



**INSTITUTE OF
OBSTETRICIANS &
GYNAECOLOGISTS**

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND**

January 2021 -December 2021 **ANNUAL REPORT**



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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Institute of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists was established in 1968, and in 1976 became an integral part of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. It draws its membership, at present numbering 237 from the whole of Ireland. Many of these are in current practice as consultants in the public sector in the Republic of Ireland. There are four categories of full membership: Honorary, ad Eundem, by election and by examination. Practitioners who have passed the RCPI examination in Obstetrics and Gynaecology or an equivalent and who are on the Institute Higher Specialist Training programme can apply for Associate Membership.

The objectives of the Institute are to represent Obstetrical and Gynaecological opinion in Ireland in a professional, advisory and administrative capacity. It aims to act as the advisory body in Ireland in matters relating to education, training, research and administration in the specialty of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, as well as to Governmental and statutory bodies in all matters pertaining to Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Training and Education is a vital part of the Institute's role. It takes responsibility for setting and maintaining examination standards related to Obstetrics and Gynaecology. It assists in the maintenance of professional standards for doctors with regard to Professional Competence in the specialty of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, including the delivery of vibrant educational events.

The Institute is a dynamic and fast paced organisation. Our members are actively involved not just in the running of the Institute, but also many of its members have extensive experience in planning and organising international scientific and corporate events. Over the years the Institute has formed many constructive links as well as having an active involvement with other Medical Societies and Colleges, nationally and internationally.

Mission:

Our mission is to promote excellence in the areas of patient care, professional standards, education and research in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

KEY PERSONNEL

Key administrators in RCPI who conduct work on behalf of the Institute include:

Institute Coordinator	Darragh Whelan	01 4853461 iog@rcpi.ie
Basic & Higher Specialist Training	Catherine Corcoran	01 8639 761 catherinecorcoran@rcpi.ie
Training Manager	Maria Golden	01 8639 711 mariagolden@rcpi.ie
Examinations	Virginia Cidfuentes	01 8639 707 examinations@rcpi.ie
Professional Competence Scheme (PCS)	Deirdre Donegan	01 8639 703 professionalcompetence@rcpi.ie
Applications to the Specialist Division of the Register	Siobhan Kearns	01 8639 720 siobhankearns@rcpi.ie
Training Site Accreditation and Trainer applications	Hollie Forde	01 4853460 hollieforde@RCPI.IE

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dr Cliona Murphy, Chair of the Institute

2021 began with many of our colleagues dealing with a national surge in Covid-19 infection and associated restrictions. It became apparent that the year would involve delivering clinical care, education and training in a continuing pandemic.

The Medical Leaders forum convened with the Dept of Health began in 2020 with a meeting of the Medical Leaders Forum taking place in January of 2021.

The key topic of discussion was “**Outbreaks and Lessons Learned**”, featuring presentations from:

- **Dr Lorraine Doherty** - National Clinical Director, Health Protection and Surveillance Centre
- **Prof Martin Cormican** - HSE Lead for Infection Prevention and Control.

Throughout 2021 the Chair met with HSE Public health and Education stakeholders regarding evolving advice to pregnant women. There was constructive collaboration with faculties of Public Health and Occupational health throughout the year.

National Immunisation Advisory Committee:

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) is an independent expert group that provides evidence-based advice to the Department of Health on vaccines, immunisation and related health matters to inform health policies in Ireland.

NIAC’s work includes reviewing the development and availability of new vaccines and vaccine technologies, assessing licensed vaccines and developing immunisation guidelines for their use in Ireland. NIAC develops and disseminates the [Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland](#) and advocates for best immunisation practices.

NIAC wrote to the Chief Medical Officer 32 times in 2021 with advice.

In April 2021 NIAC recommended that pregnant women were offered mRNA vaccination against Covid-19.

[IOG statement on NIAC recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination of pregnant women](#)

In August NIAC recommended mRNA vaccination at any gestation in pregnancy. It further recommended enhanced efforts to increase vaccine uptake in pregnant women and their close contacts.

<https://rcpi-live-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/20210902-amended-Recommendations-re-pregnancy-FINAL.pdf>

As Chair, I attended NIAC meetings in 2021 as the speciality representative. NIAC had six official meetings in 2021 with a number of secondary meetings throughout the year providing updates on guidelines which were circulated to Institute Members throughout the year.

Further to the work with NIAC, the Institute together with the Irish Medicines in Pregnancy service developed information sources for women and their doctors. These were endorsed by NWIHP and the National Immunisation office. A Q&A was developed as a collaboration between IOG, NIAC and endorsed by the Women’s and Infants Programme. The Q&A gave easily accessible information around vaccination in pregnancy and a decision aid was compiled. This information reached a wide audience with 20,000 views.

<https://rcpi-live-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/QA-for-pregnant-and-breastfeeding-women-about-COVID-19-vaccination-11.02.2022.pdf>

Throughout 2021 the Institute through the Chair and other members encouraged vaccination of pregnant

women against Covid-19. Media engagement involved national newspapers and radio to local radio. Collaboration with the National Women's and Infants programme and the National Immunisation Office led to digital and print information being supplied to women. The Institute also engaged with a group in Trinity the SciComm collective who developed digital resources for younger people counteracting misinformation on Tik Tok and Instagram.

In March I was delighted to contribute to the RCPI International Women's Day Meeting where women from many faculties shared insights from their professional journeys.

Engagement has been continued with the Faculty of Occupational Health/NWIHP and HSE regarding pregnant healthcare workers and covid. Engagement has also been continued with the HSE public health regarding pregnancy in the pandemic.

Educational Meetings:

Spring Conference, 06 March 2021

The Institute Spring Conference took place on Friday 06 March 2021. The event covered essential updates on women's health and nutrition. Guest speakers included Prof Helen Heneghan speaking on Obesity & Bariatric Surgery, Prof Fionnuala McAuliffe speaking on "Nutrition in pregnancy - A lifecourse approach to health" and Ms Fiona Dunlevy, Dietitian Manager, Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital spoke on "Enhanced recovery after surgery model of care (Gynaecology and Elective LSCS)"

Webinar Series

As with much postgraduate education the Institute had to pivot to online offerings and a number of webinars and online lectures took place to support CPD and trainee education. The Institute webinars will be covered under the Convenors report. Collaboration with other faculties and colleges was a particular positive feature of 2021

- Joint Webinar with Public health March 04 2021
- Joint Webinar with Pathology April 2021 Young patients and Sars Cov2

The ICGP held weekly webinars with the country's GPs and the Institute contributed when requested on updates relating to pregnancy. This was a valuable way of interacting with colleagues in the community.

Ah Chair, I attended ICGP webinars on: 10 March and 15 September. The Institute also contributed to the ICGP Community Gynaecology Course in December 202. A webinar was also attended on "Menopause and the Workplace – HSE workplace health and wellbeing" in September 2021.

Medical Council

The Institute met with the Medical Council to progress reaccreditation in May 2021. This meeting was to present the Institute's Action and Implementation Plan which outlined how the Institute plan to address the Condition and Recommendations arising from the recent Re-accreditation. Next steps in this process will be the completion of a Qualitative Annual return along with the Quantitative return for the IMC to report on our progress.

The Medical Council Consultative Forum met on 23 April 2021 and published a report in October 2021. The four high level themes from stakeholder meetings addressed in the report were: right touch regulation, building better processes, governance and accountability and strategic alignment.

Guidance

"Covid19 Infection Guidance for Maternity Services" was published on 06 May 2020 and updated. Prof Keelin O'Donoghue was author with wide contribution from other Institute members. The document is available via the link below:

<https://rcpi-live-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/COVID19-pregnancy-040521.pdf>

Position Papers

May 2021

A paper from the **Faculty of Paediatrics, Faculty of Public Health** and the **Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists** of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland highlights that despite improvements over the last 15 years, breastfeeding rates in Ireland remain below international targets. Cultural norms, knowledge gaps among healthcare professionals and lack of practical support impact on these rates.

The paper also affirms RCPI's commitment to hosting all meetings, conferences, and study days free from sponsorship from breastmilk substitutes in accordance with the WHO Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP)

The Institute engaged closely with NWIHP with regard to the speciality response to Covid 19. The National Advisory group for vaccination in pregnancy also had the participation of the Chair.

Other work involved the National Neonatal encephalopathy group, Guideline development and Obstetric haemorrhage. The Chair is a member of the Clinical Advisory Group convened by the Clinical Director of NWIHP Dr Peter McKenna.

Constructive engagement with NWIHP preceded developments in service provision in the areas Fertility services, Ambulatory Gynaecology, Endometriosis and Adolescent Gynaecology. Prof Keelin O Donoghue chaired the Letterkenny University Hospital Gynaecology Clinical Service Review: Implementation of Recommendations Oversight Group.

The HSE Clinical Action Forum for Termination of pregnancy services was convened in 2021. Dr Aoife Mullaly Clinical Lead chaired. A review panel of IOG members was compiled by the HSE for those cases declined under the Act. We await the findings of the review of the Health Termination of Pregnancy Act due in 2022.

The National Obstetric Haemorrhage Group

The Institute was represented on this group by myself, Dr Carmen Regan and Dr Bridgette Byrne.

National Clinical Lead

Prof Keelin O'Donoghue took up the role of Clinical Guideline Lead in early 2021 and will review guidelines and commission new ones. In May 2021 Guidance for maternity services was published.

National Neonatal Encephalopathy Action Group had contributions by a number of members of the Institute.

Institute Governance Review

Having commenced in August 2019, 2021 has overseen the near completion of the Institute Governance review. The review has been carried out by the Institute Governance Working Group, which has been chaired by Prof Sharon Sheehan. The findings were presented to the Executive and will be presented to the AGM in March 2022 prior to being finalised by RCPI Council. This review is part of wider governance review initially led by Ms Emma Cuddihy prior to her departure from RCPI in December 2020.

Appointments:

Examinations

Prof Mary Higgins was appointed as Chair of the O&G Examinations Board. It has been a busy period for Examinations with difficult challenges stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic.

A discussion is currently underway on the Diploma in Obstetrics and Women's Health (DOWH) potentially becoming a postgraduate certificate in O&G, and a proposal has been presented to Executive Council. Prof Higgins was appointed to RCPI Council in 2020 as the Institute representative having previously been Censor. In October 2021, she was appointed Vice President of the RCPI.

Convenor of Meetings:

Professor Donal Brennan took on the role of Convenor of meetings in July 2021. Prof Brennan has also joined the Institute Executive Council and is thanked for his planning of the upcoming Institute Spring Conference and AGM in March 2022.

National Clinical Lead for Guidelines in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Prof Keelin O'Donoghue took up the role of Clinical Guideline Lead in early 2021.

The National Clinical guideline program is a joint endeavour between NWHIP and the Institute. Within the Guideline Programme Team (GPT), Professor O'Donoghue is responsible for the review, update and production of national clinical guidelines in relation to Maternity and Gynaecology services. Ms Nicolai Murphy was appointed as Programme Manager. Together they have set out an ambitious programme of work.

A new guideline process has been developed; part of this process includes a multidisciplinary Expert Advisory Group (EAG), appointed at the offset to review guidelines prior to publication.

<https://www.rcpi.ie/faculties/obstetricians-and-gynaecologists/national-clinical-guidelines-in-obstetrics-and-gynaecology/>

In May 2021 "Covid19 Infection Guidance for Maternity Services" was published on 06 May 2020 and updated in 2021. Prof Keelin O'Donoghue was author with wide contribution from other Institute members. The document is available at:

<https://rcpi-live-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/COVID19-pregnancy-040521.pdf>

I am particularly grateful to Prof O'Donoghue for her advisory role in 2021 with regard to collation of international best evidence.

I wish to wholeheartedly thank all the members of the Executive who gave of their time and expertise so generously. Additionally, I would like to thank the Medicines in Pregnancy Service for their time and commitment and those colleagues in maternal fetal medicine who gave advice throughout the year.

I encourage all Members to become involved in committees and working groups. It is through an engaged membership that we can continue to shape our profession and advocate for our patients.

GOVERNANCE

The Institute is governed by an Executive Council. The Executive Council, alongside its sub-committees and joint committees of the Institute, acts as a vital source of information for those interested in obstetric & gynaecological issues in Ireland.

There were five meetings of Executive Council between January 2021-December 2021. The dates were: 14th January 2021, 4th March 2021, 27th May 2021, 23rd September 2021, 2nd December 2021.

Executive Council January 2021-December 2021:

OFFICERS	
Chair of the Institute. Institute Representative on the Forum of PGME Training Bodies, RCPI Executive Board, RCPI Advisory Committee, RCPI Fellowship Governance Working Group, RCPI CPD Focus Group, RCPI Recruitment & Retention Working Group, and Consultants Applications Advisory Committee (CAAC); Consultants Appointment Committee, Interval cancer audit steering group and Dr Murphy also sits on the Institute Governance Working Group.	Dr Clíona Murphy
Director of Training	Dr Suzanne O'Sullivan
Honorary Treasurer; Institute Representative on NPEC Governance Committee; also sits on the Institute Governance Working Group	Dr Sharon Cooley
Dublin Maternity Hospitals	
Rotunda Hospital rep	Prof Fergal Malone
Institute rep on RCPI Annual Verification Process Subcommittee; Institute Adverse Incidents Panel; Medical Council's TOP Ethics Group; Prof Daly is also a Co-NSD (HST) & co-Chair of the STC	Prof Sean Daly
Chair of Institute Governance Working Group	Dr Sharon Sheehan
NMH rep; and sits on Institute Governance Working Group	Dr Declan Keane
Regional Hospital Groups	
Hospital Rep for Drogheda / Cavan	Dr Etop Akpan
Hospital Rep for Mullingar/ Portlaoise	Prof Michael Gannon
Hospital Rep for Kilkenny/Wexford / Waterford	Dr John Stratton
Hospital Rep for CUMH / Kerry / South Tipp; Institute Rep on NPEC Perinatal Mortality Group	Prof Keelin O'Donoghue
Hospital Rep for CUMH / Kerry / South Tipp	Dr Nóirín Russell
Hospital Rep for UCHG / Portlincula / Mayo	Dr Nikhil Purandare
Hospital Rep for Sligo / Letterkenny	Dr Vimla Sharma
Northern Ireland Rep	Dr Richard De Courcey-Wheeler
Private Hospitals Rep	Dr Mona Joyce
Associate Members Rep; IOG Rep on RCPI Traffic Medicine Working Group	Dr Brendan McDonnell

International Fellowships	Prof Michael O'Connell Dr Suzanne O'Sullivan
Chair of the RCPI O&G Exams Board	Prof Mary Higgins
Irish Rep on RCOG Council; IOG rep on NPEC Perinatal Mortality Working Group	Dr Michael Geary
Institute Lead on Training Site Accreditation; sits on the Institute Governance Working Group	Dr Paul Hughes
Trainee Advocacy Officer (2019-); Communications and PR rep demitted June 2021; IOG rep on RCPI Professional Policy Group for GDPR	Dr Venita Broderick
IOG rep on RCPI Education and Quality Committee; Chair of the Specialist Education and Research Committee; IOG rep for Professional Competence; IOG rep on the Medical Council PCS Working Group	Dr Sam Thomas
Convenor of Meetings	Prof Donal Brennan
JOGS rep	Dr Gillian Ryan
Co-NSD (HST) & co-Chair of the STC; Clinical Lead for O&G clinical guidelines	Prof Keelin O'Donoghue
Co-NSD (BST)	Dr Azriny Khalid
Co-NSD (BST); IOG rep on Joint Forum / HSE NDTP Protected Training Time Working Group	Dr Etaoin Kent
President, RCPI	Prof Mary Horgan
Registrar, RCPI	Prof Michael Keane

Other Institute Representation:

Contact the Institute Coordinator at iog@rcpi.ie to ensure our records are kept up to date.

RCPI Trainees Committee	Drs Sorca O'Brien & Daniel Kane for Forum; BST O&G Representative Dr Valerie Julius
RCPI Annual Verification Process Subcommittee	Vacant
Forum Professional Competence Subcommittee	Prof Hilary Hoey (for all RCPI training bodies)
Forum Quality & Risk Subcommittee	Vacant
European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (EBCOG)	Dr Mike Robson & Prof Fionnuala McAuliffe
The National Obstetric Haemorrhage Group	Dr Clíona Murphy, Dr Carmen Regan and Dr Bridgette
NPEC Maternal Morbidity Group	Dr Bridgette Byrne, Prof Mary Higgins, Dr C Murphy
NCCP National Advisor in Oncofertility	Dr Edgar Mocanu
ICGP Reproductive & Sexual Health Committee	Dr Maeve Eogan
National Incident Management Team (NIMT)	Dr Peter McKenna
FIGO Clinical Guidelines on Placenta Accreta	Prof Donal Brennan
National Obesity Programme	Prof Fionnuala McAuliffe & Dr Jennifer Walsh
FIGO Executive Board	Prof Fionnuala McAuliffe
Massive Operative Haemorrhage working group and NOCA	Dr Naoime Burke
IOG Rep on NPEC Maternal Morbidity Group	Dr G. Méabh Ní Bhuinneáin

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

General:

A surplus of €52,609 was generated for the 12 months to end June 2021. This is €2,494 lower than last year's surplus of €55,103.

Income:

Total income (excluding investments) generated for the year ended 30 June 2021 was €152,709. This has decreased by €123,294 (45%) on last year mainly due to a decrease in Event, Event Sponsorship and Study Day income.

Income is classed under the following headings which are discussed in more detail below:

- Subscriptions and Admission Fees
- Event & Study Day Fee Income & Sponsorship Income
- HSE SLA Grant Income
- Other Income (Termination of Pregnancy Funding)

Subscriptions & Admission Fees:

Subscriptions Income totalled €45,688 for the year ended 30 June 2021. This compared favourably to the 2020 equivalent of €38,517.

In 2020/2021, 89% of Members paid their subscriptions, compared to 75% in the previous year. Admission Ceremonies were held online in 2020/2021, leading to income of just €670. While last year's Admission fees came to €7,900. This was due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Event & Study Day Fee Income & Sponsorship Income:

Covid 19 lead to the cancellation of most Events in the year ended 30 June 2021. No income was earned from events in 2020/2021 compared to €114,630 in 2019/2020.

HSE SLA Grant Income:

This relates to the SLA with the HSE to deliver training.

The amount of €71,251 SLA funding is the proportion of the grant relating to the Institute to cover the cost of overheads and administration costs. While this has decreased by €37,867 compared to last year, this is directly in proportion to the overall combined decrease in Overhead and Wages & Salaries charged to the Institute this year (€78,051 in 2020/2021 vs €115,918 in 2019/2021).

Historically the loss for the Institute (HSE Income less Cost of Wages & Salaries + Overhead) has been capped at €6,800 and the College absorbed the remainder of the overhead. This continued into this year, and the overhead absorbed by the College IOG accounts in 2020/2021 was €48,448.

Other Income (Termination of Pregnancy funding)

€35,100 income was released to the P&L in 2020/2021. Termination of Pregnancy funding received from the HSE, and offsets costs associated with that project incurred during the year.

Last year, €5,850 income was released to the P&L to cover project costs. Total funding received for this project was €350,000. We have deferred the balance of €309,050 to the Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2021.

Investments:

Investments held by the College at the end of June 2021 were €8,980,459 of which €99,951 were apportioned to the Institute. IOG Investments increased by 11% from €89,808 last year.

Costs:

Direct Expenditure totalled €72,614 in 2020/2021, a decrease of €70,548 on last year. This is mainly attributable to the lack of Events held this year due to Covid-19. Room hires and catering costs decreased by €43,657, while travel and accommodation saw a decrease of €15,728 on last year's costs.

An overhead recharge of €37,629 has been charged to the IOG accounts for 2020/2021. This constitutes 0.05% of the total College overhead. The overhead recharge covers rent, insurance, light heat etc., and covers the provision of the services of Finance, ICT, HR etc.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Dr Venita Broderick

Throughout 2020 the RCPI communications office received enquiries for information about various issues in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. We are grateful to our colleagues in the RCPI media department for their guidance and support in dealing with these issues.

The IOG has been particularly active in communicating and updating information regarding Covid19 and pregnancy as well as Covid 19 vaccination for pregnant women. Social media channels have again proven to be an effective way of communicating information during this challenging time.

The communications representative also encompasses the role of the Trainee advocacy officer. This is an important role which facilitates improved communication between trainees and the training body.

The advocacy officer is available to Trainees in Obstetrics and Gynaecology who wish to give feedback in relation to training programme and posts, training sites and curriculum. This position is completely independent from that of the role of the National Speciality Directors.

Trainees who have concerns may contact the Advocacy Officer about issues such as complaints of bullying or harassment that have not been dealt with locally, issues of sexual harassment or discrimination, training experience that falls short of that expected and issues related to the curriculum

The communications officer is the IOG representative on the RCPI forum subcommittee on Health and wellbeing. The committee aims to facilitate cooperation and exchange of information and initiatives relevant to physician health and well-being between postgraduate training bodies.

Institute Engagement:

Website:

- Information for women who are pregnant and breastfeeding about the COVID-19 vaccine, including a decision aid and a Questions and Answers document, received over 94,000 views, making it one of the most visited pages on the RCPI website in 2021. The information was viewed by people from all four corners of the world: from Australia to Vietnam.
- The number of visitors to our dedicated Institute page on the RCPI website increased by 41% in 2021; up from 15,637 in 2020 to 22,043 in 2021.
- Our joint statement with the Faculty of Pathology on Covid Placentitis issued on 13 April 2021 received over 14,000 views in 43 countries.

Social Media:

- The Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and its content consistently attracts high levels of engagement on Twitter.
- In 2021, IOG content was responsible for approximately 20,000 engagements on @RCPI_News (RCPI's main Twitter account).
- The @RCPI_ObsGyn Twitter account grew by 526 followers in 2021 and now has a total of 2,753 followers: growing by a rate of 30 new followers per month on average.
- In 2021, @RCPI_ObsGyn was mentioned 1,620 times on Twitter and the profile was visited approximately 15,000 times.

INSTITUTE STATEMENTS IN 2021

Covid Placentalitis: Joint Statement from the RCPI Faculty of Pathology and the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

The Faculty of Pathology and Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists alerted the medical community and the public to the link between Covid-19 infection in pregnancy and stillbirth and late miscarriage in April. Information was shared with national and international sister professional bodies.

Current clinical advice is for pregnant women to notify their treating hospital if they test positive for COVID-19, so as to ensure appropriate follow up, and to present early if there are concerns regarding reduced fetal movements. Pregnant women should continue all measures to avoid contracting COVID-19 infection.

Pregnant women remain eligible for vaccination if in a priority group and should be supported in making an informed decision regarding whether to accept or not. Vaccination of pregnant women can occur between 14 and 36 weeks.

A joint statement was released from the Faculty and Institute, below:

<https://www.rcpi.ie/news/releases/covid-placentalitis-statement-from-the-rcpi-faculty-of-pathology-and-the-institute-of-obstetricians-and-gynaecologists/>

A paper detailing these important findings has been accepted for publication:

<https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/doctors-investigate-several-stillbirths-among-moms-with-covid-19-68703>

Further correspondence was again issued in December 2021 again highlighting these links, with IOG members advised to encourage primary vaccination in pregnancy as well as timely booster vaccination.

The 6 cases are on a background of a total of 11 cases of SARS-CoV2 placentalitis identified in Ireland since the start of the pandemic. Results to date, from the baby's deaths, indicate a link with the B.1.1.7 variant of concern which may explain why this finding was not a significant feature of the 1st and 2nd waves in 2020. It may also partially explain why it is not a clear feature of COVID-19 infection in the international literature to date, which largely dates from COVID-19 cases seen in 2020. This condition appears to occur a relatively short time after contracting COVID-19 infection, ranging up to 21 days from experiencing symptoms. Maternal COVID-19 symptoms varied from none to moderate. Gestations involved ranged from 20- 36 weeks.

Obstetricians and Gynaecologists strongly recommend Covid-19 vaccination for pregnant women:

In August 2021 the Institute released a statement strongly recommending Covid-19 vaccination in pregnancy. It highlighted the increased risks of hospitalisation and intensive care in pregnant women who contracted the illness. The protective effects of vaccination and safety for pregnant and breastfeeding was emphasised.

<https://www.rcpi.ie/news/releases/obstetricians-and-gynaecologists-strongly-recommend-covid-19-vaccination-for-pregnant-women/>

CONVENOR'S REPORT

Dr Cliona Murphy/Prof Donal Brennan

Educational meetings continued to take place throughout 2021 with webinars continuing to replace in person meetings throughout the college.

The topics covered during the Institute webinar series included:

- 1) 3 February 2021 - Endometrial Cancer-A Growing Concern
- 2) 5 March 2021 - Essential updates on Women's Health and Nutrition
- 3) 5 May 2021 - Updated clinical guidance in relation to COVID 19 and pregnancy
- 4) 01 September Vaginal Surgery, How I Do It
- 5) 26 November 2021 - Junior O&G Society Annual Meeting

03 February 2021 "Endometrial Cancer – A growing concern" Presenters Included:

- Dr Claire Thompson, Consultant Gynaecological Oncologist at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital and Rotunda Hospital - An update on our most common cancer
- Dr Fionán Donohoe, Clinical Gynae- Oncology Fellow - 'Cancer patient to cancer survivor: Lost in transition?'

01 March 2021 Spring Meeting "Essential updates on Women's Health and Nutrition" Presenters Included:

- Prof Helen Heneghan – Obesity & Bariatric Surgery
- Prof Fionnuala McAuliffe - Nutrition in pregnancy - a life course approach to health
- Ms Fiona Dunlevy, Dietitian Manager, Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital - Enhanced recovery after surgery model of care (Gynaecology and Elective LSCS)
- Dr Eimer O'Malley, SpR in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

5 May 2021 "Updated clinical guidance in relation to COVID 19 and pregnancy" Presenters Included:

- Prof Barry O'Reilly; "Vaginal Hysterectomy - how I do it".
- Dr Orfhlaith O'Sullivan; Dr O'Sullivan's talk was on "Vault Suspension
- Dr Daniel Galvin; Dr Galvin's talk was on "Vaginal repair of prolapse".

14 October 2021 RCPI St Luke's Symposium:

In 2021, the theme of St Luke's was Global Vaccination. The meeting was held online and involved speakers from Infectious diseases, paediatrics, Inclusion medicine virology and old age medicine.

Obstetrics and Gynaecology was represented by Prof Chris Fitzpatrick and Dr Cliona Murphy

Prof Chris Fitzpatrick presented on a section including updates on COVID-19 and vaccination in Ireland and from our colleagues in Sudan, Zambia, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Malaysia, New Zealand and the USA

Dr Cliona Murphy presented on, "*Covid 19 vaccination and pregnancy - A Journey*" focusing on how the advice on vaccination and pregnancy has evolved with each wave of the virus.

Public Lecture:

Dr Murphy also presented a lecture entitled '*Unpicking the myths around vaccines and reproduction*'.

16 November RCPI Webinar Breastfeeding – Faculty of Paediatrics, Faculty of Public Health and Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Presenters Included:

- **Dr Meredith Kinoshita**, Faculty of Paediatrics SpR and Research Fellow presented on 'Breastfeeding advocacy and education'
- **Ms Sue Jameson**, IBCLC and former chair ALCI - gave a talk on 'Practical breastfeeding support'
- **Dr Sarah Brennan**, GP and Lecturer NUIG presented on - 'WHO code'
- **Dr Natalie Shenker**, Research Fellow at Imperial College London and Founder of Hearts Milk Bank spoke on 'Milk bank and research links'.

The JOGS Annual Scientific Meeting was held on 26 November 2021 and included presentations on:

- Two Orals sessions
- Poster Elevator pitch by Dr Mei Yee
- An update of changes to HST by Prof Sean Daly
- Prize giving
- JOGS AGM

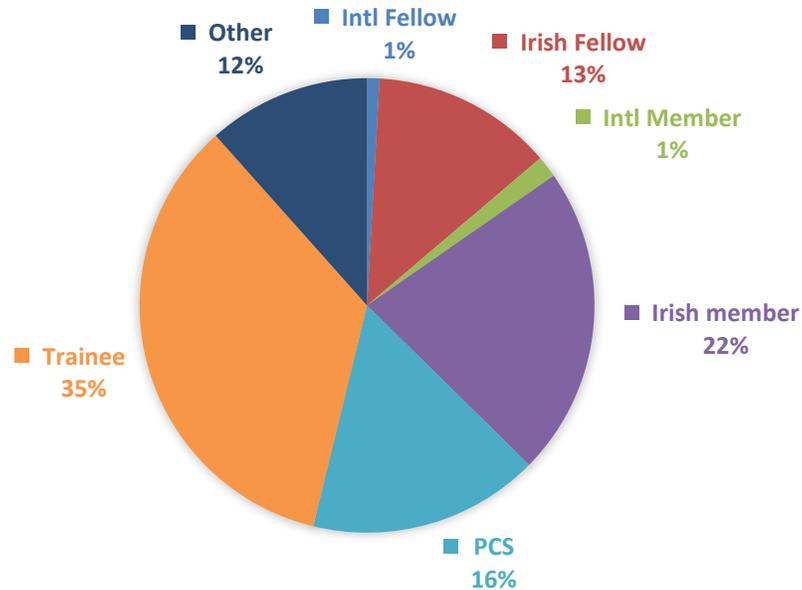
Institute Member Feedback on the webinar series:

1. 3 February 2021 – “100% would recommend. Very positive feedback re speakers. Liked the format of only two speakers. Continue webinars”.
2. 5 March 2021 – “Excellent speakers and good length. Again, webinars were valued over in person. 100% would recommend.”
3. 5 May 2021 – “Very informative. Continue with COVID 19 updates and webinars”
4. 01 September 2021 – “Excellent use of videos and questions at the end very relevant to trainees. Enjoyable webinar.”
5. 26 November 2021 – “Excellent and useful for clinical practice. Great presentation by all the speakers. Well done and thank you for organising”

Registration and Attendance

	Intl Fellow	Irish Fellow	Intl Member	Irish member	PCS	Trainee	Other	Total
03-Feb-21	1	22	6	59	55	81	42	266
05-Mar-21	2	22	2	40	20	84	28	198
05-May-21	3	32	2	36	32	54	9	168
Total:	8	117	14	200	149	314	105	907

O&G ATTENDEE BREAKDOWN 20-21



Conclusions – Key Insights

- All events received excellent feedback. Everyone valued the topics, themes and the regular COVID 19 updates.
- The Institute has been busy aligning their conference themes for 2021-2022 so that there is more engagement with the members, fellows and trainees and less overlap between faculties. Webinars were very popular due to attendees not having to travel but lots of requests to do hybrid style events or a mixture of some online and some in person once safe to do so.

NATIONAL SPECIALTY DIRECTORS' REPORT

Director of Training and Education

Dr Suzanne O'Sullivan

National Specialty Directors HST:

Prof Sean Daly and Prof Keelin O'Donoghue

National Specialty Directors BST:

Dr Etaoin Kent and Dr Azriny Khalid

Specialty Training Committee Members:

Dr Cliona Murphy, Dr Suzanne O'Sullivan, Prof Sean Daly, Prof Keelin O'Donoghue, Dr Etaoin Kent, Dr Azriny Khalid, Prof Shane Higgins, Dr Liz Dunn, Dr Hassan Rajab, Dr Nadine Farah, Prof Mary Higgins, Dr Michael O'Leary, Dr Tasneem Tamhendar, Dr Paul Hughes, Dr Gillian Ryan (trainee representative)

HST July 2021 – 2022

	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year	5 th Year	Total
Trainees in Clinical Posts in Ireland	15	15	13	12	12	67 *
Clinical Out of Programme in Ireland	0	0	5	6	7	18
Flexible Training/LTFT Training	0	0	0	2	0	2
Leave of Absence/Other	0	4	1	4	2	11
Total	15	19	19	24	21	98

*73 active posts with some posts having 2 HST trainees in 1 year

- 98 trainees on scheme including OCPE
- 36 (%) Dublin, 43 (%) outside Dublin
- 20/73 of active posts (%) in small/medium units (excluding Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick)
- 5 in Gynae only units
- 16 male and 82 female trainees on scheme (16% and 84 %)

Trainees on OCPE

1 st year on OCPE	2 nd year on OCPE	3 rd year on OCPE
8	7	3

Evaluation review

EYE	PYE	FYE	Total
85	9	4	98

All SpRs passed all assessments, with 1 interim assessment required.

Location of Trainees:

Location	Number	Location	Number
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Rotunda	10	Our Lady of Lourdes Drogheda	7
NMH	9	Mullingar	1
CWIUH	10	Mayo	2
CUMH/SIVUH	10	Portlaoise	1
Galway	5	Mater	1
Limerick	5	Tallaght	2
Wexford	4	St James	1
Waterford	3	St Vincent's	1
Portiuncula	1	Sligo	1

BST July 2021 – 2022

1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	Total
22	31	25	78

The NSDs coordinate recruitment, assessment, curriculum development and remediation for all BST trainees. The BST programme works with Hub Coordinators, where hub assignments are managed centrally. The Hub Coordinator works on behalf of the Hub and not the hospital in which they are located. Actual postings are coordinated by five Hub coordinators:

- Dr Nadine Farrah: Coombe Hub (Coombe Women and Infants Maternity Hospital, St James's Hospital, Tallaght University Hospital, Midwest Regional Hospital Portlaoise, Midwest Regional Hospital Mullingar)
- Dr Hassan Rajab: Rotunda Hub (Rotunda Hospital, Our Lady of Lourdes Drogheda Hospital, Beaumont Hospital, Cavan General Hospital)
- Dr Michael O'Leary: West Hub (University Hospital Galway, University Maternity Hospital Limerick, Letterkenny University Hospital, Mayo University Hospital, Portiuncula Hospital, Sligo General Hospital)
- Prof Shane Higgins: NMH Hub (National Maternity Hospital, St. Luke's Hospital Kilkenny, Wexford General Hospital, Mater Misericordiae)
- Dr Azriny Khalid: CUMH Hub (Cork University Maternity Hospital, University Hospital Waterford, University Hospital Kerry, Limerick Hospital, South Tipperary General Hospital)

From July 2020 year 3 of the programme has become national and is not allocated by hub.

Training Breakdown	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total
Evaluations	30	23	23	76
Interim Evaluations	3	1	3	7
Extra time on scheme	0	0	0	0
Withdrew	5	1	1	7
Leave of absence	2	0	3	5

Location of Trainees:

Location	Number	Location	Number
Portiuncula	1	Mater	1
Cavan	1	NMH	11

Beaumont	1	Our Lady of Lourdes Drogheda	6
CWIUH	10	Portlaoise	2
Connolly	1	Rotunda	10
CUMH	11	St James	2
Galway	4	Sligo	1
Kilkenny	2	South Tipperary	1
Limerick	4	Tallaght	1
Letterkenny	1	Waterford	2
Mayo	1	Wexford	2
Mullingar	2		

CSCSTs Awarded

Name
Dr Edward Corry
Dr Nikita Deegan
Dr Alison Demaio
Dr Catherine O’Gorman
Dr Fiona Reidy
Dr Sorca O’Brien
Dr Niamh Murphy
Dr Gillian Ryan
Dr Breffini Anglim
Dr Patrick Maguire

We wish to congratulate Dr Breffni Anglim in her recent appointment to a permanent consultant post in Urogynaecology in the Coombe. Dr Niamh Murphy & Dr Patrick Maguire have taken up temporary consultant posts in Dublin.

Dr Sorca O’Brien, Dr Alison De Maio, Dr Nikita Deegan, Dr Fiona Reidy, Dr Catherine O’Gorman, Dr Ed Corry are all pursuing post CSCST fellowships in Ireland and UK and we wish them all the best in their future careers.

Recruitment and Selection July 2021

BST

No. applicants	No. eligible	No. ineligible	No. shortlisted	No. interviewed	No. appointed	No. on reserve list
97	84	13	97	92	28	40

HST

No. applicants	No. eligible	No. ineligible	No. shortlisted	No. interviewed	No. appointed	No. on reserve list
29	26	3	26	23	13 (+2 in January)	10

Fellowships and Awards

Name of Fellowship	Location	Supervisor	Fellow
Aspire Fellowship: Integration of Fertility Care to the Irish public hospital system.	National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street	Prof Mary Wingfield	Dr Sorca O'Brien
Aspire Fellowship: Advanced Minimally Invasive Gynaecological Surgery	Cork University Maternity Hospital	Dr Cathy Burke and Dr Matt Hewitt	Dr Alison Demaio
COVID Post CSCST Fellowship in Maternal Medicine	Rotunda Hospital	Dr Jennifer Donnelly	Dr Claire McCarthy
COVID Post CSCST Fellowship in Complex Benign Gynaecology Management	Tallaght University Hospital and Coombe University Hospital	Dr Aoife O'Neill	Dr Fiona Reidy
COVID Post CSCST Fellowship in Obstetric Critical Care.	Cork University Maternity Hospital/ Cork University Hospital	Professor Richard Greene	Dr Aoife Morris

Hospital Accreditation

O&G inspections in 2021

- Cavan (BST) Jan 2021 – Virtual Meeting
- GUH (BST &HST) June 2021 - Site QI Visit
- OLOL (BST & HST) Oct 2021- Site QI Visit
- Sligo HST March 2021 - New Site Approval

Four sites are also looking for approval for new posts/first time approval. These are planned for 2022.

- UHW

- Cavan
- South Tipperary General Hospital
- UHK

Trainers and Trainer Project

There are currently 143 O&G Trainers

Trainer Project

- Refresher Course designed by Clinical Lead. This course is mandatory for all Trainers approved **prior** to 2019
- 8 CPD points will be awarded. Trainer status approved for following 3 years.
- Refresher Course piloted at two sites (one Dublin, one outside Dublin)
- Refresher Course will be made available to all registered (pre-2019) Trainers end of February 2022
- New 'Trainer Resource Hub' to be made available to all Trainers end of February 2022
- Presentations given to RCPI Executive & Council
- Visibility through 6 Training Body committees/ forums from Feb/ March 2022

SDR Process

Number of applications received	Recommended	Not Recommended	In progress
4	1	1	2

- Number of Written Reviews/Re-applications – 2 (outcome from these are 1 Recommended & 1 Not Recommended)
- A further 2 Recommendations were returned during this period for new applications received late 2020. Both where Not Recommended recommendations.
- IMC Review Hearings – 1 reviewing hearing held during this period with the IMC

Study days

BST:

Date	Topic(s)	Location
5 March 2021	O&G Spring Conference and Study Day	RCPI
5 March 2021	Medications in Pregnancy and Lactation Education Study Day	RCPI -Virtual
16th April 2021	Pelvic Floor Study Day	RCPI - Virtual

MDE IRELAND

Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists/HSE Joint Working Group

The Joint Working Group was set up in July 2007, and MDE Ireland, based at the National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre in Cork, commenced formal maternal death data collection for Ireland in January 2009 in collaboration with the long established UK Confidential Enquiry. The project is funded by the HSE.

Under the umbrella of NPEU/MBRRACE-UK based at the University of Oxford, statistics for UK and Ireland are now published annually, on a rolling basis. Topic-specific chapters, however, continue to appear every three years.

A report containing UK and Ireland maternal mortality data for 2017-2019 was launched at a virtual scientific meeting in November 2021. To coincide with this publication, MDE Ireland published Data Brief No. 5. All reports to date are available on the MDE Ireland website.

A meeting of the Joint Working Group was held in September 2021 by Zoom. The contract for the MBRRACE-UK programme in the UK has been extended to 30th Sept 2022, and it is anticipated that a new UK re-commissioning process will occur in the current year. We await the outcome with interest.

Mary Doyle stepped down from her role as Midwifery Assessor at the end of 2021. Mary was a valued member of the assessor team from the inception of the Enquiry in Ireland, and we wish her well in her retirement.

Thanks are due to all members of the Institute who have contributed in any way to the success of this project.

MDE Ireland looks forward to a continuing association with the UK Confidential Enquiry and NPEU/MBRRACE-UK.



Michael F O'Hare MD, FRCPI, FRCOG
Chairman

February 2022

REFERENCE

1. O'Hare MF, Manning E, Corcoran P, Greene RA on behalf of MDE Ireland. Confidential Maternal Death Enquiry in Ireland, Data Brief No 5. Cork: MDE Ireland, November 2021.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Growth in the International Medical Graduate Training Initiative

The International Medical Graduate Training Initiative continues to provide a route for sponsored overseas doctors to experience structured postgraduate medical training in the Irish public health service. It enables suitably qualified medical Trainees from the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) to undertake a fixed period of training in clinical services in Ireland. Trainees participating within these programmes are fully sponsored by their governments for the duration of their training. RCPI offers two streams of training under this Initiative, Clinical Fellowship and Residency training, and interest in these programmes has been building steadily since their introduction.

International Clinical Fellowship Programme

The International Clinical Fellowship Programme (ICFP) offers structured, curriculum-based specialist training at a senior level for doctors who are post-Residency and who wish to pursue higher training in their chosen specialty or sub-specialty. These programmes are now available in 35 specialty areas, including Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Respiratory Medicine, Rheumatology, Medical Oncology, General Paediatrics, Paediatrics Rheumatology, Paediatric subspecialties, Pathology, Public Health Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Palliative Medicine, Immunology and Occupational Medicine. In addition to offering Fellowship training in the general specialties, a new Special Interest Fellowship Programme has been launched, providing access to training at a sub-specialty level. Now in its seventh year of full operation, 115 Trainees have graduated from our Clinical Fellowship Programmes, including 8 in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and have returned home to embed their newly acquired knowledge and skills in health services in their own countries. This year, we have 56 trainees on this programme across all specialties.

The Institute currently offers four subspecialty training programmes including Gynaecology Surgery, Labour Ward Management, Maternal Medicine, Urogynaecology. Prof Michael O’Connell, Clinical Lead, and Dr Suzanne O’Sullivan, Director of Training for the Institute, are working together on recruitment and selection of the next intake.

This year, there was a very significant increase in the number of applications to the Clinical Fellowship Programmes in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, particularly in the areas of Urogynaecology and Gynae Surgery.

Clinical Fellowship Trainee Figures for 2021/2022:

Year 1	Year 2
1 x Urogynecology (National Maternity Hospital)	1 x Maternal Medicine (Cork University Hospital)
1 x Gynae Surgery (Beaumont Hospital)	1 x Gynae Surgery (Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital)

International Residency Training Programme

Our International Residency Training Programme (IRTP) is offered to doctors upon completion of their Internship. This programme enables doctors to complete Residency training in Ireland before returning to their home country with a Saudi/Arab Board equivalent qualification and Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. It is currently offered in Internal Medicine and Paediatrics.

Within the IRTP in Internal Medicine, there are currently 11 doctors in training in Ireland and an additional 15 doctors in the Gulf working to meet the requirements to start in post. We have 5 graduates of this programme to date, two of which have gone on to undertake Clinical Fellowship training with RCPI. The IRTP in Paediatrics, launched more recently, has 1 current Trainee and 1 incoming Trainee. Interest in this programme is growing and we expect numbers to increase accordingly over the coming years.

RCPI IMG HSE Scholarship Programme

The College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan's (CPSP's) working relationship with the HSE and the Forum of the Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies continues to provide a Postgraduate Scholarship Programme in Ireland for doctors from Pakistan. This allows doctors who are enrolled with the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Pakistan to complete two years of their training in Ireland. The Sudan Medical Specialisation Board (SMSB) has joined the CPSP in offering the programme in 2018 and their first cohort of trainees from Sudan completed their programme in 2020.

There is a total of 71 doctors from the CPSP and SMSB currently in training in General Internal Medicine, General Paediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynaecology – 5 in year 1 and 3 in year 2 for Obstetrics and Gynaecology. This year's recruitment is between 12 to 20% up on the 2020 level of 59 and is the highest number recruited to the Programme since 2015. In July 2021, 29 doctors from Pakistan and Sudan were admitted in the program.

Review of IMGTI:

There are arrangements to transition from the existing Joint Committee to the new governance framework of the Joint Operations Committee and Joint Senior Management Committee for the IMGTI and it is expected that the new Committees will be operational before the end of the year.

The National Framework Agreement 2021 recognises the significant contribution the IMGTI programme makes to the professional development of doctors participating in the programme, the ongoing delivery of patient services in Ireland and the development of health care in participating countries. In developing the National Framework Agreement 2021 the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies (PGTBs) and the HSE NDTP committed to supporting the further development of the programme through: Increasing the number of doctors participating in the programme; Expanding the number of countries approved for the programme and in particular the Scholarship programme and Increasing the range of specialty and subspecialty programmes to be offered.

Increasing Contribution to Global Health Efforts under the EQUALS Initiative:

The EQUALS Initiative is a joint venture between RCPI and the HSE that supporting training and equipment needs in less developed countries. To date, the Initiative has sent 12 shipments of decommissioned medical equipment from hospitals in Ireland to Zambia. The equipment was tested pre and post shipment by clinical engineers of the EQUALS Initiative, before it was distributed across the country to larger teaching hospitals and smaller health clinics.

Further to ongoing support of the new Zambia College of Medicine and Surgery (ZACOMS), the EQUALS Initiative worked together with RCPI to develop and deliver a tailored Train the Trainer course for the ZACOMS Faculty. In addition, RCPI has provided access to a suite of online courses to trainees on the ZACOMS specialist training programmes in Zambia.

PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS

Dr Ann O’Shaughnessy, Head of Professional Affairs

Restructure

This report is from the Professional Affairs function for 2021. The function has now been restructured and the departments have moved as follows:

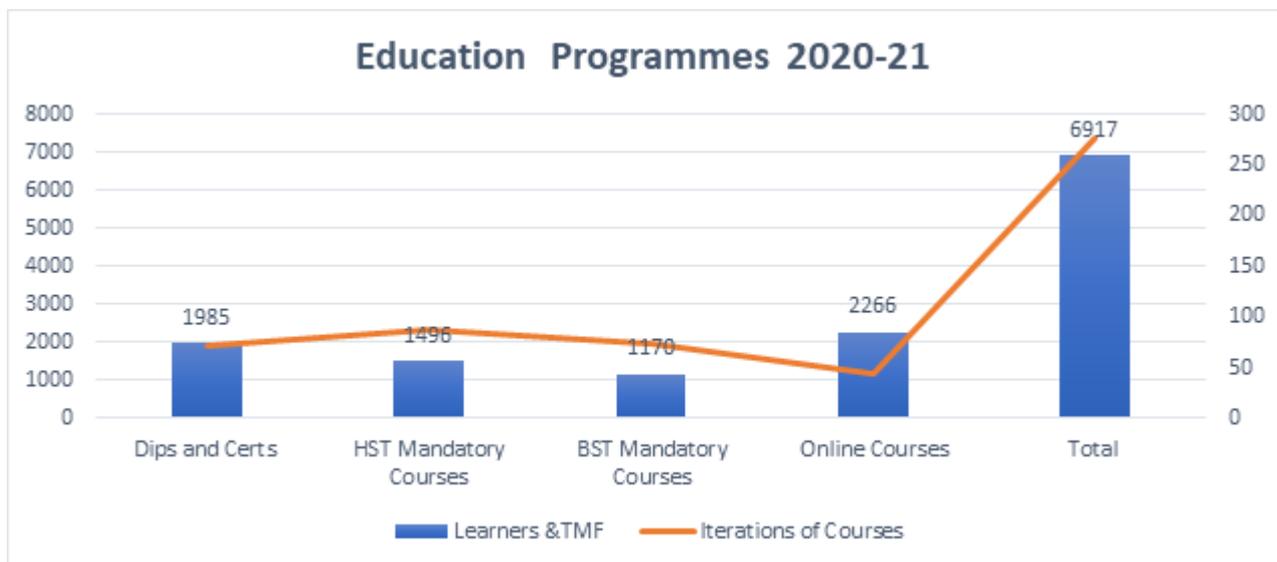
- Education Function – Education, Education Delivery (formally PMEC), Quality Improvement and Research
- Healthcare Leadership: Professional Competence; Specialty Quality Improvement, Traffic Medicine and NIAC

Educational Programmes and Events

The most significant achievement for Professional Affairs during the Academic year was a successful application to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). RCPI’s QA procedures were approved by the QQI Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC) for the scope of provision of all higher education award types up to and including Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications in the area of Healthcare delivered through face-to-face and blended learning modes. As part of this application RCPI had to implement several new governance structures including an Academic Board to oversee all education programme developments. The Academic Board has been established, meets quarterly, and is chaired by Dr Sinead Murphy. Following approval, RCPI has submitted its first programme for validation and hopes to submit further programmes at regular intervals throughout the next academic year.

A total of 276 iterations of workshops and tutorials were delivered in academic year 20/21. Several Diplomas and Certificates were delivered including those in partnership with iheed including the Diploma in woman’s Health. The iheed diploma partnership continues to be a huge success and a total of 668 learners participated in the programmed during 20/21.

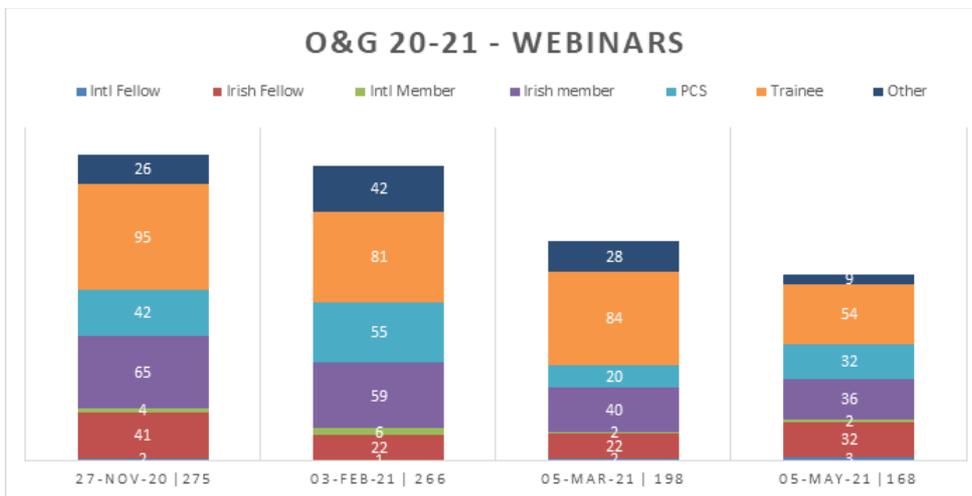
Our Quality Improvement programmes continue to be well attended and we added a new SAFE collaborative for adults in the past year.



A total of 276 iterations of workshops and tutorials were executed throughout the year.

There were no in person events held but the following webinars were run throughout 2021.

1. 27 November 2020- JOGS Annual Meeting in the AM and IOG and NPEC Reports in the PM
2. 3 February 2021-Endometrial Cancer-A Growing Concern
3. 5 March 2021-Essential updates on Women's Health and Nutrition
4. 5 May 2021- Updated clinical guidance in relation to COVID 19 and pregnancy



A total of 907 registrations were made for the four webinars, with a total of 573 attending. The November 27th webinar was split into two sessions, with the JOGS AGM in the AM and the IOG and NPEC reports in the PM. The highest number of viewers was 275 in the PM and 257 for the AM session. Fellows made up 14% of total attendees, Irish members and fellows made up 35% and Internationals were 2%.

CPD -SS

A total of 502 doctors signed up to the RCPI CPD – SS scheme which is the highest number since the scheme began. Over 200 doctors attended these courses in 20-21 which was also the highest level of engagement and attendance on courses vs previous years. Based on feedback from participants, we now offer the mandatory HST training courses as part of the CPD-SS programme.

Mandatory Training Courses

Mandatory courses specific to O&G and delivered in 2020-21 included

- BST Leadership Skills
- BST Communication Skills
- Ethics Foundation
- HST Leadership in Clinical Practice
- HST Mastering Communications
- Wellness Matters
- Ethics for Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- An Approach to Caring and Coping
- BST Workshop: Ethics, Prescribing Skills & Blood Transfusion O&G
- BST Family Planning
- HST Advanced Practical Skills for Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- HST Third- and Fourth-Degree Perineal Tears and Episiotomy
- HST Advanced Gynaecological Surgical Skills
- HST Minimal Access Skills

Other courses open to Trainees, Members or Fellows in O&G during 2020-2021 were:

- Diploma in Women's Health

- Cert in Essential Leadership for New Consultants
- Diploma in Medicine for Older Person
- Cert in Cancer Genetics
- QI in Action
- Introduction to data analysis using SPSS
- Physicians as Trainers – Essential Skills for Trainers
- Physicians as Trainers – Supervision and Performance Management
- Physicians as Trainers – Identifying and Managing Distressed Trainee
- Masterclass Series including the Advanced Masterclass during St Luke’s week
- Covid Webinars

There are also many self-paced online courses available.

Professional Competence

Summary of Key Activities in 2021

Compliance with Scheme Requirements

The overall percentage of participants across RCPI’s 11 Professional Competence Schemes who met the PCS requirements for the 2020 – 21 PCS year was 87%, which is a significant improvement on previous years 2019 -20 and 2018-19 where the compliance rate was 38% and 77% respectively. The individual Scheme compliance rates for the 2020-21 year ranged from 82% to 96%. The percentage of Participants in the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists who met the PCS requirements for the 2020 – 21 PCS year was 89% in the Specialist Division and 91% in the General Division.

The low compliance rates in the 2019-2020 PCS year reflect the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a major influence on the PCS requirements that year. The Medical Council were aware of the enormous and unprecedented demands on doctors relating to patient care resulting in limited time to participate in formal learning, travel restrictions and reduced time to record activities.

The Medical Council reduced requirements for that year and advised that Annual Statements would be annotated with ‘COVID-19’ to indicate that there were extenuating circumstances which prevented doctors from engaging in and recording the required CPD and Audit activities.

Submission of PCS Annual Reports to the Medical Council – 30 June 2021

The following 17 Annual PCS Reports were submitted to the Medical Council on behalf of our six training bodies on 30 June 2021:

- Qualitative Reports x 11 (1 per Scheme)
- Quantitative Reports x 6 (1 per training body)

Annual Verification Process (AVP)

The Annual Verification Process was undertaken for the 2018 - 2019 PCS year between September 2019 and March 2021. The extended period of this process was a result of pressures of the COVID-19 crisis that made it impossible for several Clinician Reviewers to complete that element of the process, so it was decided that it would be deferred until the initial crisis had passed.

Clinician Reviews were finally completed in November 2020 and Review results were circulated to doctors in December 2020 giving doctors with corrective actions a deadline to update their ePortfolio by 1 March 2021.

At the conclusion of the process, 144 (76%) of the initial group of 189 participants remain enrolled in a Professional Competence Scheme. Of these 144 participants, 67 (47%) have been verified with no further action required and 77 (53%) were verified with corrective action required.

As agreed with the Medical Council, Training Bodies will not carry out a Verification Process for the 2019 – 2020 PCS year due to the COVID 19 Pandemic.

The Annual Verification of the 2020 - 2021 year has commenced. 9 doctors from the Institute’s General

Division Scheme and 12 doctors from the Specialist Division Scheme have been selected. Selected doctors were notified in July 2021 and were given until 27 August 2021 to make any edits to that year before a snapshot of their data in ePortfolio is taken for review. Reviews are currently in progress.

CPD Event Approval

RCPI facilitates a process of reviewing and accrediting external activities provided by both RCPI and other individuals or bodies for the purpose of awarding CPD credits.

Outlined below is a summary of activity for the period 1 January to 31 December 2021:

Type	Applications Approved	Credits Allowed
RCPI	12	41
Non RCPI	293	1317
TOTAL	305	1358

Evaluation of Approved CPD Activities Provided by Other Individuals/Bodies

RCPI facilitates a process of reviewing and approving external activities provided by other individuals or bodies for the purpose of awarding CPD credits. During the period 1 January to 31 December 2021 RCPI approved a total of 293 activities (1317 hours) provided by other individuals or bodies. In line with the recommendations from the Healthcare Informed (HCI) Review of PCS, in March 2021 a new process was implemented to evaluate educational activities that have been submitted to RCPI for approval for CPD credits. When an application has been approved for CPD credit, a “Post Event Report” survey is circulated to Organisers and they are required to complete the survey within 3 weeks from the date their event took place. The survey includes questions that will allow us to compare the results to the initial application. An audit of survey results is carried out on a quarterly basis and the findings are reported to the RCPI Training Committee, the new governing Committee for PCS and CPD Event Approval.

Strengthened Model for Maintenance of Professional Competence

The Medical Council has undertaken a review to strengthen the Maintenance of Professional Competence Model (MPC Model). Dr Terry McWade, CEO RCPI and Prof Hilary Hoey, Director of Professional Competence, RCPI are the Forum representatives on the Working Group established by the Medical Council in 2020 in order to review and strengthen the Maintenance of Professional Competence Model (MPC Model). This review has resulted in modifications to the model established in 2011. The Working Group were asked to consider the MPC Model Framework, the Continuing Professional Development requirements, the inclusion of the Domains of Good Professional Practice and the monitoring and management of MPC compliance. In addition, they were requested to provide relevant examples of CPD activities contained in the skeletal MPC Model Framework.

The new strengthened skeletal Framework is entering the final stages of completion. It will require ongoing discussions regarding the implementation, the development of new clear and comprehensive guidance along with support relevant to enrolled doctors in each RCPI Faculty and Institute. It will also require investment in information technology relating to provision of new comprehensive guidance, ePortfolio development to facilitate the recording, monitoring and the verification process. The new MPC Model will be implemented during the 2023 – 24 PCS year.

Medical Council and AACME Review of CPD in Ireland

The Medical Council is currently working in collaboration with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (AACME) to develop CPD accreditation standards that aligns with national and international developments, thus ensuring the quality and scientific validity of CPD for medical practitioners.

The project entails a detailed consultation process with key stakeholders to gain greater insight into existing guidance and systems that deliver and recognise CPD in Ireland. The information gathered during this process will be used to inform the development of a set of standardised CPD accreditation criteria.

The consultation process consisted of a survey, followed by an interview with Dr Graham Mc Mahon, President & CEO of AACME. The survey provided us with an important opportunity to promote RCPI's strong commitment to lifelong learning and CPD along with its professionalism and excellence in the provision of world class training and educational activities. On 30 July we submitted one survey response on behalf of RCPI's six training bodies.

The interview with Graham McMahon took place on 12 August 2021 and the RCPI representatives were the President, CEO, Director of Professional Competence, Director of Academic Programmes, Head of Education and Professional Competence Manager. AACME provided us with 10 questions ahead of the interview which we addressed by way of a presentation. On completion of the consultation process with all stakeholders, AACME will submit a final report and recommendations to the Medical Council.

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Substantive Equivalence

In December 2021 we received a certificate from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada informing us that the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland's CPD Programme has been deemed substantively equivalent to the Royal College's Maintenance of Competence Program for the next five years (January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2026).

Substantive equivalency recognition means that Fellows of the Royal College who are living and practicing in Ireland can use the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland's program to maintain their membership and Fellowship with the Royal College in Canada without having to additionally participate in the Royal College's MOC Program.

Research

We conduct and support research in postgraduate medical training, health and working conditions of doctors and quality healthcare. We use this research to highlight problem areas, identify strengths and weaknesses, to provide direction and evaluate change in an evidence-based way. We strive to produce high-quality research in the field of health services research, particularly in the areas of medical education, health workforce and in healthcare quality improvement.

The following is a summary of our research activities in 2021:

Hospital Doctors Retention and Motivation:

The HDRM project is a HRB-funded research project led by Dr Niamh Humphries which focuses on the emigration, retention and motivation of hospital doctors in Ireland, supported by Dr John-Paul Byrne and Dr Jennifer Creese. In Summer 2021 the project commenced its fourth phase, investigating doctors' working lives on a day-to-day basis, particularly how COVID-19 and COVID-related changes have impacted the work experiences of hospital doctors, through remote ethnography. This utilised WhatsApp and Zoom to connect with participant hospital doctors who were invited to share their reflections on their day-to-day experiences of work. The data collected is currently being analysed by the HDRM research team and a paper on the remote ethnographic methods used has been submitted for publication.

In terms of dissemination, the project was very active in 2021 in communicating findings on a number of themes. These include a publication in the Journal of Health Organisation and Management entitled "I feel I have no voice": hospital doctors' workplace silence in Ireland." and a publication in Health Policy entitled "How the organisation of medical work shapes the everyday work experiences underpinning doctor migration trends: the case of Irish-trained emigrant doctors in Australia." Three additional publications were also accepted in 2021 set in the context of COVID-19 on themes of wellbeing, working conditions and emigration. These include a publication in BMJ Open entitled "...the way it was staffed during COVID is the way it should be staffed in real life...": a qualitative study of the impact of COVID-19 on the working conditions of junior hospital doctors.", a paper in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health entitled "We all really need to

just take a breath”: composite narratives of hospital doctors’ well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” and an additional paper in BMC Human Resources for Health entitled “COVID-19 and doctor emigration: the case of Ireland.” This was supplemented by an opinion piece published in The BMJ Opinion entitled “Recruitment, retention, and the covid-19 pandemic.”

Additionally, the team has been disseminating HDRM research findings via public and social media, national meetings and international conferences. At the close of 2021, Dr Niamh Humphries secured a prestigious senior lectureship in RCSI’s Graduate School of Healthcare Management where the HDRM project will continue in 2022, supported by Dr John-Paul Byrne. Dr Jennifer Creese who worked on the HDRM project for two years was also successful in obtaining a Lecturer position in the University of Leicester (UK). This reflects the PI successfully reaching a key goal of the HRB Emerging Investigator Award that funded the project.

Training Post Evaluation:

The Training Post Evaluation (TPE) is an anonymous online survey of all trainees (BST and HST) rolled out by RCPI in 2016. The purpose of the evaluation is for trainees to harness feedback on each rotation trainees have completed over the past year. In 2018 we produced a report based on the first three years of the Training Post Evaluation, comprising evaluations on 1,495 BST posts and 600 HST posts across 86 sites. Three years on, an additional, updated report is planned for 2022, integrating data collected in 2021.

Doctors Training Outcomes Research Study - RCPI longitudinal trainee study

The Doctors Training Outcomes Research Project has been established to review the training pathways in Basic Specialist Training and Higher Specialist Training on an annual basis. The project conducts anonymous review of the application, interview and training (rotations, annual assessment, MRCPI for Basic Specialist Trainees, etc.) processes, as well as the progression of trainees into their next career stages. The data gathered will allow us to create an on-going evidence base for continuous quality improvement of the main areas of postgraduate medical training within RCPI. Data collection and analysis processes were established using retrospective data in 2019. Annual data collection has commenced in 2020 and we will report our findings in 2022.

Supporting engagement within RCPI’s Professional Competence Scheme

This research project explores the compliance trends in RCPI Professional Competence Schemes (PCS) in order to identify factors contributing to meeting the PCS criteria and to improve the process and develop more appropriate Continuing Professional Development opportunities.

Additionally, we have analysed a survey of RCPI PCS participants, aimed to better understand attitudes, perceived benefits and challenges in participating in PCS as well as to gather greater understanding of educational preferences of PCS participants. Findings from this study were published in 2021 in The Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions entitled “Attitudes, Perceived Benefits, and Experiences of Engagement With Professional Competence Schemes for Doctors in Ireland: Findings From a National Survey.”

Research Collaborative in Quality and Patient Safety

The Research Collaborative in Quality and Patient Safety (RCQPS) is a unique collaboration between the Health Research Board, the Quality Improvement Division of the Health Service Executive and RCPI. Established in 2013, the collaborative identifies the most pressing issues affecting healthcare quality and patient safety in Ireland and allocates funding for research into these issues, knowing they can help drive improvements in quality and patient safety throughout the entire health system.

In 2021, applicants were invited to use a Quality Improvement approach to design novel interventions, systems, or processes to deliver care based on the needs that have arisen from the direct or indirect impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in Irish health and social care at one of the following levels:

1. service delivery level (e.g., older persons and frailty) healthcare organisation level (e.g., Patient and public involvement, staff wellbeing, trust and autonomy of teams)
2. population level (e.g., mental health, children’s development, public health).

Applicants were also asked to demonstrate how they intended to use Quality Improvement and Patient Safety science and methodologies in their research.

Two projects led Dr Roisin Cahalan and Prof Frédérique Vallières were awarded funding. To date, an

approximate €4 million investment in healthcare research has been awarded for RCQPS projects, with the results from the 2021 funding process expected to be published in September 2022.

RCPI Research Ethics Committee

The RCPI Research Ethics Committee reviewed 32 applications in 2021.

IOG Specific Research reviewed by the RCPI Research Ethics Committee 2021:

- RCPI RECSAF 147v2 Mary Higgins: The first 100 days: experiences and learning needs of first year trainees working within Basic Specialist Training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- RCPIRECSAF 160 Ream Langhe: An Exploration of the Experience of Surgical Skills Education amongst Junior Doctors in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. A Qualitative Study
- RCPIRECSAF 163 Valerie Julius: An exploratory study of obstetrics trainees' experiences of breaking bad news

RCPI SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS

Postgraduate Training and Education

Colm Small, Head of Function

Purpose

The overall aim of the Postgraduate Training and Education Function is to pursue excellence in all that we do. Key parts include the delivery and supports for training, examinations, accreditation and quality assurance / quality improvement, supports for RCPI's Faculties and Institutes, health and wellbeing as well as assessment and programme development.

The College and the PTE Function prides itself in being responsive and innovative. We are continuing to rise to the considerable challenges posed by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Faculties and Training

The purpose of the office is to support the key activities of the RCPI Training Bodies. It is responsible for providing high-quality administrative services to the RCPI Council, Executive, Boards and Committees of the six Faculties and Institutes.

The office is also responsible for the delivery of the RCPI postgraduate training programmes. The purpose of the department is to be a model for excellence and leadership in the development and delivery of postgraduate specialist training programmes, emphasising high quality service, efficiency, effectiveness and excellence in Trainer and Trainee engagement on behalf of the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the other five Faculties and Institutes: Institute of Medicine, Faculty of Occupational Medicine, Faculty of Public Health Medicine, the Faculty of Pathology and the Faculty of Paediatrics.

The office supports approximately 1,500 trainees and 1,300 trainers in the administration of our 29 training programmes. In terms of Obstetrics and Gynaecology this is the three-year BST programme and the five-year HST.

HST Completing Trainees

For the academic training year 2020-21, given that Covid-19 presented many ongoing challenges, we were confident that trainees receiving a CSCST in summer 2021 had met their curricular requirements.

BST Completing Trainees

Similarly, final year BST trainees met their curricular requirements for awarding of BST certification. End of year assessments were undertaken on time during May and June 2021 to allow for career progression.

Examinations Department

The purpose of the department is to develop, manage, coordinate and deliver the College's examinations both nationally and internationally. The College's Membership examinations have a global footprint. The department also develops and maintains the highest professional standards of examinations which have relevant excellence in medical care and are held at an appropriate time in a candidate's training.

Apart from leading in the development of virtual platforms and classrooms for education and assessment, the RCPI are the first training body in Ireland or the U.K. to introduce written examination by remote invigilation. Others are following our lead such as the Royal Colleges in the U.K. We have continued to successfully run our examinations by remote invigilation over the last year, ramping up to pre-pandemic examination candidate numbers from June 2020 onwards.

We are offering the same number of examination diets as we would normally have and we continue to support our BST trainees in their career progression while at the same time looking after all our international

and other examination candidates.

Remote invigilation is where a candidate sits the same examination (structure, format and length) online, but in a quiet, secure place of the candidates choosing. Instead of travelling to an examination centre and sitting the computer-based examination with other candidates, a candidate does the same test as originally planned, but at their own computer – e.g. at home or at work. Candidates are supervised remotely by invigilators throughout the examination. It is used now in many high-stakes examinations throughout the world

Clinical examinations by their definition are more complex given the elements involved and the logistics. We have clinical / OSCE examinations across a number of Faculties and Institutes and we also have overseas offerings in some Membership Examinations. These examinations were postponed in the spring and summer of 2020 but successfully recommenced in Ireland in December 2020 for Obstetrics and Gynaecology and we have successfully delivered other diets in 2021.

Assessment and Programme Development

The Assessment and Programme Development department has responsibility for the educational development of the College's postgraduate training programmes and the College's membership examinations as well as supporting their delivery. The work of the department includes the design and development of an extensive range of postgraduate medical educational programmes for doctors in training and for fully qualified specialists; the development of specialist training curricula and assessment methods and the on-going evaluation of all programmes and curricula.

Accreditation and Quality Improvement Office

As part of an overall approach to improving quality in postgraduate medical education and training, the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and its constituent training bodies are committed to a programme of continuous quality improvement initiatives. One such project is the Trainer Programme where we are rolling out a number of supports in an overall framework to better support all Trainers across the College. The project formally started in the spring of 2021 and has a Clinical Lead.

These initiatives are achieved through driving and developing standards in the quality of postgraduate medical education and training, ensuring improved standards are maintained, and delivering robust processes that will assure and engage the medical profession and the public about the standards and quality of postgraduate medical education and training in Ireland.

These initiatives, along with the recommendations from the Imrie Report, continue to form part of the overall strategic plan for postgraduate medical education and training. A key priority for this office is the establishment of a system of overall Hospital Accreditation. The first in this new model of Hospital Accreditation was successfully completed in June of 2021 and we will continue to roll this out across all of the College's training sites.

This office also supports the Medical Council accreditation of postgraduate training bodies and programmes as well as the assessment of applications to the Specialist Division of the Register.

Health and Wellbeing Department

Our health and wellbeing service is key for our trainees and the College takes this area very seriously. This department has a Director and a Manager. Apart from supporting individual doctors, this office is very proactive with various initiatives and projects ongoing at any one time.

MEMBERSHIP

New enrolments into Membership of the Institute

Enrolment on 05 March 2021:

Fellowship:

Dr Sami Farrag

Dr Ahmed Eissa

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 4 March 2022 - Spring Conference and AGM
- TBC 25 November 2021, JOGS Meeting and Annual Clinical Reports Meeting
- TBC 03 or 10 March 2022, IOG Spring Conference and AGM