



College of Psychiatrists
of Ireland

Wisdom • Learning • Compassion

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The College of Psychiatrists hosts ‘From Mental Health to Mental Illness: The Role of Psychiatry in the 21st Century’

The recent annual College of Psychiatrists of Ireland (CPsychI) NCHD Conference was a great success with a high turnout of over 100 Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors.

The Conference, hosted in the Hilton Hotel, Kilmainham Dublin on 23rd February, was organised by the Trainee Committee, a dedicated Committee within the College. Based on the theme “*From Mental Health to Mental Illness: The Role of Psychiatry in the 21st Century*” the day delivered a diverse and thought-provoking programme. Trainees were invited to attend a wide range of plenaries and workshops which focused on the shift in language that has taken place in recent years - with previous terms such as “psychiatric illness” or “mental illness” often being replaced with “mental health difficulty” - and the positive, and indeed negative, effect this has had on Doctors in defining their role within the health services.

The conference opened with a highly informative presentation from **Prof Ted Dinan** on the ‘*Gut Feelings: A Novel Paradigm in Psychiatry*’, a session that explored the evidence that has accumulated to suggest that gut microbes are involved in neural development and function. This talk was followed by a thought-provoking plenary from **Dr John Cooney** titled ‘*Why Psychiatry Matters*. Dr Cooney explored how the role of the Psychiatrist has evolved, and set out to give clarity on what we as Psychiatrists do to care for patients, rather than how or where.

Also presenting was The National Clinical Lead of the *National Clinical Programme for the Assessment and Management of Patients presenting to the Emergency Department following Self-Harm*, **Dr Anne Jeffers**. Dr Jeffers outlined the objectives of the programme and fielded questions from the delegation on its implementation going forward. Dr Jeffers also acts as Joint Chair of the College **REFOCUS** (Recovery Experience Forum of Carers and Users of Services) Committee** and was later joined by REFOCUS member **George Bridges** for a plenary session to discuss the forgotten voices in media representations of the mental health conversation.

Participants were also eager to learn about the recognition of dual diagnosis in the treatment of addiction and mental health. Attendees were invited to examine research of long term outcomes of dual diagnosis treatment and how each disorder can negatively affect overall clinical outcomes. This parallel session from **Dr Conor Farren** proved to be one of the most popular sessions of the day.

Prof Vincent Russell’s insightful workshop entitled ‘*Diagnosing Without Labelling*’ also proved popular with participants, indicative of the challenges that can often face NCHDs in the area of communication with patients, families and the wider community. Prof Russell aimed to emphasise the importance of diagnosis as central to the identity and role of the Psychiatrist, as an effective healthcare provider whose skills are different but complimentary to those of other members of the multidisciplinary team.

Having spearheaded the very first NCHD Conference in 2009, Consultant in Child and Adolescent Liaison Psychiatry, **Dr Elizabeth Barrett** returned to facilitate a workshop on ‘*Doctors and Vulnerability: Are we Unique? And What’s to be Done?*’. Dr Barrett concentrated on what it means to be vulnerable as a Doctor, particularly in training experiences, and pragmatic approaches, at systemic and individual levels, to support Trainees.

Mr Nathaniel Hayward was announced the winner of this year's **Medical Student and Intern Essay Prize**, for his essay based on the title "*The Wellness Era: Has It Been Good or Bad for Psychiatry?*". Mr Hayward, was presented with a cheque for €200, a commemorative medal, and an invite to the CPsychI Spring Conference by Trainee Committee Chair, **Dr Roisín Plunkett**. The five runners up were also invited to attend the Spring Conference as our guests.

The Ada English medal was announced for the first time this year to **Dr Mari Gleeson** for her piece of research entitled *Using electronic medical records to determine prevalence and treatment of mental disorders in primary care: a database study*. The Ada English Medal was established in 2017 in honour of Dr. Ada English, one of Ireland's pioneering psychiatrists in the early 20th century, and an innovator in the field of mental health. The Ada English medal is awarded annually to a medical student who has published outstanding original scientific research in the Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine.

ENDS

Photos (Click the links to download high resolution versions of these photos)

PHOTO 1 CPsychI-President-Dr-John-Hillery-Dr-John-Cooney-and-Members-of-the-Trainee-Committee
(<https://ibb.co/cmAYVH>)



PHOTO 2 Dr-Roisin-Plunkett-and-Mr-Nathaniel-Hayward-Winner-of-the-Medical-Student-Essay-Prize-2018
(<https://ibb.co/gjWU4c>)



PHOTO 3 Prof-Vincent-Russell-and-Dr-Brendan-McCormack-at-the-CPsychI-NCHD-Conference-2018
(<https://ibb.co/i7adxx>)



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Notes for the Editor:

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland was formed in 2009. It is the professional body for psychiatrists in the Republic of Ireland. The Mission of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is to promote excellence in the practice of psychiatry. The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is the sole body recognised by the Medical Council and the HSE for the training of doctors to become specialists in psychiatry and for the continuing assurance of the career long competence of specialists in psychiatry. The College supports the delivery of mental health services in line with the recovery model and supports the delivery of the national policy on mental health services A Vision for Change.

**A Vision for Change (2006) is a strategy document which sets out the direction for Mental Health Services in Ireland. It is a framework for promoting mental health at all levels of society and for delivering specialist care to everyone who needs it. It recognises both the strengths and inadequacies of existing services and outlines a strategy for building on the innovations heralded by Planning for the Future. It details a series of actions for developing a comprehensive person-centred model of mental health service provision.*

***REFOCUS (Recovery Experience Forum of Carers and Users of Services) is made up of people with experience of the mental health services – patients/service users, family members/carers, and psychiatrists. The Committee's role is to inform and influence all aspects of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland business objectives particularly the training experience of young future psychiatrists and identifying ways to improve the mental health services with psychiatrist members.*