

Irish Innovation in Connected Health, Wellbeing and Ageing

Unlocking Knowledge Transfer Webinar Series

May 2021

In the latest *Unlocking Knowledge Transfer* webinar series, the panellists explored how businesses and researchers can collaborate to advance new technologies within the health sector to address societal challenges. The lively panel discussion looked at the role of digitalisation across health systems and how health data is transforming the sector.

The webinar was moderated by KTI's Elizabeth Carvill and the panel of industry experts included Martha Cahill, National Contact Point for Health, Horizon Europe; Dr Anne Coady, Head of Investigator-led Grants, Research Careers and Enablers, Health Research Board; Margaret Curran, Manager, Caredoc; and Dr Oonagh Giggins - Research Fellow, NetwellCASALA, Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Throughout the morning a number of key themes and topics emerged around the subject of connected health. Themes arising included COVID-19 and how connected health has progressed throughout the pandemic, the societal need for connected health, digitalisation, and public and patient involvement (PPI) in health decisions.

Speakers talked about how the COVID-19 pandemic has become a catalyst for Irish research to step up to address the needs and challenges to move toward community-based care. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of digitalisation across health systems and health data had already become a high priority for societies across the world, and indeed in Ireland. The pandemic has highlighted the key role that digital technologies can play in connected health, wellbeing, and design of age-friendly technologies for community services.

During the discussion, Dr Anne Coady emphasised the positive progress in patient care and including patients in the decision-making processes to take ownership of their own health with the support of medical practitioners. This helps to ensure patients remain in the community, or at home where is safe to do so.

Dr Oonagh Giggins looked at the digitisation of the healthcare system and how we adopt and use technologies to ensure the delivery of remote care. She talked through the fact that Ireland has an ageing population and how managing chronic conditions at home and out of acute care could be facilitated through the digitisation of the health sector for the benefit of all involved and such an evolution in patient care improves efficiencies across the entire system and in the care of patients.

One such example is the SMILE project. Margaret Curran explained how the project is a research collaboration between NetwellCASALA at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT), Trinity College Dublin and Caredoc, and is funded under the Slaintecare Integration Fund. The research collaboration empowers patients with chronic illnesses to manage their own care at home.

The SMILE project uses wearable and at-home technology to help over-65s with ongoing health issues to manage their own care at home. The programme came into its own during the height of the pandemic when many of these patients could not or did not want to leave their homes.

Irish researchers, businesses and the resulting technology, is becoming more sophisticated as we address societal challenges and respond to the need for a model of health management where

devices, services or interventions are designed around the patient's needs and long-term wellbeing of the individual.

“People are central to this research” stated Dr Anne Coady, as she explained how the Health Research Board works closely with people to produce the best in practice solutions, this is done through public and patient involved (PPI) as businesses and academia deliver a blended health approach.

As technologies continue to develop to enhance connected health, Martha Cahill encouraged Irish researchers and businesses to consider the opportunities presented through the Horizon Europe funding programme. Most notably, the potential to advance Irish health research and create synergies across Europe to tackle shared health challenges.

The team supports Irish researchers to navigate the funding opportunities available within the Horizon Europe Health Programme, a programme which focuses on helping citizens stay healthy in a rapidly changing society by promoting positive health behaviours as well as transforming the healthcare system.

The next instalment of the Unlocking Knowledge Transfer Webinar Series will look at Patenting for Business & Research. The webinar will take place on Tuesday, 15th June, where Michael Lucey (Director Purdy Lucey) will provide an outline the fundamentals of applying for a patent and the importance of this intellectual property right for your IP strategy. Mark Lyons (CEO, Hooke Bio) and Declan Soden (CEO, Mirai Medical) will outline how patented technology has become a key asset for the businesses.

To register for the next webinar on discussing the basics of patenting, click [here](#).