

#BeRCSI Bulletin 14 – Top 100 in Wellbeing, NWWD, Physical Activity & Mercer Medical Centre Team Spotlight

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to be sending the latest HR bulletin on National Workplace Wellbeing (NWWD) 2021, the second to take place virtually. The past year has highlighted that it is not a place of work that makes an organisation, but the people in it. Over this time, we have successfully managed to continue in our mission to educate, nurture and discover for the benefit of human health, supporting the national response to Covid-19 through our frontline colleagues and academic experts, getting our students one step closer to graduation each day and ensuring we maintained our levels of support services and operations through the most disruptive event to happen in our professional lives. More than this, we have shown how our strong culture of collaboration, support, humour and authenticity is something that cannot be confined to the walls of a building. This sentiment is amplified by the many new colleagues we have welcomed to the RCSI community over the past year, who, though most have yet to step on the RCSI campus, have exemplified the RCSI values and contribute daily to our mission and purpose. We look forward to the time when we can meet in person for a coffee – in particular I look forward to a face to face coffee in our 123 St. Stephen’s Green, Remedy Café (served by the wonderful Mihaela!). Until that time, in the hopefully not too distant future, we encourage you to continue to connect with your teams and colleagues, new and well known.

It seems fitting to announce on NWWD that RCSI has been included in the **Top 100 companies** in Ireland who are [Leading the Way in Workplace Wellbeing](#). This index is the first of its kind in Ireland, acknowledging companies that are leading the way for employee wellbeing and who, through their commitment to instilling a best practice approach, have made a lasting impact on their employees and on the business community. We are encouraged to be included in this index and hope it demonstrates our commitment to continue to support the health and wellbeing of all in our RCSI community. The Inspire Team have created a programme of events today focusing on our Physical, Mental, Financial Wellbeing. The full list of activities can be viewed below. We would also like to thank our colleagues, Professor Suzanne McDonough and Dr Aoife Stephenson from the RCSI School of

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Physiotherapy who have shared practical insights and information on how we can improve our Physical Health to mark NWWD.

National Workplace Wellbeing Day- Programme of Events today!

- **8:30am Full Body Blitz** with the RCSI Gym Team. [Link to join.](#)
- **10am Coffee Roulette**-connect with colleagues across the college. [Link to join.](#)
- **11am Pension Talk** with Willis Tower Watson. [Link to join.](#)
- **12pm Financial Wellbeing & Budgeting Talk** with Bank of Ireland. [Link to join.](#)
- **1:30pm Desk Yoga** with Michele. [Link to join.](#)
- **2pm Mindfulness Body Scan** with Dr. Pádraic Dunne . [Link to join.](#)

Supporting Your Physical Wellbeing - Moving More and Sitting Less

Most of us have heard the message that to stay healthy we need to move more and sit less. This message is reinforced in the most recent [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) recommendations](#). Professor Suzanne McDonough and Dr Aoife Stephenson from the [RCSI School of Physiotherapy](#), share some of their own findings and useful tips from their collaborators about how you can best enact this important health advice. Some highlights are below and you can view the full paper they prepared as part of our offering for NWWD with more information [here](#). Check out their [research twitter page](#) to stay up to date with their programme of work.

Many of us have lost our routine of travelling to and from work giving us fewer opportunities to be active so developing a new routine is a good idea. Remember, the biggest benefit to your health is going from no or very little activity to some activity! If your activity levels are very low, try setting yourself a goal of walking or doing some other activity for 5 minutes as briskly as you can each day. If you are finding it hard to get going, you could organise to go for a walk with a friend or organise a walking meeting to get away from the computer (in line with public health guidelines), or sign up for an online activity via the RCSI Sports and Social club or RCSI gym team.

Research by Professor Suzanne McDonough has shown that people with painful conditions such as low back pain, osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia, can safely increase their walking gradually in order to meet the physical activity guidelines and that walking can help to reduce pain levels and improve your day to day function, over time. In one of Suzanne's most recent clinical trials, walking seems to work better in people with greater levels of pain and disability due to their back pain.

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There is increasing evidence that, sitting down too much can be a risk to your health. Sitting for long periods is thought to slow the metabolism, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, blood pressure and break down body fat. As many of us are now working from home, there are some simple things we can do to reduce the amount of sitting we are doing.

Some tips include:

- If you don't have a sit stand work desk at home, place your laptop on a box or similar and try alternating between working standing and sitting throughout the day
- Stand or walk around while on the phone
- Get Up for Lunch and Coffee Breaks and try include a walk
- Use a smaller cup. You'll need to get up and go for a refill more often with a smaller water bottle or coffee cup
- Use technology- set a reminder for a scheduled movement break and get up every 30 minutes- 1 hour to break your sitting time or use the inactivity feature on your fitness tracker to notify you when you have been inactive/sitting for a prolonged period

This week's **Team Spotlight!** piece shows just how far we have come in the past year, even if sometimes it doesn't feel like it. We caught up with our inspiring colleagues in the Mercer Medical Centre.

Mercer's Medical Centre is the largest General Practice in Dublin city centre; we look after thousands of patients, including RCSI students and staff, from newborn to end of life care, and everything in between. Our team has always been busy and dynamic, flexible and good humoured, with many of us in post for at least a decade. We are also an active teaching practice, with two new registrars starting with us every 6 – 12 months, a new intern beginning their rotation every 3 months, and 4th year RCSI medical students joining us for clinical attachments regularly. All in all, we are kept going during a normal year!

In the most abnormal of years, then, our team spirit has been tested to the very limit, but we're still (mostly) smiling! We will never forget the 16th of March 2020: this was the day the HSE began its Covid testing service for anyone who fulfilled the testing criteria at the time, and General Practitioners were to refer patients for testing. As we expected a flood of phone calls, we hurriedly created an online form on our website to try ease the flow, in-person appointments were cancelled, and every staff member was now on Covid duty. The

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referral service crashed; the emails and phone lines were completely overwhelmed; but somehow we got through the day!

Since then, we have streamlined and adjusted like never before! Our adaptability and strong work ethic has stood to us as we have navigated rapid, sometimes daily, changes to the HPSC and HSE guidelines, changes to IT infrastructure, primary care's long awaited move to e-prescribing, virtual consults via telephone and video, and working from home, which is now possible for all our staff, something we never thought feasible for this department. This has been a game changer when balancing keeping our services available, efficient, and safe, with the needs of our families. Our Clinical and Administration teams have multiple (virtual) meetings and check-ins to ensure we are all kept current, and we recently upgraded our website to provide even more user accessibility, functionality and up to date information and support for patients and RCSI students, and to improve efficiency for our Administration team.

With the help of the Estates and Health and Safety teams, we refurbished the practice to ensure the highest levels of hygiene and infection control; a teaching space has been fully converted into a safe and spacious overflow waiting room; and one of our clinical rooms became an isolation room for any patients with respiratory or other Covid-like symptoms who need to attend for physical assessment.

We have worked closely with the Student Welfare, Covid Control and Student Health Centre teams to develop new policies and procedures, and to provide clinical follow up for students who are sick or who test positive on routine asymptomatic screen, and to answer any questions. We have also worked with the Department of Nursing and the Faculty of Nursing who kindly helped us to manage check-in calls to Covid-positive students and to contact trace when necessary. We have provided weekend and bank holiday cover for Covid enquiries since March 2020, particularly for RCSI students and staff who might contact us out of hours.

Our most recent logistical challenge is one we have welcomed with open arms: the administration of Covid vaccines. Again, parameters and criteria are changing weekly, and we have to adjust and adapt to suit. We have been receiving limited stocks of the Pfizer vaccine Cominarty since March 2021 for our most vulnerable patients, every two weeks. As most of you know, this is a fragile vaccine with a very short life (five days from when it leaves the super freezer, and six hours from when it is reconstituted), so when we receive notice of delivery, a clinic is quickly set up, patients are contacted and booked in, and vaccines are administered, strictly in line with HSE guidelines. To date, we have administered close to 500 vaccines, with a good number of our over 70 patients now fully vaccinated. This is, of course, alongside providing our usual General Practice services!

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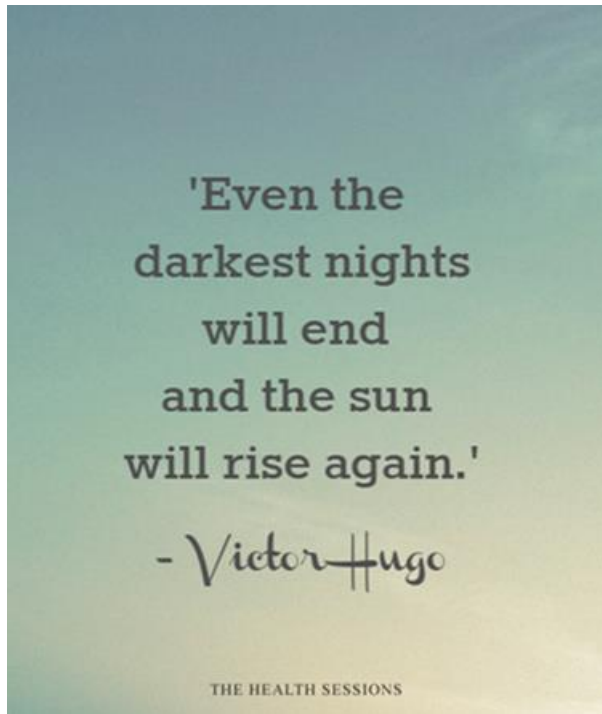
All in all, 2020/2021 has been an extremely challenging year for us; but, we are very proud of how our Team has risen to this challenge. We look forward to the continued rollout of vaccines, and a gradual return to “normal”. We’ll never go back to paper scripts, but it will be nice to have more patients coming into the Practice, when it’s safe to do so!

Mercer Medical Team - Dr Kilian McGrogan, Dr Alan O’Donohoe, Dr Judith Kavanagh, Dr Una O’Neill, Dr Orlaith O’Daly, Dr Philip Soden, Dr Aileen McCarthy, Dr Gerard Lavelle, Dr Ciara Cronin, Dr Naim Omar ANP Carol Kelly, Nurse Sharon O’Dea, Nurse Fely Castillo, Nurse Joanne Walsh, Nurse Jennifer Molony, Nurse Sandra McHugh, Veronica Quadu, Clair Sammon-Cahill, Natasha Premjee, Christine Ryder , Charlotte Middleditch, Grainne Browne, Elizabeth Kavanagh, Hayley Cahill



Commendations to those participating in the [Darkness Into Light campaign](#) committing to walk, run or swim for sunrise on May 8th. A timely reminder below.

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As always, take care and look after yourself and each other,

Barry and the HR Team

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