancer survivorship peer support programme: A mixed-methods study

Mr Aidan O'Shea

School of Clinical Therapies

Recommendations for facilitating engagement with a self-managed exercise programme for people with shoulder pain: A nominal group technique with key stakeholders

15:50 – 16:05

ELEVATOR PITCHES 3

(3-minute elevator pitch style talks, 1 question)

Ms Rehab Elhiny

School of Pharmacy

LDL-Cholesterol goal achievements and medication adherence among multimorbid older adults with polypharmacy: an analysis of data from the OPERAM trial

Ms Ciara Hanrahan

School of Clinical Therapies

Physical activity behaviour in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; a qualitative study

Ms Julie Arnott

School of Public Health

Gender-differences in COVID-19 risk perception and psychological distress in Ireland: a nationally representative cross-sectional study

Dr Aoife Corcoran

Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, School of Medicine

The CODING Study: An International Service Evaluation of Data Recording Practices in Gestational Trophoblastic Disease

16:05 – 16:30

In Conversation with Professor Helen Whelton

The Five Ps:

Persistence • People • Possibility • Push Yourself • Perspective

Interviewed by Dr Louise Collins, School of Medicine



16:30 – 17:00

Professor Gerard O’Keeffe, Vice Head for Research & Innovation

Final remarks, Prize Giving and Photos.

Close of the conference.