



# EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER FORUM NEWSLETTER

*“Help us shape the way palliative care research is conducted on the island of Ireland. Let’s increase the impact together”.*

## WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR MONIKA PILCH

Dear Early Career Researcher Forum (ECRF) Members,

Welcome to the June Edition of the ECRF Quarterly Newsletter.

Following on from the launch of the ECRF Action Plan earlier on this year, we would like to share with you a summary of the Palliative Care Research Network (PCRN) Strategic Plan for 2017-2022. We work closely with PCRN members, who are committed to support early and mid-career researchers in the field of end-of-life and palliative care. Together, we actively discuss the most effective approaches to facilitating networking, collaboration, empowerment, and career progression.

We are excited to share our latest outputs. In a very engaging ECRF podcast, Dr Karie Dennehy discusses provision of palliative care to children in the community. In her blog, Dr Stacey Power Walsh draws on her research and highlights the key role of volunteers in providing support to parents after fatal fetal anomaly (FFA) diagnosis. Inspired by the success of an online peer support initiative, Dr Mary Nevin and Dr Cliona Lorton will facilitate next session in July.

The ECRF Quarterly Newsletter itself continues to prompt discussions and ongoing conversations with our members. Thank you all for sharing your views and thoughts with us. Please continue letting us know about your most recent research achievements (please forward information to newsletter Editor, [Dr Deborah Muldrew](#)). Help us celebrate your work and highlight it to our networks. Please feel free to [contact me](#) directly if you have any suggestions or would like to get involved in our work.

Thank you for your ongoing support and assistance.  
Let’s increase the impact together!

Monika Pilch  
Chairperson, AIIHPC ECRF Steering Committee

### Overview

Podcast by Dr Karie Dennehy on ‘Attitudes of Clinical Nurse Specialists in Community Palliative Care in providing care for children’.

Blog by Dr Stacey Power Walsh discussing the experiences of volunteers supporting families following a fatal fetal anomaly (FFA) diagnosis?

PCRN Strategic Plan Summary, including how ECRF members can make the most of their membership

Event highlight: ECRF Peer to peer support

Celebrating our members achievements

Follow us online at the [Professional Palliative Hub](#)  
Or on [Twitter](#)

Get in touch:  
Email the ECRF Committee [chair](#) or AIIHPC’s Palliative Care Research Network [Project Manager](#)



# AIIHPC

Early Career Researcher Forum

## ECRF PODCAST & BLOG



Dr Karie Dennehy is a Consultant in Palliative Medicine at St James' Hospital. Karie is a University College Cork graduate of 2006. She completed the GP Training Programme in 2013, and Palliative Medicine Higher Specialist Training in 2020. She has a special interest in Care of the Older Person, Paediatric Palliative Care.

### PODCAST

In the latest edition of our podcast, Dr Karie Dennehy shares her research 'Attitudes of Clinical Nurse Specialists in Community Palliative Care in providing care for children'. While a majority of the nurses studied expressed a willingness to provide palliative care to children in the community, they require support and collaboration from experienced medical professionals and specialists within the area of children's palliative care. They also require adequate education to enable them to respond appropriately to the needs for the children they care for. Dr Dennehy also shares her experience of presenting her piece of research and key messages for early career researchers. [Listen here](#)

### BLOG

What are the experiences of volunteers supporting families following a fatal fetal anomaly (FFA) diagnosis? In the latest edition of our blog, Dr Stacey Power Walsh reports on her qualitative research exploring the key role of volunteers (n=17) in Ireland responding to the bereavement care needs of parents following a FFA diagnosis. Her findings report both the challenges and the value within the role, as well as volunteers' own personal need for self-care and support. Findings illustrate the need for collaborative working between health and social care professionals and volunteers to assist them in supporting parents who experience a FFA. [Read here](#)



Dr Stacey Power-Walsh is an Assistant Professor in Children's Nursing in University College Dublin. She is a Registered Children's and Intellectual Disability Nurse with years' experience of caring for children with life limiting conditions and complex care needs. Stacey has a Masters in Palliative care and her PhD explored experiences of pregnancy with FFA



Our forum sits within the AIHPC Palliative Care Research Network (PCRN). In the [March edition](#) of our Newsletter, we highlighted the core objectives of the ECRF Committee. In this edition we would like to draw attention to the PCRN Strategic Plan for 2017-2022, which helps to shape our work.

The PCRN Strategic Plan (2017-2022) provides a framework for all those seeking to undertake palliative care research, from early career researchers to those leading and shaping international projects. Through this strategy the PCRN demonstrates its commitment to work collaboratively to strengthen palliative research, education, policy and practice on the island of Ireland and further afield.

The PCRN incorporates the Early Career Researchers Forum (ECRF), which is central to the Network's role in capacity building.

### Strategic Plan

- Facilitate the development of a collaborative and coherent research environment and culture
- Strategically support the delivery of outstanding, innovative, internationally relevant research on an all-island basis
- Develop research leaders and research capacity
- Facilitate the advancement of knowledge and practice for hospice and palliative care through interdisciplinary collaborations and meaningful involvement of people with life limiting conditions and their carers
- Facilitate the effective translation of knowledge on the island of Ireland and internationally, demonstrating the impact of research and development programmes on policy and strategic health priorities

### How you can benefit

1. Opportunities for collaboration and networking with other ECRF and PCRN members through PCRN symposium
2. Develop your knowledge and skills to support career progression by attending events specifically for ECRF and PCRN members
3. Support Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in your research through AIHPC's Voices4Care
4. Disseminate your research through blogs and podcasts on the Palliative Hub Professional and share your news through Twitter and the ECRF Newsletter



### EVENT SPOTLIGHT: PEER TO PEER SUPPORT

The ECRF hosted an online peer support session on 19th April. The aim of the session was to provide ECRF members with an opportunity to meet each other, talk about their research, share experiences and provide support to one another. Six members of the ECRF met and there was plenty of constructive and fruitful discussion particularly regarding challenges members face conducting research during COVID. Would you like to meet other early career palliative care researchers? The next peer to peer session will be scheduled soon. Registration details will be sent to members once confirmed.

Written by: Dr Mary Nevin

#### Feedback on the event

The screenshot shows a presentation slide on the left and four feedback quotes on the right. The slide text reads: "ECRF Peer Support Sessions are an initiative of the Early Career Researcher Forum supported by the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care". The quotes are: "Can't wait till the next peer support session", "Some great and usable advice", "A very enjoyable session", and "I found this session extremely helpful and informative".

#### Facilitators



**Dr Mary Nevin** is an assistant Professor of Nursing at Dublin City University. Her PhD explored non-specialist palliative care provision in hospitals. She is a registered general nurse and a Night Nurse with the Irish Cancer Society.



**Dr Cliona Lorton** is a Research Fellow at Trinity College Dublin, A graduate of Trinity College Dublin, she began her career in Palliative Medicine in OLH&CS and Blackrock Hospice.

#### Future events

**ECRF Peer to Peer Support**  
Date TBC [online]. Registration details will be circulated shortly

**Research Impact Seminar – COVID-19 and pandemic response in palliative care**  
30 June 2021, 2-3pm [online]  
To register, [click this link](#)

**Webinar: 'Health and Social Care R&D Doctoral Fellowship for Health and Social Care Professionals in Northern Ireland' –**  
6 July, 3-4pm [online]  
To register [Click here](#)

**Improving End of Life Care for people with Cardiovascular Disease & Heart Failure**  
7 July 2021 [online].  
For further information and to book your place visit [Link](#) or email [kerry@hc-uk.org.uk](mailto:kerry@hc-uk.org.uk) 20% discount available with code [hcuk20aiihpc](#)



## CELEBRATING OUR MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

**We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our ECRF members on all their hard work. Here are some examples of what our early career researchers have been working on:**

- Congratulations to **Brid McCarthy** on her contribution to the publication of a concept analysis of transitions during end-of-life care from the perspective of informal caregivers in [European Journal of Oncology Nursing](#).
- A new protocol has been published in [BMC Nursing](#), co-authored by **Anne Fee**, for a mixed methods exploratory investigation into the role and contribution of the healthcare assistant in out of hours palliative care.
- Congratulations to **Rachel McCauley**, who has published a systematic review and narrative synthesis on mutual support between patients and family caregivers in palliative care in [Palliative Medicine](#).
- We look forward to reading the new publication by **Stacey Power-Walsh** analysing the influence of media commentary on fatal fetal anomaly in Ireland, published in [Health](#).
- Congratulations to **Karie Dennehy** whose research 'Attitudes of Clinical Nurse Specialists in Community Palliative Care in providing care for children' was accepted as an oral presentation for the recent Irish Association of Palliative Care Education and Research Symposium. For more information on this topic, check out this month's ECRF Blog.
- **Deborah Muldrew** has recently collaborated with the AIIHPC on the relaunch of a Marie Curie funded educational intervention for palliative care specialists on constipation assessment and management. Details of the project can be found on the [project webpage](#) and [blog](#), and the [educational resource](#) is available on the AIIHPC Palliative Hub Learning Platform.

### Interested in sharing your successes?

If you would like us to share your successes through our newsletter, email updates, or twitter, please get in touch with our communications and social media officer, [Dr Deborah Muldrew](#). Information for Twitter can be shared at any time, but if you would like to be included in the Autumn edition of the ECRF Newsletter, please send your information to us before 1st September 2021.

### Get involved

We are looking for people who would like to support the work of the ECRF from the island of Ireland and are particularly interested in members who are based in Northern Ireland. Some activities you may be involved in include writing blogs, participating in our podcast series, and hosting online-based activities (e.g., webinars). Please contact the chair, [Monika Pilch](#), if you would like to get involved.