



JULY 2025, ISSUE 18

SPHPSS IN FOCUS

A quarterly newsletter from the UCD School of Public Health,
Physiotherapy and Sports Science



WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the Summer edition of SPHPSS in Focus! Once again we have a bumper issue jam packed with the latest updates on our activities and achievements. Thanks and best wishes to Doaa Amin and Grainne Bannigan who recently left the newsletter team. We are now looking for new members - any interested PhD students please get in contact!

Since our last issue we celebrated the retirement of Josephine Aylward and welcomed new staff members Karen O'Shaughnessy (PA to the Head of SPHPSS) and Ciara Darker (Programme & Operations Manager, Sport Management and Sport Science). We wish you both the best in your new roles.

Huge congratulations to Associate Professor Mary Codd who has been elected President Elect of ASPHER (Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region) - fantastic achievement! Congratulations also to Drs Shevaun Teo, Rini Bhatnagar, Laura McMahon, Rianna McElroy and Patricia Hall who were recently conferred with PhDs - we wish you all the very best for your future endeavours.

BSc Physiotherapy student Aoife Wafer was awarded the 2025 Guinness Women's Six Nations Player of the Championship, and PhD students Rory Lambe and Anna Quinn won prizes for their presentations at the UCD CHAS Graduate Research Symposium and the Nutrition Society. Our graduates also continue to do us proud - MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics alumna Ciara Walsh was awarded the quality improvement in dietetic practice award at the INDI Research Symposium, and MPH alumnus Dr Jwenish Kumawat was awarded an ASPHER Early Career Excellence Award.

Well done also to Professor Catherine Doody and Associate Professor Ross Neville on their recent promotions, to Dr Kaat Philippe on securing a Marie-Sklodowska Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship and to Assistant Professor Dimuthu Rathnayake who was part of the winning team in the Patient Safety Initiative category at the recent Irish Healthcare Centre Awards.

Read on to find out more about the latest research, teaching, activities and achievements in the SPHPSS.

Asst Professor Catherine Phillips
Editor of SPHPSS in Focus

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- School and Division News
- Research Highlights
- Achievements and Awards
- Teaching and Learning Updates
- Healthy UCD events
- School Committee Updates
- New Appointments
- Recent Publications

CORE TEACHING PROGRAMMES

- [BSc Sport, Health and Exercise Science](#)
- [BSc Physiotherapy](#)
- [BSc Sport and Exercise Management](#)
- [H Dip in Safety, Health and Well-Being at Work](#)
- [Cert. in Safety and Health at Work](#)
- [MPH](#)
- [MPH \(Nutrition\)](#)
- [MPH \(Global Health\)](#)
- [MPH \(Epidemiology\)](#)
- [MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics](#)
- [MSc Occupational Safety and Health](#)
- [Prof Masters in Physiotherapy](#)
- [MSc Sport Management](#)

Assoc. Professor Mary Codd elected as ASPHER President



We are delighted to announce that Associate Professor Mary Codd has been elected as President-elect of ASPHER, The Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region. Professor Codd will assume the position of ASPHER Vice-President (President-elect) for the 2025-2026 term followed by President for the 2026-2028 term. This is the first time that a President has been elected from an Irish member School of Public Health.

Professor Codd is Associate Professor of Epidemiology & Biostatistics at the UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, and Director of the UCD Master of Public Health (MPH) Programme and the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master of Public Health Degree (Europubhealth) at UCD.

Her professional experience spans the implementation of the first population-based cancer screening programme in Ireland leading to the development of the Irish National Breast Screening Programme, Breastcheck, to establishing and directing the UCD Specialised Contact Tracing Centre during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ASPHER is the key independent European organisation dedicated to improving and protecting the public health by strengthening education and training of public health professionals for both practice and research. It is a membership organisation of Schools and Institutes of Public Health across Europe. Founded in 1966, ASPHER currently has over 134 members in 43 countries of the WHO European Region.

UCD has a long association with ASPHER and Professor Codd has served on its Executive Board since 2019. She has been a member of many significant ASPHER projects including leading the development, with ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control), of updated Core Competencies in Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology in 2022, and the pan-European ASPHER Core Curriculum for Public Health launched at the European Public Health Conference in November 2024.

As President, Professor Codd will maintain and enhance ASPHER's functions and objectives, and will focus, in particular, on: the impact of social media on children and young people; the challenges of healthy ageing and long-term care for older members of society; and the continued development of curricula and competencies for public health professionals. Following the election at the recent General Assembly of ASPHER, current President, Professor Henrique Barros, said "We warmly congratulate Professor Mary Codd and look forward to her continued contributions to ASPHER's mission and values". Professor Cecily Kelleher, UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences Principal, noted that the prestigious appointment is "the culmination of many years of fruitful engagement between UCD and ASPHER" indicating that "the curriculum reforms spearheaded by Professor Codd will have a lasting influence on the New Public Health". Associate Professor and Head of the UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, James Matthews, congratulated Professor Codd saying that "this is an important and significant achievement that reinforces the School's position as one of the leaders in Europe in supporting ASPHER's mission to strengthen the education and training of Public Health professionals for practice and research".

Farewell to Josephine Aylward



We bid farewell to Josephine Aylward in May, as she retired from UCD. Josephine held a number of roles across the university, the latest of which was PA to the Head of the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science.

Josephine will be fondly remembered for her calm, friendly demeanour and for always being super organised and efficient.

Best of luck in your retirement Josephine!

Pictured: Josephine Aylward and Nuria Corcoran

MSc in Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Graduation

Twenty-three newly qualified and registered dietitians graduated on Thursday 29th May 2025. Lorna Haydon was awarded the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute medal for the highest GPA across the two year programme. We wish all the graduates every success in their careers and look forward to hearing about their various pathways in the workforce!



Pictured: Class of 2025 MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics



Pictured: Lorna Haydon, awarded INDI medal for highest GPA and Jennifer Feighan CEO Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI)

World Physiotherapy Congress 2025

UCD was strongly represented at the World Physiotherapy Congress 2025 in Tokyo in May with Garrett Van Oirschot, Rory Lambe, and Ryan Summersby presenting their PhD research. All had platform presentations.

Ryan presented "Injury Burden of Adolescent Sports in Ireland using the Oslo Sports Trauma Research Centre Questionnaire: A Prospective Cohort Study." Supervised by Dr Sinead Holden and Professor Brian Caulfield.

Rory presented "The accuracy of Apple Watch for measuring VO2max, heart rate and energy expenditure: a validation study." Supervised by Dr Cailbhe Doherty. Garrett presented "An Evaluation of Patient Educational Multimedia Design in Paediatric Musculoskeletal Healthcare: A Systematic Review" as well as "Designing Multimedia Patient Education Materials for Scoliosis: a Three-Armed Feasibility Parallel Randomized Controlled Trial of YouTube Videos." Supervised by Dr Cailbhe Doherty.



Pictured (L-R): Garrett Van Oirschot, Rory Lambe and Ryan Summersby

Open Science Journal Club


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Enables Bad Science;
Statistical Thinking Enables
Good Science"



MONDAY, 30 JUNE 1 – 2 PM

LOCATION: CONWAY G026 | HUB

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Are you interested in Open Science/Open Research? If so, consider dropping by our informal, monthly ReproducibiliTEA journal club focused on meta-science and reproducible research.

The next discussion will take place from 1-2pm in the G026 i Hub of the Conway building on Monday, 30th June. All are welcome, especially Early Career Researchers. Email cstar@ucd.ie if you'd like to be added to the journal club mailing list, and for more information visit the CSTAR [webpage](#).

PhD Graduation



Congratulations to Dr Shevaun Teo on her recent graduation. Shevaun's PhD research, supervised by Assistant Professor Catherine Phillips, examined associations between maternal diet, lifestyle and socio-demographic factors with placental and offspring health outcomes, generating four peer-reviewed publications so far!

Irish Healthcare Awards 2025: Best Patient Safety Initiative

Congratulations to Dr Dimuthu Rathnakaye, SPHPSS, who was part of the project team (pictured below) working on the Quality and Patient Safety Competency Navigator in UCD IRIS.

The project won the best Patient Safety Initiative at the recent Irish Healthcare Centre Awards 2025 and is a Finalist in the Learning and Development Institute of Ireland-Excellence in Learning Awards due to be announced on 26th September.



UCD Teaching and Academic Development Fellowship Update

Associate Professor Olive Lennon was awarded a UCD Fellowship in Teaching & Academic Development in January 2024. She is working in an interdisciplinary group with colleagues from School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems (Dr Sean Paul Teeling), Education (Dr Rachel Farrell) and English (Dr Naomi McAreavey) examining Engagement through Partnership.

Along with colleagues Rachel Farrell and Sean Paul Teeling, they presented work on programme theories for staff student partnerships generated from a realist review which they have just completed at the 7th Annual Philosophy and Theory of Higher Education conference, jointly hosted by UCD and Trinity College from the 10th-12th June. They also hosted an in-person panel session at the Students as Partners Roundtable 2025 at the University of Westminster from the 25-27 June.

The programme theories they have developed from the realist review will be explored further and refined for the localised context of UCD in the latter half of the year. The group will be convening workshops in October 2025 for students, faculty and professional staff to explore these further. Please contact Olive if you are interested in participating olive.lennon@ucd.ie. In the meantime the team would be grateful if staff and students could complete a brief survey relating to staff student partnership. The [student](#) and [staff](#) surveys will be anonymous, voluntary, and take approximately 10-12 minutes to complete.



Pictured (L-R): UCD fellowship team Associate Prof Olive Lennon, Dr Rachel Farrell and Dr Sean Paul Teeling at the Philosophy and Theory of Higher Education conference

Contribution to UCD's East Asia Engagement



University College Dublin
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath
Ireland's Global University

Professor Eleni Theodoraki starts from 1st July as invited member of the UCD's Asia Engagement Working Group.

We wish Eleni well in this role!

Recent PhD graduates Dr Laura McMahon and Dr Patricia Hall

Congratulations to UCD lecturer and clinical tutor Laura McMahon on her recent graduation. Laura's PhD programme of research comprehensively examined respiratory dysfunction in Parkinson's disease with three peer reviewed publications and more to come!

Congratulations to Patricia Hall, former UCD research nurse and SPHeRE scholar on her recent graduation. Patricia's PhD focused on theory and evidence informed lifestyle-related stroke secondary prevention and has five peer reviewed publications to date. Patricia is now working for the Health Research Board Ireland and we wish her well in her new position.

Pictured: Dr Patricia Hall (L), Associate Prof Olive Lennon (C), Dr Laura McMahon (R)



Rory Lambe publishes article in Nature Careers: Strategies to enjoy the PhD journey



Rory recommends finding a community and establishing clear work-life boundaries to make PhD life more fun. Credit: Vincent Hoban/UCD

Doing a PhD can sometimes feel like a long hard race towards the finishing line, but focussing solely on that endpoint only brings the illusion of relief. In an article for Nature's Career Column, Rory Lambe describes five strategies that have allowed him to find joy during the course of his postgraduate studies:

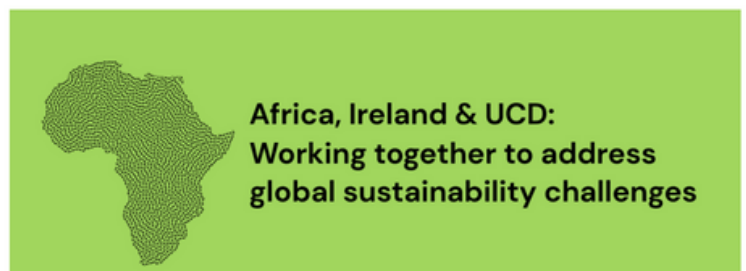
1. Building a genuine community
2. Establishing clear work boundaries
3. Creating a routine for resilience
4. Acknowledging your own progress
5. Valuing the journey itself

Rory's research involves wearable technology in healthcare. His project aims to build a machine learning model that can assess heart health using a combination of clinical and wearable data. Read the article [here](#).

Africa, Ireland and UCD: Working together to address global sustainability challenges

On May 22nd the UCD Earth Institute and UCD Office of Global Engagement hosted "Africa, Ireland and UCD: Working together to address global sustainability challenges". This event aimed to connect researchers across UCD who engage with Africa in interdisciplinary sustainability, climate and environmental research tackling urgent global and interconnected challenges, engage with the wider political, policy and funding context for these activities, and to build capacity for future initiatives.

Showcased at the event were collaborative projects on areas such as environment, food security and health, including the AMEN project (*Personalised mHealth Maternal Nutritional Education for Equitable Nutritional Access and Improved Maternal and Offspring Health Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa*) led by Assistant Professor Catherine Phillips, SPHPSS with partners in the University of Limpopo, South Africa, which was profiled by postdoctoral researcher Dr Praveenkumar Aivalli.



SPHPSS at the UCD Festival

This year's UCD Festival was a wonderful success, with many engaging events highlighting UCD's latest research and innovations.



The Sport Science team was present with the 'Unleashing the Power of Performance Testing' and 'Muscle-controlled Games for Prosthesis Control' stands.

The former allowed people to test how high they can jump and how strong their grip is, starting a friendly competition in many families. In the interactive Prosthesis Control demo, volunteers could control a game with the muscles of their arms, using the same techniques that are used to control bionic arms.

At the ever popular 'Know Your Numbers' stand, participants had their height, weight and hand grip strength accurately measured by our Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics team and were given important tips on healthy eating.



The Healthy UCD team gave out great advice on helping to keep everyone's skin safe this summer and all year round at the 'Be Sun Smart' stand. Children played in the sand pit, customised their own sun hat and everyone got a pocket sized SPF to take away.



Huge thanks to all of the volunteers and participants who made it a fantastic day out. See you again at UCD Festival 2026!

CHAS Graduate Research Symposium 2025

The UCD CHAS Graduate Research Student Symposium took place on Tuesday, 29 April 2025. Research students from across the five college schools were invited to showcase their work through oral presentations and posters.

CHAS Vice Principal for Research and Innovation, Professor Lorraine Brennan, awarded second prize for Presentation Excellence to Rory Lambe (SPHPSS) for his talk titled “The accuracy of Apple Watch for measuring VO₂ max, heart rate, and energy expenditure: A validation study,” supervised by Dr Cailbhe Doherty. Congratulations Rory!

Several other SPHPSS students from the School and the Institute for Sport and Health also presented posters, highlighting the breadth and impact of research underway within the School.



Pictured: Rory Lambe and Prof Lorraine Brennan



Pictured: PhD students from SPHPSS/ISH presenting their posters at CHAS

UCD Volunteer Overseas Tanzanian Health Project

On the 6th June this year, nine UCD students, six physiotherapists, a medical student, a food scientist and a nutritionist travelled to Tanzania with UCD Volunteers Overseas. Associate Professor Tara Cusack accompanied them as their Team Lead and Clinical Tutor.

Since then, the health team have been working at the Matumaini Centre in Dar es Salaam. The centre was founded by the Holy Union Sisters and provides rehabilitation for children with disabilities and vocational education and support to empower their mothers.

The UCDVO team has been having an amazing experience working with the mothers and children attending the centre while at the same time learning much about the culture and customs of Tanzania. The project finishes on the 4th July following which the team will enjoy visits to Kilimanjaro and Zanzibar.



Pictured: Lots of music and fun with the Mamas and their children (above), and a yoga workshop for the mamas (left)



The UCD VO Tanzanian Health Project visiting the Irish Embassy in Dar es Salaam. Pictured (L-R): Tara Cusack (UCD Clinical Tutor/Team Lead) , Mags Gaynor (Deputy Irish Ambassador to Tanzania and East Africa), Aliko Vlasopoulou (Med), Stephy Regi Paul (PT), Caoimhe Monaghan (PT), Niamh Phelan (PT), Juliane Fallon (PT), Katie Farrell (Food Science), Aoife Kelly (PT), Una Stephens (Nutritionist), Evelius (PT at the Matumaini Centre), Ruanne Whitelaw (PT)



Graduate Programmes: Apply Now

The UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science offers a wide range of graduate programmes across all of our disciplines and at various levels.

Courses range from short-term Certificates to part-time Professional to two-year full-time Masters programmes.

Full information, including application requirements and deadlines, are available [here](#). International students can find more information about studying at UCD [here](#).



Dr Kaat Philippe Awarded Marie-Sklodowska Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship

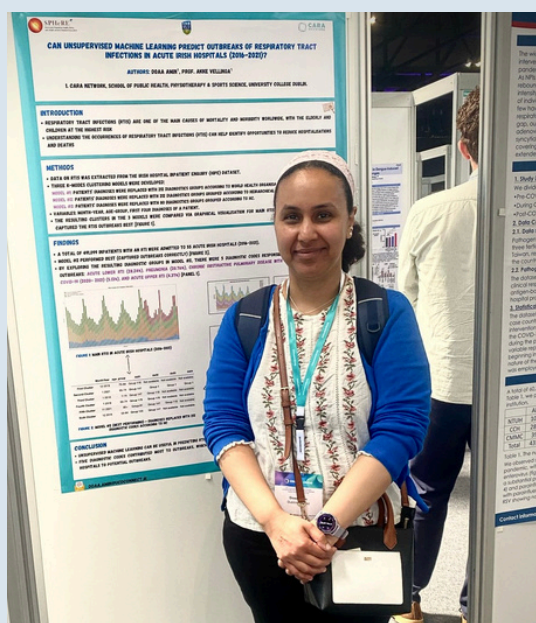
Dr Kaat Philippe has received a Marie-Sklodowska Curie Postdoctoral Global Fellowship for her project PremEat, which will investigate the experiences and support needs of families and healthcare professionals regarding preterm children's eating behaviour. The project will run from October 2025 to September 2028, with a two-year phase at the University of Zurich (UZH) and a one-year return phase at UCD. It was developed in collaboration with Dr Celine Murrin (UCD), Prof. Giancarlo Natalucci (UZH), and two PPI partners: the Irish Neonatal Health Alliance and Frühchen Schweiz.

From 12-16 May, Dr Philippe went to Switzerland (supported by CHAS seed funding) to present and prepare the PremEat project with collaborators at UZH and members of the Swiss NeoNet follow-up group, who aim to improve the long-term care of preterm and at-risk neonates.

Pictured: Dr Kaat Philippe at the neonatology research unit of Prof Dr Giancarlo Natalucci at the University of Zurich/ University Hospital Zurich



CARA Network's @ESCMID Global 2025, Vienna, Austria

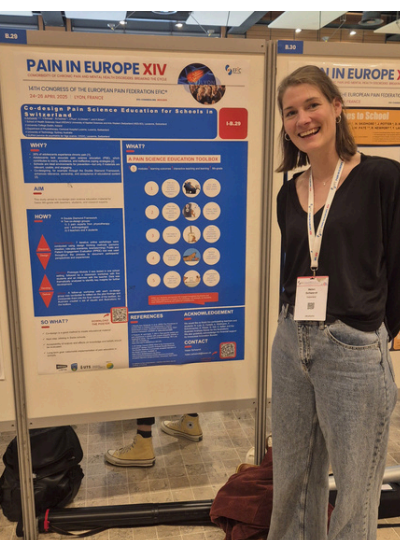


Doaa Amin is a PhD candidate and is part of the CARA network, working under the supervision of Prof. Akke Vellinga. Doaa presented her research at The 35th European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID Global 2025). Her research explored the utilisation of an unsupervised machine learning algorithm (K-modes clustering) to predict outbreaks of respiratory tract infections (RTIs) based on data from 55 acute Irish hospitals (2016-2021). Not only K-modes clustering was useful in predicting the outbreaks, but also further exploration resulted in five diagnostic codes (i.e., acute lower RTI, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease with acute lower RTI, COVID-19 (2020- 2021), and acute upper RTI) being responsible for two thirds of all hospitalisations with an RTI in acute hospitals.

The presented abstract/poster's title was "Can unsupervised machine learning predict outbreaks of respiratory tract infections in acute Irish hospitals (2016-2021)?"

Pictured: Doaa Amin, Vienna, Austria

Congress of the European Pain Federation 2025



The SPHPSS was well represented at the 14th Congress of the European Pain Federation (EFIC) in Lyon.

Natasha Hinwood (PhD candidate) chaired a workshop and presented findings from a cohort study studying the biopsychosocial pain profiles of people living with obesity.

Helen Schwerdt (PhD candidate) presented a poster detailing the co-design of a pain science education intervention for Swiss schools.

Pictured: Natasha Winwood (L) and Helen Schwerdt (R) at EFIC 2025

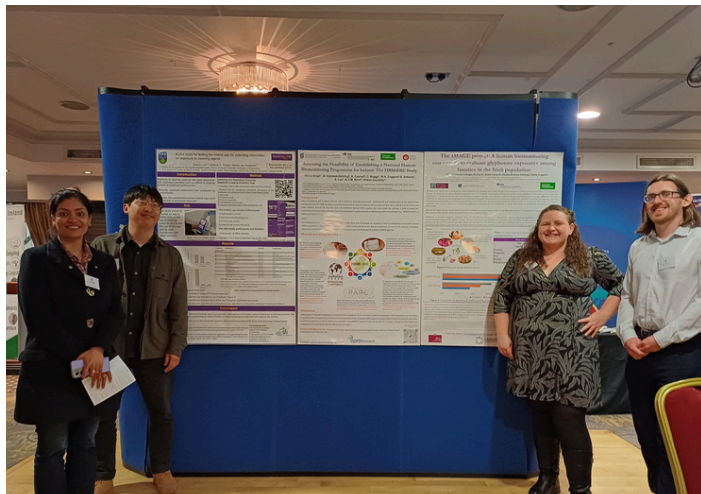
Exposure science research team attend the 32nd Annual OHSI Conference 2025 'Looking to the future'

Congratulations to Dr Sewon Lee, who was awarded the best poster prize at the conference, and to Dr Alison Connolly, who was elected vice President of the Occupational Hygiene Society of Ireland ([OHSI](#)).

The 32nd Annual OHSI conference was held in Tullamore on the 1st of April, 2025. Assistant Professor Dr Alison Connolly, postdoctoral researchers Dr Richa Singh and Dr Sewon Lee and PhD candidate, Darragh Doherty, all attended the event. Darragh Doherty presented an oral presentation on the 'Exposures to neonicotinoid insecticides in occupational settings in Ireland', and the rest of the research group presented poster presentations.



Pictured: Occupational Hygiene Society of Ireland Committee



Pictured: UCD Exposure Science Research Team attending OHSI 2025 'Occupational Hygiene Society of Ireland Committee'

Idecide 2025

In May, 33 primary school children from St. Kiernan's and St. Peter's in Bray completed the IDecide project. IDecide is a community outreach project aimed at 5th and 6th class primary school children from DEIS schools, with the aim of enhancing agency to complete 3rd level education. The children get an opportunity to experience university life and see themselves as active creators of their futures. The project uses storytelling, role modelling and experiential learning to achieve its intended outcomes.



Students from St. Kiernan's and St. Peters, Bray, Co. Wicklow

IDecide was created by Antonella Puggioni (School of Veterinary Medicine), Melinda Halasz (School of Medicine) and Nicola Dervan (School of Physiotherapy, Sports Science and Public Health; MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics) to help tackle the inequality experienced by those from lower socioeconomic areas who are underrepresented in 3rd level education. The initiative is run in collaboration with Kathie Orr from Access and Lifelong Learning and the Pathways to the Profession project and supported by staff from the clinical skills labs in Nursing and Midwifery, Veterinary Medicine and Computer Science. The feedback from St. Kiernan's and St. Peter's was extremely positive, with the children and their teachers reporting beneficial effects on the children's agency for 3rd level education.

Aoife Wafer awarded the 2025 Guinness Women's Six Nations Player of the Championship

We are so proud of SPHPSS BSc Physiotherapy student Aoife Wafer for being the first Irish woman, and the youngest player to date, to be awarded the 2025 Guinness Women's Six Nations Player of the Championship.

Wafer was presented with her award during an event hosted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Emma Blain, aimed at inspiring young women through the power of sport.

Aoife has scored 12 tries in 15 caps for Ireland.

Pictured: Aoife Wafer

Credit: www.sixnationsrugby.com



Isokinetic Football Medicine Conference Madrid

Assistant Professor Sinead Holden was an invited speaker at the Isokinetic Football Medicine Conference in Madrid. Sinead spoke about her work on youth athlete growth and development, with a talk entitled 'The complex extensor mechanism adaptation in the young player'. UCD had good representation with Assistant Professor Nicol van Dyk also invited for a symposium.



European Respiratory Summit Conference 2025



Professor Patricia Fitzpatrick was an invited speaker at the European Respiratory Summit (ERS), held in Dublin on 11-12 June 2025 at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

Led by ERS President Prof Silke Ryan of St Vincent's University Hospital, it brought together experts, government and public-health representatives, healthcare professionals, and patient advocates to review successes in respiratory disease prevention, highlight data and research gaps (including insights from WHO-Europe), and identify policy, programme and product initiatives to reduce the burden of respiratory illness across Europe. Patricia's talk was entitled "Making a difference: prevention, early detection, screening".

Pictured: Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick on panel discussion following talk at European Respiratory Summit Conference

Sport, Development and Peace: Critical Global Challenges



Edited by Dr Joel Rookwood, lecturer in Sport Management and course director for the undergraduate BSc Sport and Exercise Management degree, the recently published book “Sport, Development and Peace: Critical Global Challenges” offers a comprehensive exploration of the rapidly evolving landscape of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), a critical approach to peacebuilding, economic development, and social transformation gaining increasing stature during the last twenty-five years.

Contributors scrutinize the diversification in SDP methods and ideals, spotlighting global dimensions and differences in this burgeoning field. Encompassing contributions from scholars across five continents, the chapters (including several authored and co-authored by Joel) illuminate diverse approaches and analyses, reflecting a variety of viewpoints and experiences.

For more information see [here](#).

International Collaboration Workshop with the Joanna Briggs Institute

Dr Niamh Merriman and Dr Mary Walsh were delighted to attend an international collaboration workshop with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI), hosted by the National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA). The event welcomed Associate Professor Craig Lockwood, Editor-in-Chief and JBI Director of Implementation Science, alongside key stakeholders from clinical, research, audit, and quality improvement backgrounds across the Health Service Executive, University College Dublin (UCD), and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI).

The workshop featured engaging discussions on JBI’s evidence implementation tools and resources, and NOCA’s ongoing efforts to advance clinical audit and quality improvement in Ireland. The collaboration highlighted shared commitments to improving patient care and outcomes, and set the stage for future joint initiatives between JBI, NOCA, and Irish healthcare partners.



UCDVO GAA Project

This summer, UCD Volunteers Overseas (UCDVO) students participated in a transformative four-week placement in Uganda, where they worked on a range of impactful community development projects. In partnership with Nurture Africa, Kisiizi Hospital, and Eco Brixx, students contributed to rehabilitation camps for children with disabilities, nutrition programmes, and plastic recycling and sustainability initiatives.

This year also saw the successful launch of a pilot GAA-based sports and development project aimed at empowering young people, particularly girls, through physical education. The multidisciplinary teams — made up of students from physiotherapy, nutrition, sustainability, and sports science — brought energy, skill and compassion to each project, continuing UCDVO's long-standing commitment to ethical, community-led global engagement.



Prof Theodoraki: External PhD Examiner in UK

Professor Eleni Theodoraki acted as PhD external examiner at the University of Stirling. The thesis was entitled: Knowledge Transfer from Organising Committee to Local Stakeholders: A Case Study of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games.

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING



Jon Mackey appointed as National Performance Director



Congratulations to SPHPSS MSc Coaching Science in Sport alumnus, Jon Mackey, for being appointed as National Performance Director for Irish Boxing for the LA 2028 Olympic cycle. Fantastic appointment and we wish you every success Jon!

Read more [here](#).

MSc in Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Dissertations & Other Projects: National Conferences

Several 2024/2025 graduates from the MSc in Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics presented findings from their MSc dissertation studies at the recent Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute 10th Annual Research Symposium on the 6th May 2025 and the Nutrition Society Irish Section Conference 'Promoting Optimal Nutrition for People and Planet' 11-14th June 2025, both taking place at TU Dublin, Grangegorman.

Natalie Wu, Jane Kinghan and Justin Cox gave oral presentations at the Nutrition Society Irish Section conference. Lorna Haydon, Katy O'Driscoll, Natalie Wu, Jane Kinghan, Caoimhe O'Donovan, Hannah Fitzgerald, Dearbhla O'Moore, Maria Marques Previ, Holly Wolfe, Emily Hunt, Laura Murphy, and Maebh Trench, and year 1 student Lana Devine and MSc research postgraduate student Clodagh Landers all presented posters at the INDI event. The research themes were diverse and included sustainability in dietetics education, malnutrition at various life and disease stages, Lifeways and COSI cohort research, physical assessment in clinical dietetics, gestational diabetes, and cystic fibrosis.

Recent graduate from 2023 graduate Ciara Walsh, working in Peamount Hospital, delivered a compelling oral presentation on Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and was awarded the quality improvement in dietetic practice award for her work in this area at the INDI 10th Annual Research Symposium. Congratulations Ciara!



Pictured: MSc Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics Poster & Oral Presentations at the National INDI Research Symposium and Nutrition Society Irish Section Conference 2025

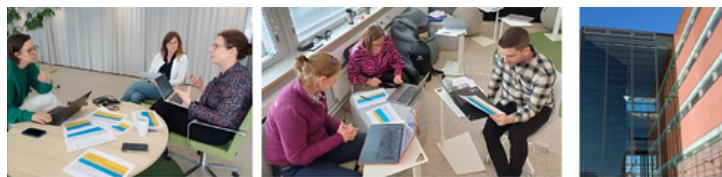
Prominence Project Update

PROMINENCE
Physiotherapy • Obesity • Education



The PROMINENCE consortium hit the ground running in 2025, actively participating in major conferences and professional meetings across Europe. By engaging with a wide network of physiotherapy researchers, educators, and healthcare professionals, the project continues to promote its mission: advancing obesity education and professional competencies for physiotherapists.

The Consortium's conference journey began in February at the [Winter Symposium Obesity 2025](#) in De Haan, Belgium, where PROMINENCE was honoured with the Best Poster Award. This was followed by participation in the [Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists \(ISCP\) 2025 Conference](#) in April, held in Dublin, Ireland. The first half of the year concludes with the [32nd European Congress on Obesity \(ECO 2025\)](#) in Málaga, Spain. These activities reflect PROMINENCE's strong commitment to collaboration, knowledge exchange, and leadership in obesity education within physiotherapy across Europe.



Pictured L-R: Prof. Catherine Blake, Assoc Prof. Dr Gráinne O'Donoghue; Dr Kenneth Verboven (University of Hasselt), Assoc Prof. Dr Caitriona Cunningham (Project Lead)

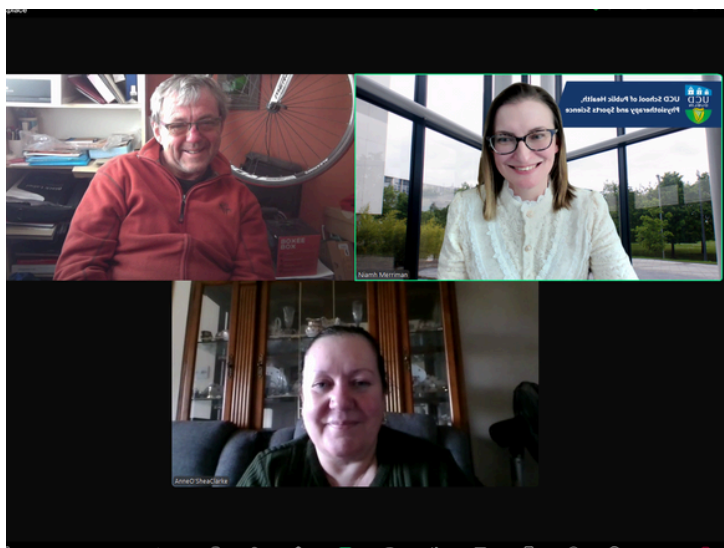


2nd Transnational Meeting held in Helsinki in April 2025

Alongside conference participation, the consortium convened its second and final [transnational meeting in Helsinki](#), Finland, hosted by partner [Arcada University of Applied Sciences](#) and in collaboration with [Tampere University of Applied Sciences](#). The two-day meeting focused on consolidating progress and shaping the next steps - most notably, the development of the competency framework and the open education resource (OER).

UCD SPHPSS participants included Associate Professor Caitriona Cunningham (Project Lead), Prof. Catherine Blake, and Associate Professor Gráinne O'Donoghue, together with colleagues from MDU (Professor Cecilia Fridén), TAMK (Dr Pipsa Tuominen), Arcada (Dr Camilla Wikström-Grotell and Dr Cia Törnblum), UHasselt (Dr Kenneth Verboven and Dr Anouk Agten), and the Europe Region of World Physiotherapy (Emilia Kosińska).

The HipCog Study: Public and Patient Involvement Activities



Dr Niamh Merriman, Ms Anne O'Shea Clarke from Sage Advocacy, and members of the Dementia Research Advisory Team from the Alzheimer Society of Ireland

In April 2025, Dr Niamh Merriman engaged in Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) activities for the HipCog Study by meeting with members of the Dementia Research Advisory Team from the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Anne O'Shea Clarke from Sage Advocacy.

These consultations provided valuable perspectives on the barriers and enablers to screening for delirium and cognitive impairment in older adults with hip fracture in acute care. The insights from these PPI partners have directly informed the interpretation of qualitative findings from healthcare professionals and will shape recommendations to improve screening and care for cognitively vulnerable patients.

One Year In: PARA Project's Progress and Impact

The Para Athletics Academy, run by Annmarie Carroll, Adjunct Associate Professor Alison O'Riordan and Professor Kate Pumpa wrapped up its first year at the start of summer after hosting a number of webinars, workshops and testing days from October 2024 to March 2025. This inaugural year saw a number of up and coming athletes and their coaches receive education on topics such as intro to physical preparation, sport psychology and nutrition. The Academy athletes are currently in the middle of their outdoor competition season and have already put on some incredible performances at both national and international competitions.



Pictured: The Para Academy Team



Pictured: Cooking classes run by Kate Pumpa at Sports Ireland for the Para Athletics academy members

Additional Funding for the PARA Project

Prof Kate Pumpa, Adjunct Associate Prof Alison O'Riordan, James Nolan and PhD student Annmarie Carroll have received additional funding from Sport Ireland to grow the research team and expand the Para Athletics Research and Application (PARA) project. This research and associates sports academy is focused on talent identification and the development of athletes eligible to compete in Paralympic events. We are currently advertising for a Research Masters student, with a strong data analytics background. For more information contact kate.pumpa@ucd.ie



Pictured: L-R: Academy athletes Damien, Aryell, Darie and Academy lead and PhD student Annmarie Carroll

UCD Dietetics at the Irish Network of Healthcare Educators Annual Scientific Conference, UCC



The Irish Network of Healthcare Educators (INHED) brings together individuals and organisations with an interest in, and responsibilities for healthcare education. The organisation began as a collaboration between the seven undergraduate medical schools on the island of Ireland. It has since developed into an integrative educational organisation for all health professional disciplines in Ireland. The 2025 Annual meeting focused on embracing the future of health professional education.

Ruth Charles, RD and Practice Tutor presented this poster on behalf of the Practice Placement Team of the MSc Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics Programme: "ENHANCING CLINICAL PLACEMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH STUDENT LED PROJECT DESIGN". The abstract is available on [page 136](#) of the weblink provided along with the 2 day programme content.

Pictured: Ruth Charles Registered Dietitian at INHED 2025 in UCC

Nutrition Society Conference: best oral presentation winner!

PhD student Anna Quinn has been awarded Best Oral Presentation at the 2025 Nutrition Society Irish Section Conference, held at Technological University Dublin from 11–13 June. Anna, based at the SPHPSS Institute for Sport & Health, presented her doctoral research as part of the [EU APPETITE project](#), which is funded in Ireland by the HRB. Her winning presentation, “Relationships between body composition, resting metabolic rate, appetite, and energy intake in older adults,” offered novel insights into how physiological factors such as fat mass, fat-free mass, and metabolic rate shape appetite and energy intake during ageing. Her work contributes to a broader research goal: understanding and addressing the decline in appetite often experienced by older adults, with a focus on targeted nutrition and physical activity interventions to help prevent undernutrition. Anna’s PhD is supervised by Dr Katy Horner and Professor Clare Corish in the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science at UCD.



Pictured: Anna Quinn at the Nutrition Society Conference June 2025

MSc Sport Management Networking Event

It was great to welcome back some of our MSc Sport Management University alumni to a networking event held in May at the UCD University Club. Alumni who are now working in the sport sector, including in Paralympics Ireland, Irish Squash, Basketball Ireland, Badminton Ireland, Munster Cricket, and St. Joseph's AFC, chatted to current students and faculty, and shared their experiences since finishing the MSc. Special thanks to Senator Evanne Ní Chuilinn, formerly of RTE, who discussed her platform to champion physical literacy, mental health, and equality in Irish sport. The MSc Sport Management alumni community is growing and we thank them for coming back and inspiring our current (and future) students.



Pictured: MSc Sport Management Programme Director Dr Tom Fabian welcoming the group

Pictured: Senator Evanne Ní Chuilinn addressing the crowd

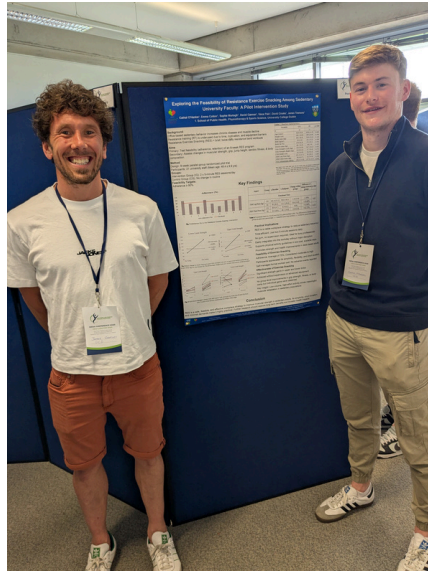
Irish Sport and Exercise Sciences Association Conference

The inaugural Irish Sport and Exercise Sciences Association (ISESA) Conference took place at SETU Waterford on the 22nd-23rd of May, with the Sport Health and Exercise Science team attending alongside our PhD students and a final year BSc Health & Performance Science student.

There was great representation of poster presentations by our postgraduate and undergraduate students, and Prof Kate Pumpa, an ISESA board member also launched the new Accredited Sport and Exercise Scientist accreditation pathway. This accreditation will provide a nationally recognised benchmark for excellence across all disciplines in sport and exercise sciences. [Click here for more information.](#)



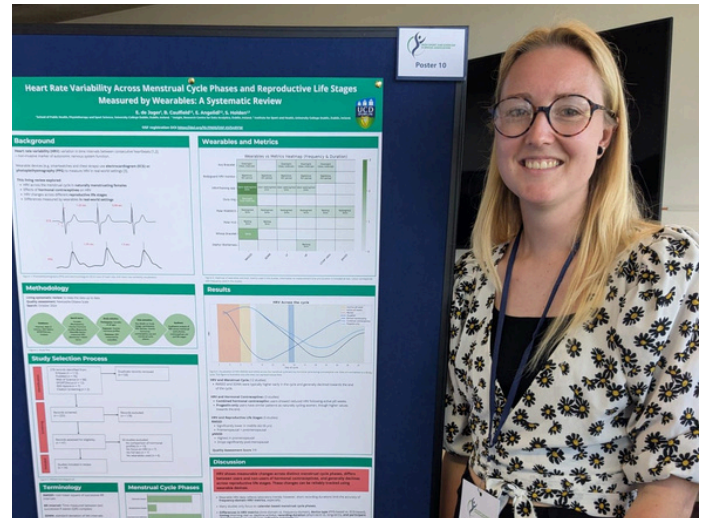
Pictured: Prof Kate Pumpa



Pictured: Dr Timmons & Cathal O'Hanlon



Pictured: Annmarie Carroll presented her study, "A qualitative exploration of the lived experiences of key stakeholders in para athletics in Ireland."



Pictured: Eline De Jager shared her systematic review titled "Heart rate variability across menstrual cycle phases and reproductive life stages measured by wearables."



Open Science Talk

On the 4th of June the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science hosted Prof. D. Lakens from Eindhoven University of Technology, who gave an insightful and engaging talk on open science. Some 50-60 people were in attendance from different UCD Schools, but also from University College Cork, University of Maynooth, Technological University Dublin and elsewhere. Prof. Daniel Lakens has an ongoing collaboration with Dr Max Ditroilo, who spent 6 months at his university in 2024 during his sabbatical.

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European Health Psychology Society conference 2025

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Rourke M, Tobin L, Mooney T, Fitzpatrick P, Gleeson G, Russell NE. An analysis of screening results of first screened Cervical Check attendees aged 63-69 and regular screened attendees aged 60-65.

O'Connor M, Mooney T, Fitzpatrick P, Gleeson G, Russell NE. The downstream impact of a sudden surge in screening test samples on a national screening programme.

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Murphy S, Mooney T, Phelan N, Smith A, Campbell L, Connors A, Larke A, McNally S, Fitzpatrick P, Mullooly M, Flanagan F. Rising Recall Rates in Ireland's National Breast Screening Programme: Insights from Two Million Screenings.

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European Respiratory Society Prevention Summit, Dublin, 12th June 2025

Fitzpatrick P. Making a difference: prevention, early detection, screening.

National Screening Service Research Seminar, 11th June 2025

Fitzpatrick P Barriers and facilitators to participation in cancer screening among Irish Travellers.

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