

## Training Attachment at the World Health Organisation, Geneva.

### Dr Ina Kelly

My interest in working at the World Health Organisation (WHO) began in my first year of higher specialist training, when the possibility an attachment there was first presented to the Specialist Registrar group.

It was a great privilege to avail of this opportunity, and I commenced my training post there in January 2010. Despite heavy snow throughout Europe, I took the car and ferry via Rosslare and Cherbourg and arrived safely in Geneva.

My trainer at the WHO was Dr. Claudia Stein, medical epidemiologist in the Food Safety and Zoonoses department who completed her medical and public health medicine training in the UK. The Food Safety and Zoonoses department (FOS) is in the Health Security and the Environment cluster and is responsible for a number of initiatives and programmes including Infosan, Codex Trust Fund, anti-microbial resistance in food and the WHO Initiative to Estimate the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases.

My first week in the WHO was unusual in that the Executive Board (EB) was holding its annual meeting that week. It was a particularly busy time for our department, as a food safety resolution was being considered by the EB and senior professional staff had to be available to answer member state queries. The resolution was passed at the EB and therefore was brought to the World Health Assembly (WHA) meeting in May.

The 63<sup>rd</sup> WHA food safety resolution *“supports improving the evidence base to estimate the burden of food borne diseases and the strengthening of global networks including INFOSAN (International Food Safety Authorities Network) and to improve the assessment, management and communications of foodborne and zoonotic risks in a timely manner. WHO is encouraged to continue working directly with FAO and OIE to strengthen public health, support economic development, and continue joint risk assessments through WHO/FAO expert bodies, and establishment of standards through the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius*

*Commission”.* ([http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/EB126/B126\\_R7-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB126/B126_R7-en.pdf))

This World Health Assembly is attended by 193 Member States, and the meeting is held in the Palais des Nations, originally built for the League of Nations and now the European office of the United Nations Organization. The food safety resolution was passed at the WHA and this resolution now gives the WHO its mandate on food safety.



Dr Ina Kelly and Dr Miriam Owens beside the Ski slopes in Crozet, in the Jura Mountains overlooking Geneva.

My main work was with the WHO Initiative to Estimate the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases. The Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) is the external advisory group to the WHO on the epidemiology of global foodborne diseases. The work of the Initiative is generated from the advice of this group and is mainly carried out by the WHO Secretariat. The aims of the FERG Initiative are to *“obtain reliable epidemiological estimates on current, projected and averted morbidity, disability and mortality of foodborne diseases”* and to *“provide countries with simple, user-friendly tools to conduct their own foodborne disease burden studies and examine the effectiveness of their prevention and intervention efforts”*.

My role in the WHO was to work as a Consultant within the FERG team on two projects. The first and smaller project was to carry out a systematic review of the components and tools for policy situation analysis. I presented the findings of my review at the FERG Task

Forces meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in March 2010 which was hosted by the Centre for Disease Control.

My second and main project was to carry out the Mid-Term Evaluation of the WHO Initiative to Estimate the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases. Our colleague Jane Whelan had been involved in the preparation of an evaluation framework two years previously and this was used for the Year 1 evaluation and was modified for use in this work. I will return to Geneva in November to present the results of this study to the annual Initiative meeting which is called FERG 4.

Working with new colleagues was one of the most enjoyable parts of my WHO experience. Although there were surprisingly few public health physicians in the FOS Department, the staff included other disciplines such as veterinarians and toxicologists and it was interesting to see how these other disciplines contribute to public health.

It also demonstrated to me the considerable benefits of public health medicine training as I was able to bring medical knowledge and epidemiology skills to other projects. I assisted with the interpretation and presentation of data on human milk bio-monitoring for persistent organic pollutants (POPs) drawing on previous public health experience. My training in statistics and communications allowed me to interpret research findings and communicate the results. I was able to advise on the interpretation of human H5N1 data notified to GLEWS (Global Early Warning System for Major Animal Diseases, including Zoonoses) because of knowledge of human ID surveillance and H5N1 and I also advised on the content of Infosan alerts and other reports. Working with people from all over the globe was fascinating; especially in terms of the types of tea and coffee they choose at break times!

My experience in WHO HQ was a huge source of learning to me. It is enlightening to see Ireland from an international perspective, in comparison with other developed and developing countries. In many ways we are achieving high standards and we have many advantages in global terms that we take for granted: for example collection of vital statistics, ID surveillance, food safety, temperate climate, and so on. I learned a lot about the complexity of burden of disease estimation and how useful this work is in the prioritisation of scarce resources in controlling diseases with the highest burden. I also learned about the need for much more active knowledge translation efforts from researchers, so that policy makers can make evidence-informed policy through awareness and understanding of the relevant evidence.

I made good friendships with quite a few colleagues in the department and plan to see some of them again soon. Early on in my stay in Geneva, I was very lucky to have a weekend visit from Miriam Owens who was only an hour down the road in Veyrier du Lac on the EPIET course "Introduction to Intervention Epidemiology, into Epi, 2010".

## Faculty of Public Health Summer Scientific Meeting, Wednesday May 24th/25<sup>th</sup>, 2010

This year's Summer Scientific Meeting was opened by the Dean, Dr. Patricia Fitzpatrick, who welcomed the participants. Professor Joe Barry then spoke about the important role of the Faculty in advocating on public health concerns, citing as examples the Faculty's contributions in the areas of tobacco control and more recently in the area of alcohol control.



Dr Freda O' Neill, Dr Brian O' Herlihy and Dr Triona McCarthy

The first scientific session on the usage and governance of health information started with two keynote addresses. The first was by Mr Gary Davis, Deputy Data Protection Commissioner, who spoke about data protection as a real or imagined barrier to the effective use of health information. Mr. Davis emphasised that the Office of the Data Protection is aware of the need to protect Public Health and wherever possible will try to work with medical practitioners in the best interests of the health of the population.

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Prof Joe Barry, Mr Gary Davis, Dr Patricia Fitzpatrick and Mr Peter Lennon.

In the second keynote address, Mr. Peter Lennon from the Department of Health and Children's Legislation Unit talked about the proposed Health Information Bill. One of the main purposes of the Bill will be to establish a legislative framework to enable information to be used to best effect for the enhancement of medical care and patient safety throughout the health service in Ireland. The bill will create an integrated system whereby personal health information is available across many care settings and transferable between clinicians and hospitals both public and private. This proposed National Electronic Health Record is expected to be facilitated by the introduction of Unique Health Identifiers under which an individual's entire medical records from all sources will be available under the one identification number.

Practical examples of good use of information were then provided by Mr. Steve Barron and Ms. Lorraine Fahy, both from the Institute of Public Health. Mr. Barron spoke about estimating the prevalence of chronic conditions in the island of Ireland and Ms. Fahy spoke about developing community profiles.

The second session was on Health Protection and had a major environmental focus with presentations on reporting radiation incidents, health effects of landfill and environmental odours and a public health response to flooding. A VTEC investigation in a crèche, an incident of human-pig and pig-human transmission of H1N1 and a survey of the effectiveness of H1N1 vaccination in Ireland completed this session

The second day opened with a session on public health involvement in health services. Drs Mai Mannix and Orla Healy gave individual accounts of public health input into reconfiguration in the Mid West and the South respectively. There were two presentations on cancer with Dr McCarthy describing how public health is

contributing the development of a Community Oncology programme and Dr Smith gave an insight into developing a colorectal screening programme. Prof Lyons (Swansea University) described early findings from an electronic cohort for children in Wales.

The next session focussed on improving standards of healthcare. Dr Madden (UCC) gave an overview of her report on patient safety and Dr Mulholland gave a preview of HIQA's new standards for safer better healthcare. This was followed by an update from Dr Shelley on plans for stroke services. This session concluded with a key note address from Prof Fahy (RSCI) on drug safety.

The final session had a health promotion theme with papers on salt, measurement of BMI in hospitals, adherence to secondary prevention programmes in primary care, smoking interventions in hospital, interventions in men's health and breast screening uptake. Dr Foley Nolan (Safefood) gave a paper on food poverty in Ireland and actions underway to combat same.



Dr Fenton Howell, Prof Ronan Lyons, Dr Pat Doorley and Prof Joe Barry

The poster prize went to Ms Caroline Delaney and Dr Elizabeth Keane won the Zachary Johnson prize for best presentation.



Dr Howard Johnson, Dr Peter Wright and Dr Bob McDonnell

### Faculty Board

A call for nominations to the Faculty Board was sent out on August 11<sup>th</sup> and 3 new board members have been nominated. The new Board members will be announced at the AGM on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

### Retirements

A number of our friends and colleagues have retired in recent months and we would like to wish them all well. Specialists who have retired include the following:

Dr Marita Glacken  
Dr Tim Jackson  
Dr Brian O' Herlihy  
Dr Freda O' Neill  
Dr Maura O' Shea  
Dr Patricia Prendeville  
Dr Beth Ann Roch



Dr Mary Kiernan and Dr Margaret O' Sullivan

### Specialist Training

There are currently 8 Specialist Registrars (SpRs) in the training programme. Dr Peter Wright is the National Specialty Director.

### Current location of Specialist Registrars July – December 2010

Name	Training Institution
Fionnuala Cooney	HSE North West
Fionnuala Donohue	HSE East
Sinead Donohue	HSE East
Jennifer Martin	Dept of Health and Children
Mary O' Riordan	HSE West
Jenny O' Hanlon	HSE South
Miriam Owens	UCD
Coilin O hAiseadha	HSE South East

## Annual Conferring Ceremony



Dr Catherine Lynch, Dr Patrick O' Sullivan, Dr Mai Mannix and Dr Orla Healy

### Successful Candidates 2010 MFPHM Part II

Dr Catherine Lynch

### Annual Conferring Ceremony

### Fellowship

Dr Philip Crowley  
Dr Orla Healy  
Professor Cecily Kelleher  
Dr Mai Mannix  
Dr Patrick O' Sullivan

### Membership

Dr Catherine Lynch

### Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training

Dr Breda Smyth  
Dr Jane Whelan  
Dr Eleanor McArdle  
Dr Ina Kelly  
Dr Catherine Lynch  
Dr Anne Dee



Conferring Group Photo May 2010

Front row from L-R Dr Catherine Hayes, Vice Dean, Dr Patricia Fitzpatrick, Dean, Dr Frank Murray, Registrar, Dr John Cuddihy, Honorary Secretary, Mr Leo Kearns, CEO. 2<sup>nd</sup> row from L-R Dr Peter Wright, NSD, Mr Karl Morris, Mace Bearer, Dr David Weakliam, Honorary Treasurer. 3<sup>rd</sup> row from L – R Dr Orla Healy, Prof Cecily Kelleher, Dr Philip Crowley. Back row from L – R Dr Catherine Lynch, Dr Patrick O' Sullivan and Dr Mai Mannix.

## Dates for your diary

### Faculty of Public Health Medicine Winter Scientific Meeting 2010

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010

#### Winter Scientific Meeting

Venue: The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland No. 6  
Kildare Street, Dublin 2

Please see the website at [www.rcpi.ie](http://www.rcpi.ie) for further details

### Faculty of Public Health Medicine Annual General Meeting 2010

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010

The Faculty's 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> December, immediately after the conclusion of the Winter Scientific Meeting. This is the main business meeting of the Faculty and it is your opportunity to hear from the Board and Committee Chairs about the past year's activities and future plans. It is open to Members and Fellows of the Faculty only. Any Fellow or Member of the Faculty, in good standing, who wishes to introduce a motion at the AGM should send it in writing to the Honorary Secretary of the Faculty not less than 30 days before the meeting

### Safe Food

#### 4 November 2010 Salt: Hard to Shake

New research into the dietary intake of salt and related risks to the Irish population

Venue: Clarion Hotel, Cork

Time: 10.30am – 2.30pm

### Safe Food

The good, the bad and the learning - evaluating obesity interventions

#### A workshop hosted by the All-island Obesity Action Forum supported by safefood

Date: Tuesday, 9 November 2010

Venue: Gibson Hotel Dublin

Time: 11.45am – 3.45pm

### HPA Training Day

Chemical Hazards and Poisons Division (Cardiff) Unit, HPA Training day

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010

Venue: Large Boardroom, HSE Estates Office, 2-3 Parnell Square East, Dublin 1

The focus will be on

1. Public Health Response to Acute Chemical Incidents
2. Land Contamination
3. Non-Ionising Radiation
4. Electrical Hypersensitivity

To register, please contact Rita Hayden at:  
Rita.Hayden@hse.ie.

### RAMI Section of Epidemiology and Public Health Jacqueline Horgan Registrar's Bronze Medal 2010

Meeting: 11th November 2010, 10.30 am.

Full day CME meeting.

Venue: Frederick House, 19 South Frederick Street, Dublin 2

The presentations for the Jacqueline Horgan Bronze Medal commence in the morning at 10.30am and the winner will be announced at 1.20pm.

Refreshments of tea, coffee and sandwiches at 1.30pm.

The afternoon session will commence at 2.15pm and the topic is '**Regulating healthcare to protect the public health**'

Speakers are:

Dr Paul Kavanagh, *Head of Professional Competence, The Medical Council*  
'Maintaining Competence, Maintaining Trust'

Dr Deirdre Mulholland, *Head of Standards and Methodology, HIQA.*

The meeting will finish at 4.30pm.

**Faculty of Public Health Medicine  
Summer Scientific Meeting 2011**

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2011**

**Summer Scientific Meeting**

Venue: The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland No. 6  
Kildare Street, Dublin 2

A call for abstracts will go out by the beginning of  
February, please see the website at [www.rcpi.ie](http://www.rcpi.ie) for  
further details.

**Annual Conferring Ceremony at 7 pm**

This important annual event will take place in the College  
on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 7 pm when Fellows will be  
admitted and successful exam candidates will be  
conferred with Membership.  
It will be followed by a Reception.

**Annual Dinner at 8 pm**

Fellows and members of the Faculty, and the admission  
candidates, are encouraged to attend the Annual dinner  
on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May with their family and friends.  
Venue: The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland No. 6  
Kildare Street, Dublin 2

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**We would like to hear from  
you:**

- If you have any suggestions or items of news that  
you think might be of interest;
- If you are organising a conference that would be  
of interest to Faculty members.

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