

The College of Psychiatrists hosts ‘The Science of Psychiatry’

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

The Conference, hosted in the Hilton Hotel, Kilmainham Dublin on 17th February, was organised by the Trainee Committee, a dedicated working group within the College. Based on the theme “*The Science of Psychiatry*” the day delivered a diverse and thought-provoking programme. Trainees were invited to attend a wide range of plenaries and workshops which encompassed topics that can prove challenging to Trainees in everyday clinical practice.

The conference was opened with a topical presentation from **Dr Aidan Corvin** on the ‘*The Genomics Revolution and what it means for Psychiatry*’, which are profoundly re-shaping the landscape of psychiatric research and are likely to impact clinical practice in the future. This talk was followed by a very informative session from **Prof John Waddington** titled ‘*Lessons from a Life in Mental Health Research: the ‘Then’, ‘Now’ and Heuristics of Neuroscience for Psychiatry*’. Using psychotic illness as a context, Prof Waddington focused on harnessing the knowledge of biological and psychosocial aspects of mental health, illuminated by neuroscience.

Participants were also eager to learn about research which can be intimidating when adding it to often already full work schedules. In a survey conducted on the day participants shared their own experiences with research during their training. The parallel session from **Dr Eric Kelleher** and **Dr Eric Roche** on research for NCHD’s in psychiatry proved to be one of the most popular sessions of the day.

Prof Louise Gallagher’s insightful workshop entitled ‘*From Basic Science to Clinical Translation in Autism Spectrum Disorder*’ also proved popular with participants. Frequently viewed as an enigmatic condition, often depicted in popular media, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has also been the subject of intense scientific research focused on the discovery of risk factors, causes, diagnosis and treatments. The impact of ASD on the individual and society cannot be understated. This workshop discussed the challenges faced by psychiatrists in treating ASD and presented a future vision for improved treatments and outcomes for people with ASD.

Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist in Intellectual Disability **Dr Anthony Kearns** provided a unique insight into this emerging field of **Forensic and Intellectual Disability Psychiatry**. This area involves those with intellectual disabilities who have become involved with the criminal justice system, and require specialist services.

Dr Jim Lucey, Medical Director of St Patrick’s Mental Health Services and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Trinity College, gave an energetic and interactive workshop entitled ‘*The Media Calls: What do we do now?*’. Dr Lucey helped prepare participants for situations where the media requests comment from a psychiatrist. Citing influential psychiatrists such as **Dr Anthony Clare** and **Dr Ronnie Laing**, Lucey explained the importance of the psychiatrist’s role in accurately representing mental health and illness in the media in order to combat stigma and improve public education on mental health.

Dr Siobhan Sheehy was announced the winner of this year’s **Medical Student Essay Prize**, for her essay based on the title “*Unwilling or Unable? A Discussion on Consent and Human Rights in Psychiatric Care*”. Dr Sheehy, was presented with a cheque for €200, a commemorative medal, and an invite to the CPsychI Spring Conference by Trainee Committee Chair, **Dr Roisin Plunkett**. The four runners up were also invited to attend the Spring Conference as our guests.

ENDS

Photos:

NCHD Image 1

(l-r) Dr Roisin Plunkett, Prof Aidan Corvin, Dr John Hillery and Prof John Waddington

NCHD Image 2

(l-r) Dr Roisin Plunkett and Essay Prize Winner Dr Siobhan Sheehy

NCHD Image 3

Prof Aiden Corvin Presenting during the morning of the NCHD Conference

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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.*