

DOCTRID IV International Conference-Post Conference Report

Professor Brian Harvey, Director of Research of the DOCTRID Research Institute welcomed everyone to the event. He was confident that the meeting would 'provide a platform to create awareness of how multidisciplinary collaborative research can bring about practical changes to improve the lives of those with Intellectual Disability or Autism Spectrum Disorders'

Mr Christy Lynch, CEO of KARE spoke about the delays in implementing policies and how this impacts on service delivery. He also highlighted the importance of care providers giving their clients choice and allowing them to have influence over decisions which affect their lives through a 'person centred model' of care. **Dr Jennifer Clegg, a clinical psychologist in the University of Nottingham** discussed a range of issues relating to social inclusion including the importance of meaningful relationships for people with ID, the care burden on families and the moral implications of moving people out from congregated settings-there should be no 'one size fits all' policy. The wishes of the client must be considered and community living is not suitable or desirable for everyone with ID. **Dr Bernard Dan, a paediatric neurologist at the Queen Fabiola Children's University Hospital** informed the audience of the importance of combining the clinical approach with genetics and care pathways and the identification of risk factors in ID. The issue of secondary prevention was discussed and how to tackle anxiety, mental health issues and challenging behaviour. How could we use technology as intervention treatments and what are the consequences of medication?

The role of Assistive Technologies is a central focus of DOCTRID and the ASSISTID programme. **Dr Gerald Craddock from the National Disability Authority and Centre for Inclusive Design** provided an excellent overview of the current policies and provision around Assistive Technologies (AT), the findings from the NDA 2012 report on AT showing a high level of unmet need within this field, and the importance of user-led design and universal design. AT are devices and tools which allow people to perform many of the tasks of daily living and to participate in social activities, employment and education. It has been said that "for people without disabilities, technology makes things easier, for people with a disabilities, technology makes things possible".

Dr Anthony Staines from DCU put forward some thought-provoking remarks on the importance of evidence based trials and research studies, of which there is currently a significant lack in the field of ID/ASD care and intervention. This point supports the core principal of DOCTRID which is to fund and support scientific research to provide evidence to inform policy, service provision and care for people with ID or ASD. Having an evidence base will allow clinicians, carers and service providers to make informed decisions leading to more effective care and improved quality of life. The €9M EU Marie Curie ASSISTID programme, coordinated by the DOCTRID Research Institute and co-funded by RESPECT will be a main driver of this research over the next four years. ASSISTID will fund 40 researchers to undertake projects in Assistive Technologies for ID/ASD (for more information visit www.assistid.ie). RESPECT also co-funds the Michigan State University-DOCTRID Hegarty fellowships which are two year projects

co-located between MSU and Irish DOCTRID partner universities, see <http://www.educ.msu.edu/cepse/rehab/hegartyfellow.asp> for more information.

The Workshops on Day 2 were very well attended with good interaction between delegates from all disciplines and backgrounds. Please see the workshop summary documents for the outcomes of these discussions which were prepared by the Hegarty Fellows (Dr June Chen, Dr Carolyn Shivers and Dr Stacy Clifford-Simplican) and Dr Nigel Newbutt from the University of the West of England, Bristol.