

## Talking about cancer: Cancer Week Ireland 2016

Cancer affects one in three Irish people at some stage of their lives. It has touched every family in every community. More people are being diagnosed with cancer every year, yet more and more people are surviving and living with and beyond the disease.

Cancer Week Ireland is a national initiative to get people talking about cancer and how we can prevent it, spot it, treat it, and survive and thrive afterwards.

This year, UCD Conway Institute researchers were involved in three events on campus for Cancer Week Ireland 2016, which ran from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> October.

*UCD Breast Health Day* on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> saw researchers joining forces with colleagues in Systems Biology Ireland, Breast-Predict and UCD Institute of Food & Health as well as the UCD student society, One Health and patient advocate group, Europa Donna Ireland.

At stands in the UCD Student Centre, O'Brien Centre for Science and Quinn School of Business, the volunteers promoted the importance of lifestyle factors such as diet and exercise in influencing future breast health and the role of early detection in fighting breast cancer.

There were competitions on rowing machines and exercise bikes, an opportunity to measure body mass index, take a look at what cancer cells actually look like as well as complementary fruit sponsored by Lidl Ireland.

*The Patient Voice in Cancer Research II* on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> welcomed cancer survivors and patient advocate groups to UCD Conway Institute for the second event in this series that aims to create a framework for patient and public involvement (PPI) in cancer research within the university.

While the concept of PPI is relatively new in Ireland, there has been a concerted effort over the past decade to embed PPI within the research process in Northern Ireland. Participants heard the experiences of Ruth Boyd and Margaret Grayson from the Northern Ireland Cancer Research Consumer Forum (NICRCF), which is affiliated to the Northern Ireland Cancer Trials Network (NICTN).

NICRCF Chair, Margaret Grayson was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004 and has been involved in partnerships with researchers since 2010. Ruth Boyd is a senior research nurse with the Cancer Research UK at the NICTN in Belfast and is the PPI Professional Lead for the cancer network.

Michael Howard and Carol Naylor from Macmillan Cancer Support spoke about their roles within this charity that provides professional and peer support to an online community of 1 million people, making it Europe's largest peer support community.

During the workshop sessions, participants discussed the design and use of a questionnaire for patients interested in being involved in research.

The *Breast-Predict Cancer Week Symposium* began on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> with invited research seminars from guest speakers, Prof Robert Coleman, University of Sheffield; Prof Anne-Lise Borresen-Dale, Oslo University Hospital and Dr Pernette Vershure, University of Amsterdam as well as graduate presentations by students nationwide who are affiliated to this Irish Cancer Society Collaborative Cancer Research Centre .