



Irish College of  
Ophthalmologists  
*Eye Doctors of Ireland*  
Protecting your Vision

# Newsletter

ISSUE 25

AUTUMN/WINTER 2019

## Message from the President



Dear All,

As we enter the final quarter of 2019, I am delighted to share with you, some key developments taking place in the College and in the speciality.

We open this edition with a report on the integrated eye care team meeting, hosted by the ICO in collaboration with the Clinical Programme on October 4th. It is a significant achievement and the culmination of many years of hard work by the College and Clinical Programme that the first Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist posts are in recruitment phase. We continue our focus on ensuring the national implementation of extended services and resourcing at Primary Care Centres as we look to the New Year. The endorsement of the Clinical Programme Model of Care was further acknowledged with the successful application by the College for funding from the Sláintecare Integration Fund for the integrated eye team.

The College introduced our new online member's portal at the beginning of 2019 and are pleased at the very high utilisation of the facilities and services it provides by members. Thank you for your co-operation during the introductory phase and we look forward to continually extending the applications and benefits available exclusively to our members through this facility.

The ICO Winter Meeting takes place on the morning of Friday, 29 November where we will be guiding members on the Professional Competence Scheme and the ICO Audit topic for 2020. David Keegan will provide an update on the national diabetic retina screening programme five years on from its introduction. A very timely occasion to discuss and review the merits of the programme and challenges in the current medical environment.

We are delighted to be welcoming our esteemed colleague, Mr. Paul Sullivan, Director of Education at Moorfields London, to present the 2019 Montgomery Lecture on the evening of the 29th in the Old Anatomy Lecture Theatre, Trinity College Dublin.

It promises to be a day of stimulating and informative discussion and I look forward to meeting with many of you there.

With Best Wishes  
PATRICIA QUINLAN

## ICO and Clinical Programme Host Integrated Eye Care Team Meeting

On Friday October 4, the ICO in collaboration with the Clinical Programme for Ophthalmology hosted the first in a series of education meetings for the integrated eye care team at the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital.

The ICO has been a long-standing advocate for the expansion of ophthalmology services. The College, in collaboration with the Clinical Programme, has worked extensively with the HSE and Department of Health over the last number of years to determine and

enable how best to expand capacity in line with ever increasing demands and to secure commitment of investment in the speciality. The Primary Care Eye Services Review Group Report, informed by the Clinical Programme Model of Care,

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Pictured attending an Education Session for the Integrated Eye Care Team on Glaucoma, hosted by the Irish College of Ophthalmologists in collaboration with the National Clinical Programme for Ophthalmology at the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital, October 4th were (L-R) William Power, Clinical Lead for Ophthalmology, Michelle Forde, HSE General Manager, Primary Care CHO 9; Mary O'Kelly, HSE Head of Service, Primary Care CHO 7; Deirdre Coyne, HSE Project Lead, Primary Care, CHO 6 and Robert Kidd, HSE Assistant National Director, Scheduled Care.



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provides a blue print for the delivery of services enabling patients to be seen in the community by the eye care team and to alleviate the current pressures on the acute system. The ICO has responded to the demand for increased services in the community, including the developments in the training programme for Medical Ophthalmology.

The ICO and Clinical Programme welcomes the current progress with the implementation of the integrated eye care teams in the community. This model of care aims to deliver a safe and sustainable service to meet current and future patient demand, and must be underpinned by the appropriate clinical governance and oversight to ensure the highest standards of patient safety are maintained.

The meeting 'Managing Stable Glaucoma in the Community – Introduction to the Virtual Clinic Model of Care' which took place on October 4th included a clinical session on team delivered glaucoma care, presented by Ms Aoife Doyle, Ophthalmic Surgeon and Ciara Liston, Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital. The virtual clinic was set up at the Hospital in November 2018 following six years of planning and dedication to the project by Aoife and Ciara.

Delegates were also given an update on the implementation of new integrated eye care teams with talks from Clinical Lead Billy Power, and from HSE



Michelle Forde, HSE General Manager, Primary Care CHO 9; William Power, Clinical Lead, Aoife Doyle, Ciara Liston, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Glaucoma Care (Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital) and Yvonne Delaney, ICO Dean of Postgraduate Education.

management in CHO 6, 7 and 9. Speakers who participated in the talks on the day were Siobhan McArdle, HSE Head of Operations for Primary Care, Community Operations; Michelle Forde, General Manager, Primary Care CHO 9; Mary O'Kelly, Head of Service Primary Care CHO 7; and Deirdre Coyne, Project Lead, Primary Care, CHO 6.

ICO President Patricia Quinlan reaffirmed the College's commitment to

ensuring the expansion and improvement of access for patients to ophthalmology services in line with ever-increasing demand and the work that has been ongoing in this regard by the ICO and Clinical Programme.

Progress is underway in the Dublin CHO's for Phase 1 of the extension of ophthalmology community services with the placement of integrated eye care teams in CHO 6, 7 and 9. These CHO's



Eilish Martin, Nutan Gill, Daljit Sambhi, and Ciara McAlevey, Clinical Nurse Team, Ophthalmology Department, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda, Co Louth



Carmel Barlow, CNS, Ophthalmology Dept., Midlands Regional Hospital, Mullingar and Cathy O'Loughlin, CNS, Ophthalmology, Laois/Offaly





Noreen Sheehy, PHN, Ophthalmology Dept. St Mary's Health Centre, North Tipperary, Catherine McCrann, and Angela Frawley, HSE Business Manager, Primary Care Ophthalmology Services, Mid West CHO3



Elaine Crossan and Hilary Devlin, Eye Clinic Liaison Officers, NCBI and Tania Constable, Optometrist, Temple Street Children's University Hospital

look after the greater Dublin and East region. The Clinical Programme has worked with the HSE and negotiated long and hard with the Department of Health, the Minister for Health and Sláintecare Office and have received the recognition that if we are going to deliver eye care in the community, that it has to be done in a multi-disciplinary team model format.

Phase 2 of planning is due to commence during 2020-21 and aims to establish integrated eye care teams

nationally as geographically appropriate to meet demand, with links to the relevant ophthalmic acute unit.

The Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist will lead the team with support from orthoptists, optometrists, nurse and admin support staff.

Speaking at the event, Billy Power said, "The ICO has put considerable time into reconfiguring the training pathways and securing the approval from the Consultant Appointments Committee so

that we can now appoint Consultant Medical Ophthalmologists working in the community with an affiliation with their local hospital."

The Clinical Programme and ICO in their extensive work with the HSE have secured the initial required funding for three paediatric teams to be appointed in each of the Dublin CHO's and these Consultant Medical Ophthalmologists jobs have been advertised.

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Owen Daly, Optometrist, Alex Doherty, Orthoptist, Beaumont Hospital and Shane Conroy, Optometrist, Temple Street Children's University Hospital



Siobhan Kelly and Trish King, HSE General Manager, Scheduled Care, Acute Operations

Billy Power highlighted that the infrastructure in the form of primary care centres around the country is largely in place, and the space exists for eye care teams to utilise. He urged teams in the community to engage with their Head of Services in Primary Care to see if suitable accommodation can be identified for eye care services and pushing for what ophthalmology needs in their area. Billy reinforced the importance of 'bottom-up' interaction and engagement in ensuring demands are communicated effectively with management. He told delegates at the meeting that the Clinical Programme will support teams in the community, educating them on what is needed and what is the best way to deliver it.

The meeting provided a unique opportunity for those directly involved in developing eye care services to share their experiences and achievements, and for the wider audience to get a greater

understanding of what is happening on the ground and future plans in motion. The importance of the work and inspired dedication by team members was a reoccurring point raised at the meeting and certainly the achievement of establishing the virtual eye clinic at the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital highlighted the potential there to drive innovation.

The College and Clinical Programme remain staunchly committed to continuing our work with the HSE, the Department of Health and Sláintecare Office to see to fruition a model of eye care which will deliver the highest standards, underpinned by clinical governance promoting patient safety and sustainability of this patient centred model.

Future integrated eye care team meetings will focus on the areas of specialty care delivered as a result of expanded ophthalmology services in the community.

We encourage and welcome feedback



Alison Blake and Michelle Forde, HSE General Manager, Primary Care CHO 9

and support from our members and look forward to keeping you updated on progress.

## Clinical Programme awarded Sláintecare Funding for Integrated Eye Care Team

**An application to Sláintecare by the Clinical Programme for funding for an integrated eye care team has been successful. This is a significant endorsement of the model of care developed by the Clinical Programme and the ICO.**

The secured funding for the eye care team was one of 122 successful projects to be selected and announced by the Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD on September 16th as part of €20 million Sláintecare Integration Fund. It is a significant achievement for the Clinical Programme and ICO that the model of eye care, endorsed by Minister Simon Harris as healthcare policy in 2017, has been recognised.

Speaking at the launch of the Integration Fund, Minister Harris said: "The successful Sláintecare Integration Fund projects are leading examples of how innovative thinking can bring about meaningful and long-lasting change to health and social care in Ireland."

"These projects show how joined-up thinking and working in partnership can help us reach Sláintecare's goals of shifting the majority of care to the community, reducing waiting lists and improving experiences for patients and staff across

the health and social care system in Ireland. I look forward to seeing the end results of these projects and how they might be scaled up."

The Fund awarded to the Clinical Programme will be directed at supporting the resourcing of the new eye care team at CHO 7 this year, as the roll out of integrated eye care teams in the community gets underway.

Clinical Lead Billy Power said the selection of the application for support is a significant acknowledgment by Sláintecare and the Minister for Health of the extensive work by the ICO and Clinical Programme with the HSE to expand ophthalmology services in the community and a very important step in moving forward with projected plans.

The ICO wish to congratulate Mairide McGuire, Joanne Kearney and Margaret Morgan who were also successful in their application for Sláintecare integration funding for three projects in the Donegal

Community Ophthalmic Services.

The projects are to initiate medical retina service and intravitreal injection service for patients with diabetic retinopathy; an optometrist for Donegal Community Ophthalmology and a selective laser trabeculoplasty. It is a significant development for the area and will greatly enhance the care the teams can deliver locally in Donegal.

Speaking at the announcement of the successful Integrated Fund applicants, Laura Magahy, Sláintecare Executive Director said "the funding initiative is a very important milestone for Sláintecare, with the projects demonstrating the innovative ways we can work in partnership to deliver Sláintecare's goals."

"The Sláintecare Integration Fund projects will test new ways in which we can bring care closer to home, including putting the patient at the centre of service design and delivery. The standard of applications we received across all categories was of an exceptional standard, and the successful projects exemplify how we can work in partnership to deliver the Sláintecare vision of the right care in the right place at the right time."



# Kate Coleman Honoured by UCD for Philanthropic Work in Ophthalmology

**The College congratulate Kate Coleman who was conferred with an honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine honoris causa at the UCD Medicine 2019 Conferings on Thursday 6th June 2019 at UCD O'Reilly Hall.**

The degree award was given in recognition of Kate's extensive philanthropic efforts in Africa which has resulted in the provision of accessible, expert, ophthalmic care and over 250,000 sight-restoring surgical procedures. The degree was conferred by UCD President, Prof Andrew Deeks with the citation and presentation made by Prof Colm O'Brien, UCD Professor of Ophthalmology at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital.

In 2006 Kate founded the Right to Sight charity to address the severe shortage of eye specialists and the issue of needless blindness in Africa, where populations are particularly vulnerable to developing cataracts and glaucoma and many cannot afford or access treatment.

Specifically, the aim of Right to Sight is to develop a sustainable model to deliver training to African surgeons and support staff and to equip hospitals and eye care centres with modern equipment.

The charity has provided eye healthcare at more than 20 sites to more than 2.5 million people and facilitated more than 250,000 sight restoring surgical operations through partner hospitals in Angola, Cameroon, Ethiopia,

Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The most recent eye clinic was opened for the Massai Tribe in Kenya by Rotary. Kate's work with Right to Sight led

to her co-ordinating a global movement with other dedicated eye surgeons to eradicate needless blindness on a global scale through the World Health Organisation Vision2020 movement.



*Kate Coleman is pictured with UCD President, Prof. Andrew Deeks and Prof. Com O'Brien, UCD Professor of Ophthalmology at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital at the UCD Medicine 2019 Conferings on Thursday 6th June 2019 at UCD O'Reilly Hall.*

## Global Alliance Meeting, AAO 2019

**During her visit to the AAO 2019 Annual Meeting in San Francisco this year, Alison Blake met with Ms Jane Aguirre, Vice President of the AAO and head of Global Alliances. Jane updated on the new features of the ONE Network, which is available to all ICO members. These include an AAO Ophthalmic Education app along with retinoscopy and strabismus simulators.**

All ICO members, including trainees, have free access to the Academy's Ophthalmic News & Education (ONE@) Network. ICO members have personal login details but if you have any queries or have forgotten your username or password or need instructions on logging in to the ONE Network you can contact the ICO directly or email [oneintl@aao.org](mailto:oneintl@aao.org).



*Alison Blake is pictured with Ms Jane Aguirre, Vice President, Membership and Alliances, AAO and Ms Guna Laganovska, UEMS Latvian Representative at the Global Alliance Meeting held during AAO 2019, San Francisco from 12-15th October. The UEMS meeting will take place in Riga next year.*

# 11th Annual Adare

**T**he 11th Adare Retinal Meeting took place on Thursday 26th September in the Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick. The meeting is coordinated each year by Marie Hickey Dwyer. This year's meeting attracted a record attendance of both eye doctors in practice and those in training, a notable testament to Marie's dedication and commitment to creating an engaging programme.

Guest speaker, Mr. Hemal Mehta, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon at Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust gave an inspiring talk on 'Clinical Pearls for OCT Analysis in Macular Disease'

Mr Mehta's clinical research during his fellowships at Sydney Eye Hospital and Moorfields Eye Hospital is the basis of his MD thesis on 'Novel Endpoints in Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Trials' registered at Cambridge University. He is the Lead for Ophthalmic Clinical Trials Research in his Trust, evaluating emerging therapies, particularly for retinal diseases. He is a member of the UK Retinal Outcomes Group.

Other topics covered at the meeting included the role of steroids in the treatment of diabetic maculopathy, new advances in retinal diseases and clinical case studies, high myopia and macular complications, neuroretinitis, and a debate session on vitreomacular traction in diabetes – 'To Intervene or not'.

The details of the ICO/Novartis Eye Research Bursary for 2019 were also announced at the Annual Adare Retinal Meeting in The Dunraven Arms Hotel, Co. Limerick. The annual bursary



*Alison Blake, Grace O'Malley and Catherine McCrann*

is an unrestricted educational grant awarded to a doctor who wishes to undertake a research project or specific training in the field of ophthalmology.

The Bursary has been instrumental in facilitating eye doctors in Ireland to undertake pioneering research into potential cures and treatments for sight-threatening conditions.

The winner will be announced at the ICO Winter Meeting which will take place at the Chartered Accountants House, 47 Pearse Street, Dublin 2 on Friday, 29th November 2019.



*Pictured at the 11th Annual Adare Retinal Meeting which took place in the Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare, Co Limerick on Thursday, 26th September were John Doris, Catherine Cleary, guest speaker Mr Hemal Mehta, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, meeting co-ordinator Marie Hickey Dwyer, Rory Murphy, Deirdre Townley and Frank Kinsella.*



# Retinal Meeting



*Ian Dooley and Zubair Idrees*



*Yvonne Delaney, Patricia Quinlan and Declan O'Brien*



*Geraldine Comer and Ann McCarthy*



*John Murtagh, Akmal Hussain and Hamid Nufees*



*Frank Kinsella and Marie Hickey Dwyer*



*Catherine Cleary and Timothy Horgan*

# Your Experience of Fulfilling PCS Requirements Survey

## Background

It is important to the College to provide a Professional Competence Scheme (PCS) that meets the needs of our enrolled doctors. The PCS is the framework in which the Medical Council have mandated the College to deliver professional learning and development. Working within this framework means that the scheme operates according to a set of rules and protocols. The College's role is to decode these in order to communicate them clearly, and to develop processes and supports that help our enrolled doctors to achieve the requirements. While we must implement what is legally required, the College advocates on behalf of our doctors, to question or suggest improvements to any protocols or ideas that we believe could be better realised.

We feel to do this to the best of our ability, we must ensure that all members of our PCS community are being heard, that we are a channel broadcasting a two way signal. We say community because that is what we have. A PCS community that is made up of the College, the Council, the PCS committee, our enrolled doctors and further afield, our Post-graduate Medical Training counterparts, and the Medical Council. The scheme can only evolve to become best fit for purpose by ensuring the valued input of this community. This survey is the input of our enrolled doctors and has already influenced the development of our supports, processes and our future goals.

## Working Well

The survey feedback indicates that the current system works well, particularly in relation to the support available and the PCS portal. The College wants to ensure that we continue to do what we do well and so this positive feedback from the survey has been extremely valuable in confirming where we have met or exceeded standards.

Doctors reported that the College has been helpful in the administration of the scheme and in providing information about activities. Most doctors agreed their employer is supportive of their professional development and that there is support if they want to complete a PDP.

The combined audit was identified as an example of what worked very well collaboratively last year. In terms of future communication, some doctors reported they would like greater identification of activities available including associated CPD points and locations, and to be kept informed of any Medical Council plans to introduce 360 assessments and peer reviews.

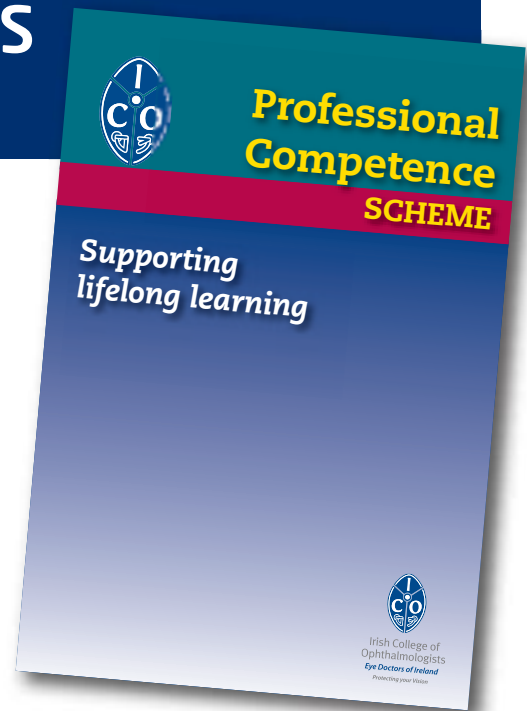
Doctors find the PCS Portal easy to use to log CPD activities and 75% of doctors agreed there is guidance available when using the portal. Automatic uploads of activities made by the ICO on behalf of our enrolled doctors to the PCS portal was said to be very helpful and a request was made for more if possible. Doctors report use of the PCS portal is enhanced by allowing for a learning curve, and carrying out frequent uploads to the portal instead of uploading all activities at the end of the year. Receiving a certificate of attendance is a useful prompt to upload the record to the portal. It would be helpful for the PCS manual to be linked on the portal.

## PCS Categories & Learning Activities

Just over half of doctors find some PCS categories are easier than others to source activities for, and identified the Internal category as the most difficult. The environments of those working in private practice, as locum, community based and part-time do not at times yield enough internal activities. Internal activities are viewed as very variable and difficult to quantify. A time conflict can occur when internal activities are largely scheduled during working hours. There is a need for better criteria for internal activities as some activities are not being logged due to confusion over what category they apply to.

The External category was identified as the next most challenging category to achieve PCS requirements. The costs associated with attending and the location of the meeting versus where the doctor is based were cited. So too were family and personal circumstances and work obligations.

Most doctors find utilising credits for personal and shared learning activities a



positive experience, and that discussion and sharing enhances overall learning. Examples of these activities were governance meetings, clinical clubs, staff meetings, journal clubs, peer review groups. There were however obstacles to achieving personal and shared learning requirements including scheduling, limited personal and shared learning options available, confusion over what reflective and shared learning is and how it can be used to log points. It was also reported that some doctors are most likely practising personal and shared learning activities but not realising they can log them.

Doctors would like to see an improvement in both the clarity of the PCS categories along with flexibility in the weighting of points per category.

There were several suggestions on how to improve and diversify the kinds of learning activities available; expert webinars on case management and practice flow; real world evidence based studies; more group activities; “things learned” approach to each activity; broader medical topics such as communication, error, no blame, open disclosure; quizzes and case reviews; more activities centred on new developments and techniques, and practical activities led by experts; more audit guidance and templates.

## Accessibility

Nearly all doctors would like more options to attend CPD activities online or remotely. When choosing a CPD activity,



the content of an activity is key but close second to this is the accessibility of the activity especially location when the doctor is based a good distance away. A variety of locations for activities, not only centred in Dublin, and more online activity options would be welcomed.

## Doctors' Own View of PCS Participation

Most doctors believe engaging with PCS and attending CPD activities benefits patient safety. Concerns were raised about the PCS being fit for purpose, particularly the mode of collecting points and how doctors who are not engaged are monitored.

Over three quarters of doctors believe the PCS enhances professional learning. Increased autonomy and flexibility would be welcomed to enable doctors tailor their professional learning to their individual needs. It was noted that professional learning can be diminished when the end of scheme year pressure results in attending activities of little relevance to achieve points.

## Personal Circumstances

As mentioned above, there are some work situations, such as single practice, that produce extra challenges and doctors in these situations have asked for increased support. Doctors who are retired and doctors on maternity leave feel the Medical Council need to review the requirements for doctors in these circumstances.

## Conclusion

The survey yielded valuable suggestions for improvement and highlighted some issues negatively affecting the experience of some enrolled doctors. Some suggestions for improvement are more easily incorporated and for those that are not, they will be raised in discussions with the relevant parties and the Medical Council.

How do we respond to the challenges within the PCS framework? Creatively, and as a community. We have the expertise, experience and engagement to be the best placed people to shape our own professional competence.

We value your feedback and we hope you continue to give it. It is our belief that the scheme will improve year on year with input from the PCS community. We will be continually seeking feedback, but if you have suggestions or comments at any stage please do not hesitate to contact us.

# ICO Winter Meeting and Annual Montgomery Lecture 2019

**The ICO will host our Winter Meeting on the morning of Friday, November 29th at the Chartered Accountants House, 47 Pearse Street, Dublin 2. The Winter meeting will cover two sessions:**

1. ICO Guide to Getting to Grips with Professional Competence Scheme' and a discussion on the ICO National Audit for 2020.
2. An update from David Keegan, National Clinical Lead for Diabetic Retinopathy, National Screening Service on the 'Five Years of Retina Screen' operations and progress.

The winter meeting will run from 9.30am to 1pm and will be followed by the RAMI Meeting in the afternoon at the same venue. Closing date for Abstracts is Thursday 7th November 2019 by 3pm.

That evening, the College is honoured to welcome Mr. Paul Sullivan, Vitreoretinal Surgeon and Director of Education, Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, who will present the 2019 Montgomery Lecture.

Mr. Sullivan's Lecture entitled 'Surgical Errors: Why Things Go Wrong and How to Prevent It?' will be held in the old Anatomy Lecture Theatre, Trinity College Dublin (accessed via The Chemistry Building). This original anatomy lecture theatre was where Robert Montgomery and some of the early Montgomery lecturers taught and Prof Martina Hennessey, Associate Professor of Medical Education at the School of Medicine, TCD, will give a short curated tour before the 2019 Lecture. Paul has lectured at many national and international meetings including the Royal College of



Mr Paul Sullivan, Annual Montgomery Lecturer 2019

Ophthalmologists Annual Congress, the World Ophthalmology Congress and the American Academy of Ophthalmology Annual Meeting.

Paul has been an invited speaker at many national and international meetings including the Royal College of Ophthalmologists Annual Congress, the World

Ophthalmology Congress and the American Academy of Ophthalmology Annual Meeting.

He has authored and coauthored of over 70 peer reviewed scientific publications and has written several book chapters on many aspects of vitreoretinal detachment including the chapter on conventional retinal detachment techniques for the 5th Edition 'Retina' (Ed. S Ryan), the leading international textbook on retinal disease.

Paul is the coauthor of the Eyemovies Vitreoretinal Surgery DVD which won a commendation in the BMJ book awards and is widely used throughout the world for training vitreoretinal surgeons.

In 2013, he received an 'NHS Hero' award (based on commendations from patients and colleagues). That same year, he set up Eyelearning Ltd for the publication of ophthalmic e-books. He has published a vitreoretinal ibook and an ibook on cataract surgery is currently in development.

We look forward to welcoming members to what promises to be a most stimulating and educational day of talks at the Winter Meeting and Mr. Sullivan's Lecture that evening. Full programme details are available on the ICO website and will be circulated through the member's portal.

## Medical Ophthalmology Sub Specialty Meeting

The next medical ophthalmology sub specialty meeting is scheduled to take place from 11am to 3pm on Friday 10th January at the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital. Aoife Doyle will give a presentation on glaucoma with a focus on SLT laser training and trialing.

# 74th Plenary Session of the UEMS Section of Ophthalmology – Report by Alison Blake

**The 74th Plenary Session of the UEMS Section of Ophthalmology was held in Valencia, Spain 22-23 June 2019.**

The Union of European Medical Specialists is an EU wide representative body liaising with the EU Commission divided into sections by specialty. UEMS represents over 1.6 million medical specialists in all the different specialties across 40 countries. It also has strong links and relations with European Institutions (Commission and Parliament), the other independent European Medical Organisations and the European Medical / Scientific Societies. The UEMS has 39 Specialist Sections, which represent independently recognised specialties. They each created a European Board as a subgroup, in conjunction with the relevant European Society, with a view to defining European standards of medical education and training. They also contribute to the work of Multidisciplinary Joint Committees (MJC) which address fields of a multidisciplinary nature. The Section of Ophthalmology encompasses the European Board of Ophthalmology which awards the EBO Diploma. The UEMS sections are grouped and Ophthalmology is in Group 2 Surgery. The current President is Dr P Magennis from Ireland.

The President of our section of Ophthalmology (4 year term) is Wagih Aclimandos from the UK, the General Secretary is Denise Curtin (Ireland) and Treasurer Eija Vesti from Finland.

The intention of the UEMS General Council is to continue to treat the UK as a full member after Brexit.

Accounts are held in Brussels and the annual accounts were accepted by the Section.

EACCME (European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education) plays a major part in setting the standards for CME/CPD throughout Europe. This leading role is being increasingly recognised by political organisations (European Commission and Parliament), provider and funding organisations, and doctors. It has mutual recognition with the American Medical Association (AMA).



*John Ledingham, Alison Blake, Deirdre Townley and Denise Curtin pictured with Kristina Tornqvist, Swedish Representative, and Tim Carpenter at the U.E.M.S. 74th Plenary Session meeting 2019.*

## EU European Training Requirement (ETR)

This is likely to be 5 years in future. Ophthalmologists are in agreement to change the length, however some Eastern European governments go by the old directive of 2005 which specifies three years. A new directive is imminent further to the advice and recommendation of the specialty.

## European Board of Ophthalmology

The current President of the European Board of Ophthalmology is Christina Grupcheva (Bulgaria). The EBO exam is so popular the location no longer can accommodate all who apply. A second location in Berlin in association with the German Ophthalmological Society (DOG) will host an autumn exam this year with an initial maximum of 200 candidates.

The EBO now has an advisory committee to take responsibility for the exam. Twenty seven countries were represented at the 2018 exam with 300 examiners and a 92% success rate. The Peter Eustace medal was presented to Wagih Aclimandos for long time exceptional contributions to education.

The UEMS is now 60 years old.

Clear understanding of the Medical Act will be increasingly important in future to ensure safe care of patients.

The 75th plenary session of the Section of Ophthalmology will be held in Riga, Latvia on June 22nd and 23rd, 2020.

## Upcoming...

### UKISCRS Meeting & Mr Peter Barry Memorial Lecture

November 28th,  
Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospital,  
Dublin.

### ICO Winter Meeting

November 29th, Chartered Accountant House, Pearse Street, Dublin.

### Annual Montgomery Lecture 2019

November 29th,  
Old Anatomy Lecture Theatre,  
Trinity College Dublin

### Medical Ophthalmology Sub Specialty Meeting

January 10th 2020,  
Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospital.

SAVE THE DATE



# Eye Clinic Liaison Officer

**In Spring 2019, the National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) began its Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) service in the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, CHI (Children's Health Ireland) at Temple Street, St. Vincent's University Hospital and in the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital.**

The aim of this service is to provide timely support to patients at the point of, or as close to diagnosis as possible. The service receives referrals from hospital outpatient department clinics, inpatients and day surgery patients. ECLOs represent all VISPA partners – NCBI, ChildVision, Irish Guide Dogs and Fighting Blindness. Each organisation has its own unique service offering, which the ECLO can highlight matching the needs of the patient.

The key part of the ECLO role is to listen, offer emotional support and signpost to appropriate services. Patients often have not had the opportunity to speak with someone in the clinic with regards to their concerns around their diagnosis, and the future. They may not have enough information about their eye condition or the treatment that is being offered. The patient may have experienced sudden traumatic sight loss or a slow gradual loss of sight. The ECLO also has a key role in advocating on behalf of the patient and provides information and training to hospital staff, for example sighted guide training.

To date the ECLO service has received 310 patient referrals for timely support, with over 140 onward referrals being made to community based service providers including NCBI's lifecycle teams. In addition, 56 staff training sessions have been provided across the three hospital locations.

Feedback on the impact of the ECLO service to date has been very positive. One

patient described the fear she used to feel, "I used to be afraid to sleep in case I woke up totally blind, now I feel more reassured" and "the ECLO encouraged me to go back to work, I didn't think I could do it". In total, 84% of patients surveyed felt their emotional wellbeing has increased after having contact with the ECLO.

To celebrate the 100th referral from the ECLO service to NCBI on July 29th 2019 presentations were made in both Temple St Children's Hospital and the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear hospitals. It was great to be able to highlight the success of the role and lovely to show appreciation to our two champions in both hospitals who had been very proactive in referring and advocating on behalf of the service.



*Elaine Crossan, Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, NCBI pictured with Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital ophthalmology team*



*Hilary Devlin, Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, NCBI and Children's University Hospital Temple Street Ophthalmic team*

# SOE Meeting 2019, Nice

**The SOE (European Society of Ophthalmology) Congress was held at the Acropolis Nice, France in June 2019. President Jan Tjeerd de Faber completed his term of office and Wagih Aclimandos, UK, commenced his Presidency.**

The SOE meeting was attended by Irish board member Pat Logan and Clare Quigley outgoing SOE YO (young ophthalmologist). The next Congress will be held in Prague in 2021.



Alison Blake and David Keegan pictured at the SOE Meeting in Nice with AAO members Mr. Lawrence Mendenhall, AAO Chief Operating Officer, AAO, Mr Paul Chan, AAO Secretary for Global Alliances, Mr George Williams AAO President, Ms Jane Aguirre, AAO Vice President, Membership and Alliances, Mr. David Parke AAO Chief Executive Officer, and David Keegan



SOE Board Representative Pat Logan with outgoing SOE President Jan Tjeerd de Faber at the SOE 2019 Meeting in Nice, France



## ORBITAL - Waterford Team Leads Major Eye Study

**ORBITAL (Ocular Research By Integrated Training And Learning) is a newly formed ocular research consortium of 23 members from Europe, the US and Canada, made up of patient advocacy groups, academics, clinicians and industry.**

The network is led by Dr Larry Fitzhenry from Waterford Institute of Technology and is funded by a Horizon 2020 Marie Curie European Training Network award worth €4m, a competitive grant recently won by Dr Fitzhenry.

Irish commitment to the project sees the involvement of UCD, Queen's, the charity Fighting Blindness and Kilkenny-based eye surgeon David Kent.

ORBITAL's aim is to develop the next generation of research leaders in the field of ocular drug delivery and therapeutics with a particular emphasis on AMD and diabetic retinopathy. It is hoped that this novel approach will ensure that PhD level researchers will have a clear focus on patient needs as well as interdisciplinary skills with a strong focus on outreach, dissemination and public engagement.



Pictured at the launch of the ORBITAL project are (l to r): John Leonard, Fighting Blindness member who is visually impaired and living with AMD; Dr Laurence Fitzhenry, WIT researcher and coordinator of the ORBITAL project; David Kent, Consultant Eye Surgeon at the The Vision Clinic in Kilkenny and Laura Brady, Head of Research at Fighting Blindness.