



Dear Colleagues

Last week was an important week for the Hospital as we published our 2020 Annual Report and announced plans to recruit an additional 300 staff over the next 12-18 months.

The Nursing, Medical, Health & Social Care Professionals and Administrative posts will support expansion and enhancement of services which are planned across the Hospital.

The [Annual Report](#) reflects what we do, it is based on our people and I look forward to the next year and the great stories we will have to tell as we progress on the implementation of our five year strategy.

In the last six weeks we have had unprecedented numbers presenting to our Emergency Department. We regret that this is causing delays for patients, as always we will prioritise those who need to be seen on a clinical urgency first. Due to social distancing guidelines the waiting area in ED is reduced in size so if you are referring a patient to ED please remind them to come alone (where possible).

Kind regards

Lucy Nugent
Chief Executive
Tallaght University Hospital



Research Project Delivers Unique Technology

How we walk (termed "gait") is an indicator of our overall function, it provides clinician's with important information on a patient's physical, cognitive and psychological wellness.

Until now, equipment to measure gait has been expensive, requiring a high level of training, and a lot of space. For this reason, accessibility to gait analysis in clinical settings has been limited. GaitKeeper, a new AI digital solution developed by DGL and clinically validated by TUH will change the way we can measure gait, by providing a digital application which measures changes in a person's walking. GaitKeeper requires minimal space and can be used by anyone.

The clinical study of GaitKeeper in TUH, brought novel artificial and computer vision research carried out in the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics in Dublin City University, out of the lab and into the hands of clinicians.



In a research partnership funded by Enterprise Ireland, the technology which has been in development for the last two years is the first technology of its type in the world. The study in TUH confirmed that the data provided by GaitKeeper is accurate and reliable, indicating that this tool is suitable to be used in the clinical setting.

Developing accessible technology which easily and accurately measures subtle changes in gait performance will enhance the detection of declining health and the timely delivery of care to older people. This ensures clinical interventions occur ahead of significant health decline, when those interventions are more costly, take longer to deliver, and most importantly have worse outcomes for recovery. You can view a short video on the unique development via this [link](#).

Virtual Consultant Led Return Urology Clinic

Tallaght University Hospital (TUH) Urology Department has seen a huge growth in the number of referrals to the Urology outpatients department in the last five years.

Indeed, it is the highest urology waiting list in the country and is increasing. This is partly due to the volume of referrals, aging population and the fact that TUH processes 71% of the workload from the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group.

A large number of these patients are on the outpatient (OP) return waiting list. OP visits are time consuming, costly and clinic appointments are often delayed. Also, patients can travel a significant distance and given the COVID crisis we felt that we could not sustain this model of working into the future.

As a result, we set up a Consultant led "virtual" chart review clinic using electronic methods (letters, imaging, blood results) and chart review if required. This new service was supported by the validation office and urology clerical support team. The results achieved so far are impressive. Approximately 3,000 patients have been virtually assessed and based on this 35% were discharged directly via letter and advice. Approximately 30% required further imaging and were either waiting for the imaging to be performed or the results to be discussed with them. These patients will be contacted by phone with the results and a plan made for discharge or further imaging as necessary.

14% were referred to the TUH Sláintecare Male LUTS (Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms) Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Lynn Casey, for virtual review. Through her virtual clinic she was able to assess and discharge 70% of these men with lifestyle and medication advice.

Finally, 20% of this patient group needed a face to face clinical OPD appointment for clinical assessment or investigation review. In 10% of patients there was insufficient information available in the clinical platforms thus requiring a chart review. Hopefully the role out of the new EPR system will aid us to embed these virtual clinics more easily.

Overall the team involved in the project found, 90% of patients could be managed via "virtual" means with 55% discharged as they no longer need medical care. The potential outpatient cost savings are conservatively estimated at €119,000 through the reduced footfall, nursing and clinician time. In the current climate, innovative models of care are necessitated and permit the facilitation of "virtual" OPD clinic enables reliable review of patients with reduced face-to-face follow up consultation.

The team, led by Mr. Rowan Casey plan to examine patient satisfaction with the new service and the role of clinical pathways to reduce the "new to return" clinic ratios.



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Official Opening of the RDSC



Pictured from left to right at the official opening of the Reeves Day Surgery Centre (RDSC) were Laura Magahy, Executive Director Sláintecare; Minister of Health Stephen Donnelly TD; Prof Paul Ridway, Consultant Surgeon & Perioperative Clinical Director and Lucy Nugent Chief Executive of TUH.

The opening of the RDSC is part of the five year strategy for the Hospital, eliminating long wait times for routine day surgery and improve access for patients. Sláintecare have supported the RDSC with funding for the fourth theatre helping the Hospital to further eliminate lengthy delays for patients. Opened in December 2020 patients waiting for procedures are benefitting from the new facility with a reduction in waiting times, for example those waiting for procedures on the Pain Medicine Day Case list have dropped from 436 on the waiting list with wait times ranging from 0-29 months to 235 patients waiting from 0-11 months.

TUH Digital Health Internship Programme Launched

Tallaght University Hospital (TUH) in conjunction with TU Dublin are delighted to formally launch their Digital Health Internship Programme. The purpose of the programme is to create a bridge between excellent classroom knowledge and the healthcare ICT workplace.

The launch is building on the relationship the Hospital has had with TU Dublin over the last 20 years. The Hospital is the perfect venue for refining student's healthcare and business knowledge, ICT skills and research interests.

Every January, TUH will offer two, six month paid internships to two TU Dublin students studying an ICT related course at TU Dublin, Tallaght campus. Commenting on the new programme, David Wall Chief Information Officer at TUH said "The TUH Digital Health Internship experience is central to TU Dublin students' learning process. It offers students an opportunity to explore areas of interest, develop insights and, work in Digital Health in one of Ireland's leading Hospitals".



Pictured left to right (back row) Sean McHugh, Lecturer in Computing TU Dublin Tallaght; Sharon Larkin, Director of HR TUH; Barry Feeney, Head of Dept. of Computing TU Dublin Tallaght; Front left to Right Jonasz Wisniewski, Digital Intern; Stephen Roche, Digital Intern and David Wall, Chief Information Officer TUH

TUH Innovation Centre

With COVID-19 as the impetus, the last year or so has been a flagship year for healthcare innovation worldwide. While technologies like telehealth played a key role in changing the way healthcare is delivered, the year also brought a shift in overarching strategies and approaches to innovation.

At TUH we are assessing how innovation can not only address the COVID-19 crisis but also build a more effective, efficient, and equitable healthcare system in the future. To enable this vision TUH is delighted to announce the establishment of the TUH Innovation Centre. The Innovation Centre will provide an opportunity for partners to test healthcare innovation projects across clinical and non-clinical departments.

The newly established Innovation Hub, a one-of-a-kind dedicated physical space in the main atrium of the Hospital, will support the provision of 'idea clinics'. Idea clinics will support the development of ideas from concept to implementation.

Newly appointed to lead this development is the Head of Innovation, Dr. Natalie Cole and Innovation NCHD Dr. Hannah O' Keeffe. Dr. Cole has over 20 years' experience in Research & Innovation both nationally and internationally, Dr. O' Keeffe is a NCHD and Nephrology SpR, who previously worked in TUH for two years.

Dr. Cole and Dr. O'Keeffe will look at ideas that can make a difference along the patient experience.



Dr. Natalie Cole and Dr. Hannah O'Keeffe

They are particularly interested in ideas that are interdisciplinary and aligned with the concept of a 'hospital without walls'. Ideas can be big or small and be related to any discipline, area of the hospital and linkage to community healthcare.

They would welcome ideas from the GP community to improve communications and shared patient care. If you have any ideas, or even if you have a problem that we could help you to develop a solution for, please get in touch with them at innovation@tuh.ie

TUH Nursing Students Make History

The coronavirus pandemic has placed enormous challenges on nursing students' clinical placements. In spite of this adversity, the establishment of nursing students' placements in the Citywest Vaccination Centre is a positive outcome and fantastic opportunity for our nurses of the future.

Last month TUH nursing students made history as the first nursing students to attend placements in a mass vaccination centre. These placements were established through a collaborative with TUH, Trinity College Dublin, Office of the Nursing & Midwifery Services Director, Department of Health & the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland.

This is a valuable clinical placement for our TUH undergraduate nursing students, gaining various multidisciplinary learning opportunities in wellness, vaccinator role, observation, reconstitution and logistics.



(Left to Right) Rachel O'Byrne O'Reilly, Clinical Placement Coordinator TUH; Christina Lydon, Assistant Director of Nursing Nurse Practice Development TUH; Lina Ly, 2018 General Nursing Student; Emma McEvoy, 2018 General Nursing Student; Eileen Whelan, Chief Director of Nursing & Midwifery & Quality, Dublin Midlands Hospital Group; Lucy Stewart, 2018 General Nursing Student; Helen Teague, Student Allocations Liaison Officer TUH; Claire McGuire, Clinical Lead Citywest Vaccination Centre; Rachel Kenna, Chief Nurse, DoH; and Áine Lynch, Director of Nursing & Integrated Care TUH

New Clinical Facilitator for Delirium/ Sepsis Appointed

Deepthi Chakkittakandy has taken up the one year post of Clinical Facilitator in Delirium & Sepsis. She will work in conjunction with the Delirium Steering Committee and Sepsis Steering committee.

The purpose of this Delirium & Sepsis initiative is to implement national and local guidelines on delirium and sepsis in TUH. For more information please contact deepthi.chakkittakandy@tuh.ie

Delirium is a complex neuropsychiatric syndrome, commonly encountered across all healthcare settings, and associated with adverse outcomes including more prolonged hospitalisation, institutionalisation and increased mortality, independent of age, prior cognitive functioning and comorbidities.

In a recent study, mortality was shown to increase by 11% for every additional 48 hours of active delirium, highlighting the need for timely detection and treatment. However, delirium is misdiagnosed, detected late or missed in over 50% of cases across acute healthcare settings. This under-recognition, along with increasing evidence regarding delirium treatment, emphasises the importance of understanding the factors that relate to accurate identification (Ryan et al. 2013).

In Ireland, sepsis contributes to 27% of total hospital deaths. 27% of patients admitted to ICU have Sepsis



Deepthi Chakkittakandy, Clinical Facilitator in Delirium & Sepsis

(Irish National ICU Report, 2019) the average length of stay for sepsis is 22 days. Mortality rates for SIRS, Sepsis & Septic shock for DMHG is 21.1% (HSE, 2019). This initiative is aligned with the national Sepsis Clinical Guideline and the HSE National Sepsis Clinical Strategy.

Oncology Day Unit – Makeover Complete

Our colleagues are well settled into their new surroundings in the relocated Oncology Day Unit which opened last week with the support of the Tallaght University Hospital Foundation (TUHF).

The new unit has a much larger footprint, a 50% increase in space for patients and staff with more single rooms, bathrooms and meeting spaces than was within the old Oncology unit. Commenting on the move Ciaran Faughnan, Director of Facilities & Estates said "Each year over 800 patients attend the Day Unit; this new bespoke space created has a higher specification and finish compared to the previous space. The Hospital is working through a comprehensive list of capital infrastructure projects with priority given to those projects that improve access for our patients. I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of the Technical Services Team that completed this project in the first few months of this year, a time when we were dealing with the height of COVID-19 and the various challenges it presented to us."



Pictured from left to right before the opening of the Unit to patients were Jun Cao, Clinical Nurse Specialist; Jini Paul, Staff Nurse; Heather Sloane, CNM2; Sarah Farrell, Staff Nurse; Una Murtagh, Clinical Nurse Specialist; Helen Tobin, Staff Nurse; Helen Tobin, Staff Nurse; Gillian Gurhy, Healthcare Assistant; Marion Rock, Healthcare Assistant and Christine Leonard, Clinical Nurse Specialist

Commenting on the opening, Douglas Collins, Chief Executive of the TUHF said: "TUHF committed to support the Hospital's efforts to provide patients with a contemporary, dignified environment. This refurbishment of the old Renal space for the new unit has created a modern welcoming space in the Hospital, which allows for privacy and gives oncology patients the environment they deserve at a time when they are most vulnerable.

"We want to extend a massive thank you to all our donors, the James Gill Memorial Trust and James' family. Thanks to their generosity and commitment, we can reflect the standard of our patient care with modern bright and facilities that offer comfort and the best possible experience when receiving treatment."



If you would like any more information about any articles in the Connect or have suggestions for future editions please do get in touch

Email: GPConnect@tuh.ie

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