

9TH TRIALS METHODOLOGY SYMPOSIUM IRELAND

Trials That Matter:
Pragmatism, inclusion
and informativeness in
health research

November 13th 2025,
Kingsley Hotel, Cork



Co-funded by the
European Union

Register

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Trials That Matter: Pragmatism, inclusion and informativeness in health research

Time	Title/Topic	Presenter
09.00	Welcome (Tea/Coffee)	
09.10	Welcome from the College of Medicine and Health and UCC	Prof. Helen Whelton University College Cork
09.20	Welcome address	Dr Teresa Maguire Health Research Board
09.30	Designing trials with a pragmatic or explanatory intention	Prof. Merrick Zwarenstein Western University, Canada
09.50	Design and delivery of a pragmatic drug trial in emergency medicine settings	Prof. Siobhan Creanor University of Exeter, UK
10.10	From sidelines to centre field: public and patient involvement in the Enhancing Men's Awareness of Testicular Diseases (E-MAT) Trial in GAA Clubs	Dr Mohamad Saab University College Cork & Mr Alan O'Connor St. Finbarr's National Hurling & Football Club, Cork
10.30	Q & A	Chair: Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar University College Cork
10.55	Break (Tea/Coffee)	
	PhD Presentations	
11.15	Digital technology for clinical trials: Predicting outcome using digital technology for interstitial lung disease (PRODIGY-ILD)	Emer Gunne University College Dublin
11.20	Engagement and retention of PPI in clinical trials	Katarina Medved University College Cork
11.25	Methodological Guidance for Incorporating Lived Experience in the Early Stages of Core Outcome Set Development: A Scoping Review.	Marci Livingston University of Limerick
11.30	Biobanks at the bedside: Enabling inclusive, informative trials through real-world sample collection and data linkage	Dr Anna Michalska-Falkowska Medical University of Bialystok, Poland
11.40	Innovations in trial delivery	Mr Reamonn Madden Novartis, Ireland
12.05	Data integration and use of AI	Dr Hans Constandt FAQIR Institute, Belgium
12.25	Why and how to be pragmatic in pandemic preparedness	Prof. Karine Lacombe Sorbonne Université, France
12.45	Q & A	Chair: Prof. Declan Devane University of Galway
13.10	Lunch	
14.20	Enabling pragmatism - making trials more informative and inclusive	Prof. Shaun Treweek University of Aberdeen, UK and Uppsala University, Sweden
14.40	Pragmatic randomised controlled trials: strengthening the concept through a robust international collaborative network: PRIME-9	Prof. Elmır Omerovic University of Gothenburg, Sweden
15.00	Improving mental health in the workplace: outcomes and learnings from a cluster RCT in 11 countries	Prof. Ella Arensman University College Cork
15.20	Q & A	Chair: Prof. Merrick Zwarenstein Western University, Canada
15.45	Closing Address	Prof. Frances Shiely University College Cork

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Professor Merrick Zwarenstein
Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics,
University of Western Ontario, Canada

Merrick is a tenured full professor in the Departments of Family Medicine, and of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Western Ontario, in Canada. He received an MBBCh in South Africa, where he worked as a family doctor and health services researcher. He received an MSc from the London School of Hygiene in the UK, and a PhD from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. He has worked in Canada for more than 20 years, specializing in randomised trials (RCTs) of complex, non-drug interventions. He is an author of over 200 peer reviewed publications and initiated and continues to contribute to updates of the PRECIS tool, a guideline helping trial designers to match the design choices they make for their RCT to their intended purpose for that trial.



Professor Siobhan Creanor
Professor in Medical Statistics & Clinical Trials,
Director of Exeter Clinical Trials Unit, University of Exeter, UK

Professor Siobhan Creanor is a UK-based expert in Medical Statistics and Clinical Trials and Director of the UKCRC-registered Exeter Clinical Trials Unit at the University of Exeter. She has over 25 years of experience collaborating across diverse health area helping to secure in excess of £35M of research funding, and has been the statistician or senior statistician on more than a dozen major randomized trials and over 140 peer-reviewed publications. Her leadership of two clinical trials units and growing medical/health statistics teams has supported over 40 clinical trials in areas such as cancer therapy, emergency medicine, and mental health. She also serves on numerous trial oversight committees and is a peer-reviewer and committee member for major research funders, including NIHR. Professor Creanor is widely recognised for advancing statistical excellence and methodological excellence in clinical trials and mentoring early-career researchers, including statisticians, in multidisciplinary healthcare research.

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Dr Mohamad Saab

**Senior Lecturer & Vice Dean of Graduate Studies,
School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Cork**

Dr Saab is Senior Lecturer and Director of the Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology Nursing at University College Cork (UCC). A Registered General Nurse, he earned degrees from the American University of Beirut and a PhD in Nursing from UCC. He has secured over €17 million in research funding, including €7 million as Principal Investigator, and leads a €6 million Horizon Europe project using XR/VR to support testicular cancer survivors. He has conducted studies on VR and AI in nursing and medical education and produced over 200 research outputs on VR in health promotion, cancer awareness, survivorship, palliative care, and nursing education. With an h-index of 25, Dr. Saab has twice received UCC Research and Innovation Awards, serves as Associate Editor for two international journals, and supervises a number of PhD students.



Alan O Connor

**Senior Occupational Therapist,
St Finbarr's National Hurling and Football Club, Cork**

Alan is a senior occupational therapist in the mental health services on a team that specialises in first episode psychosis. Alan graduated from UCC in 2015 where he earned a BSc in occupational therapy. He then returned to UCC to complete his MSc in physiotherapy. Alan has a keen interest in sport, and currently works privately as a physiotherapist in a sports injury clinic. He plays senior Gaelic football with St Finbarr's National Hurling and Football Club. Alan was recruited as a PPI for the E-MAT Trial due to his involvement in the GAA.

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Emer Gunne

HRB-TMRN PhD Scholar, University College Dublin

Emer is a Health Research Board funded PhD scholar with UCD Clinical Research Centre. Emer completed Graduate Medicine UCD in 2017 and an MSc in Clinical and Translational Research in 2019. She worked as a Research Associate with Children's Health Ireland receiving the award for Research Paper of the year 2022 for her latest publication "An Estimate of the Cumulative Paediatric Prevalence of Rare Diseases in Ireland and Comment on the Literature". Emer is studying under the supervision of Prof Peter Doran (UCD School of Medicine) and Prof Michael Keane (UCD School of Medicine), her project is on the use of Digital Technologies in Clinical Trials.



Katarina Medved

SPHeRE and HRB-TMRN PhD Scholar, University College Cork

Katarina's doctoral research is focused on engagement and retention of Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) contributors in cancer clinical trials. Katarina is supervised by Prof. Frances Shiely (HRB Clinical Research Facility, University College Cork), Professor Patricia Kearney (School of Public Health, University College Cork), Dr Laia Raigal (Cancer Research @UCC at University College Cork) and Dr Alice Biggane (Pfizer, UK).



Marci Kay Livingston

HRB-TMRN PhD Scholar, University of Limerick

Marci Kay Livingston, DNP, MPH, RN, CHPN (she/her) is a HRB-TMRN PhD Scholar at the University of Limerick. With a BSc in Nursing from Louisiana State University – Health Sciences Center; a MPH from the University of Edinburgh, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice from California State University – Fresno, Marci Kay has focused her academic journey on understanding how individuals and groups define concepts such as well-being, health, and comfort. Her topic within the HRB-TMRN program will center on exploring the participation of people with lived experience of a condition/ intervention in the development of Core Outcome Sets. She is supervised by Dr Katie Robinson and Dr Elaine Toomey.

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Dr Anna Michalska-Falkowska
Deputy Director of Quality Management at the Biobank,
Medical University of Białystok, Poland

Anna Michalska-Falkowska, PhD in Medical Sciences, is a pharmacist with a specialization in clinical pharmacy and holds a Master of Science in Biobanking. She completed her professional and academic training at the Medical University of Białystok (Poland), the University of Alberta (Canada), and the Medical University of Graz (Austria). She also completed postgraduate studies in "Non-Commercial Clinical Trials - Design, Implementation and Management" at the Medical University of Wrocław, funded by a scholarship from the Medical Research Agency. In 2023, she obtained the Qualification in Biorepository Science awarded by the American Society for Clinical Pathology, USA.



Reamonn Madden
Innovation Capability Director,
Novartis, Ireland

Reamonn Madden is a member of the global clinical operations innovation group and leads the OneDCT working group within Novartis, leveraging over five years driving the execution of DCT elements in trials and over a decade in trial management and data management.

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Professor Karine Lacombe
Professor of Infectious Diseases,
Sorbonne Université, France

Karine Lacombe, M.D, PhD, is an infectious diseases specialist whose clinical practice, teaching and research are focusing on viral infections. She graduated from Pierre et Marie Curie Medical University in Paris and completed her residency in St Antoine Hospital, Paris and St André Hospital, Bordeaux. In 2006, she got her PhD in Epidemiology on HIV / hepatitis B coinfection and the determinants of liver fibrosis. She became an associate Professor in Infectious Diseases in 2007 and got a full professorship position at Sorbonne Université in 2016. Recent publications include results of phase 2 and 3 clinical trials in HIV, chronic hepatitis as well as respiratory viral infections. She is one of the international leaders in chronic viral infections and has been giving plenary lectures in all international conferences in infectious diseases. Since March 2020, she has been deeply involved as a clinician and researcher but also at a political level in the management of the Covid-19 crisis.



Professor Shaun Treweek
Aberdeen Centre for Evaluation, University of Aberdeen, UK
Department of Women's and Children's Health, Uppsala University, Sweden

Shaun is a health services researcher interested in efficient trial design, particularly around inclusive recruitment and retention and the effective presentation of research evidence. He led the development of the NIHR INCLUDE Ethnicity Framework, a tool to help trialists design inclusive trials, PRO EDI, a tool to help systematic reviewers consider equity in their reviews, and PRECIS-2, a tool to match trial design decisions to what the users of the results need.

He leads an initiative called Trial Forge (<http://www.trialforge.org>) that aims to be more systematic about how we identify, generate and use research evidence in making trial design, conduct, analysis and reporting decisions. Shaun is also an Editor-in-Chief of the journal Trials.

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Professor Elmir Omerovic
Professor of Cardiology,
Gothenburg University, Sweden

Elmir Omerovic, MD, PhD, is a Senior Consultant Cardiologist at Sahlgrenska University Hospital and Chair Professor of Cardiology at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Since 2007, he has served as Head of the Heart Group at the Wallenberg Laboratory for Cardiovascular Research, Sahlgrenska Academy, where he leads a multidisciplinary team engaged in translational and clinical cardiovascular research. Professor Omerovic is a board-certified cardiologist who received his specialist training at Sahlgrenska University Hospital.



Professor Ella Arensman
Professor of Public Mental Health,
School of Public Health, University College Cork

Professor Ella Arensman is Head of the School of Public Health, Professor of Public Mental Health with the School of Public Health, College of Medicine and Health and Chief Scientist with the National Suicide Research Foundation, University College Cork. She is Vice President of the European Alliance Against Depression and past President of the International Association for Suicide Prevention. She is Visiting Professor with the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, Griffith University, Brisbane, and an advisor for WHO. Over more than 35 years, she has initiated numerous national and international interdisciplinary research consortia on suicide and self-harm surveillance, intervention and prevention programmes for suicide, self-harm, depression, anxiety, and excess mortality among young people and adults with mental health conditions.

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