

COVID Era Post CSCST Fellowship: Developing a model of community care for people with Young Onset Dementia

Applications are invited for this Post-CSCST Fellowship funded by HSE/NDTP for a 12 month period from July 2021. To be eligible, in July 2021 doctors must be within 3 years of having obtained their CSCST and completed their HST training within the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland. HSTs in their final year of training may be appointed subject to submission of their completed CSCST by July 21. The Fellow will receive an enhanced HST salary (at the final point of the salary scale).

Location: CHO 7, between Tallaght University Hospital and St James's Hospital sites

Main Supervisor: Professor C Aoibhinn Lynch, Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry but also involving collaboration with and supervision from Professor Greg Swanwick, Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry; Professor Elaine Greene, Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry, St James's Hospital; Dr Siobhan Hutchinson, Consultant Neurologist, St James's Hospital; Dr Sean O'Dowd, Consultant Neurologist, Tallaght University Hospital.

Background: In Ireland, as it stands, there is no distinct service for patients who develop dementia before the age of 65 years and this is generally acknowledged to represent a gap in health care services in this country. It is estimated that there are approximately 3000-4000 people in Ireland living with Young Onset Dementia (YOD)(Pierse et al, 2019), many of whom struggle to find a service who can diagnose and manage their condition. The needs of those with Young Onset Dementia are different to older patients, often having more unusual subtypes of dementia with atypical presentations, more genetically mediated disease, significant neuro-behavioural and psychological impact for patients and families, and different social care and support needs. The gap in our current services for this group of patients is highlighted in recent research published by the National Dementia Office (Fox, Cahill, McGown, Kilty, 2020) and the need to address this gap is referred to in recent mental health policy (Sharing the Vision, Government of Ireland, 2020).

In order to provide a service for the assessment, diagnosis and management of patients with YOD, a number of clinical skillsets may be required which cross medical specialities including those of Neurology, Old Age Psychiatry and Medicine for the Elderly. At present, there is no distinct training pathway for doctors in Ireland to train in the specialised area of YOD and which encompasses all of the appropriate clinical skills. This fellowship is proposed with the aim of offering training across relevant specialities to equip the Fellow with the necessary skills to offer a service to this group of patients.

Fellowship Description: This fellowship proposal includes the following elements:

- 2 days per week clinical attachment with the Memory Clinic, Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing (MISA), St James's Hospital. This is a national Memory Clinic, jointly run by Medicine for the Elderly and Psychiatry of Old Age, with input from Neurology. This clinic assesses patients with more unusual dementias, using specialised neuropsychology and investigations such as CSF examination and functional neuroimaging. The clinic is also a centre for clinical drug trials and research in dementia. It is envisaged that the Fellow would spend 2 days per week assessing younger patients with dementia, including attendance at the weekly Consensus Meeting where diagnoses are confirmed.

- 2 days per week clinical attachment with the Integrated Care service in Tallaght University Hospital, assessing patients with dementia living in the community catchment area. The Integrated Care Team is a collaborative model of care between the Old Age Psychiatry and Medicine for the Elderly clinical services who share the care of patients who require the services and skills of both teams.
- It is expected that, during the 2 days based at TUH, the fellow would spend one session at a Neurology clinic gaining clinical skills in Neurology assessment and diagnostics, with particular reference to neurocognitive disorders.
- The remaining one day per week is protected for research. In particular, the aim of this fellowship is to assess the care needs of younger patients with dementia with a view to designing a community service in CHO 7 which would ultimately meet those needs.
- Please note: It is also envisaged that the Fellow, during the course of the year, will be facilitated to spend one month visiting an established YOD diagnostic and community service in the UK, as an observer.

Opportunities for research: There are a number of potentially useful clinical research projects which would be achievable during the course of this fellowship, such as:

- Audit of younger patients attending the Memory Clinic, St James's Hospital: numbers, age, geographical address, diagnosis, disease severity, investigations, behaviour disturbance, medications, need for follow up and ongoing care
- Audit of younger patients with dementia attending Neurology Clinic, Tallaght University Hospital: numbers, age, disease profile, geographical addresses, medications, behaviour disturbance, social care needs
- Study of carer/ family needs in CHO 7
- Educational needs of staff in providing care for younger people with dementia
- Inventory of existing community based resources for dementia in the CHO 7 area, with a view to identifying resources/ gaps for those with YOD
- Develop a proposal for the development of a community based service for people with YOD in CHO 7, as a potential model of service provision.

All of the consultant supervisors have completed postgraduate research degrees and publications on the subject of dementia. MISA is a clinical research centre and, as such, is a very suitable environment for multidisciplinary research in dementia. The hospital sites are TCD affiliated hospitals, bringing the advantage of established research/ educational networks and supports.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Professor C Aoibhinn Lynch with informal enquiries Cecilia.lynch@hse.ie.

To apply, a Curriculum Vitae and cover letter should be emailed to Denise.Gibson@hse.ie , following which an interview will be arranged.