



Report from UK Student Health Association **Conference 2018**

The 2018 UK Student Health Association (UK SHA) Conference took place from the 1st – 4th July in the lovely and welcoming surrounds of the University of Liverpool. President, Laura Tully, and PRO, Dr. Eoin Mac Donncha, attended the conference on behalf of the Irish Student Health Association.

The Conference was opened by Executive PVC Fiona Beveridge and Diane Exley, who welcomed all the enthusiastic delegates who had travelled from all over of the UK and beyond to attend the conference. They spoke about the work being done in conjunction with Univesities UK and AMOSHE to link and integrate services looking after the health and the general needs of students, to improve their overall health and wellbeing. In particular, they spoke of the fantastic research and report, produced in relation to physical and sexual violence, and the Univesities UK Guidance on creating and promoting safer campuses and implementing a code of conduct for the student body. (Interesting/useful links: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/changing-the-culture-final-report.aspx>)

The incoming UK SHA President, Dr Gregor Murdoch, provided an engaging and entertaining inaugural address, telling the tale of his path through life and medicine, which ultimately led him to his present student health post at Stirling University. He spoke in particular of the importance of how the vital work being carried out by practices who provide student-specific services needed to be acknowledged, supported and adequately resourced by the powers-that-be in both the Universities and in the National Health Service.

The first of the workshops attended on Day 1 of the conference was on ADHD in Primary Care. Dr Peter Mason, Consultant Psychiatrist, gave a run down of the prevalence of ADHD and the significant issues related to the condition, including increased mortality rate, reduced completion of third level education, increased risks of unemployment/involvement in crime/substance abuse, thereby highlighting the importance of diagnosis and appropriate treatment. He detailed the various medication options recommended under the NICE guidelines and their effectiveness and potential adverse effects.

(Interesting/useful links: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87>)

Drawing on his experience of treating students for over 10 years in Liverpool, Dr. Oliver Lutte delivered a lively engaging workshop on 'Managing common student sports injuries'. As well as learning about how to

help our students avoid sports injuries, we learned how to gain confidence in managing students presenting with such injuries. Participants in this workshop also learned the secrets of how to run couch to 400K.

Dr Nihara Krause, Clinical Psychologist then presented on 'The overlooked Eating Disorders'. She provided an excellent overview of less well known but relatively common conditions such as Avoidant Restrictive Intake Disorder (ARFID), Other Specified Feeding & Eating Disorders (OSFED), Purging Disorder, Night Eating Syndrome, Orthorexia, Anorexia Athletica & Muscle Dysmorphic Disorder.

(Interesting/useful links: <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n809.pdf&ver=1405> and <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/national-clinical-programme-for-eating-disorders/ed-moc.pdf>)

Following lunch, Dr Ash Alam, Consultant Gynaecologist, delivered a talk on Abnormal Vaginal Bleeding in Young Women. He focused in particular on the importance of always outruling pregnancy and of carrying out an adequate examination. He stressed how post-coital bleeding was the most significant symptom to take note of in relation abnormal vaginal bleeding and that this always warranted examination and investigation to outrule sexually transmitted infection or cervical pathology. He addressed options for adjusting hormonal contraception and investigation to outrule various other causes of abnormal bleeding.

(Interesting/useful links: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/436924/doh-guidelines-young-women.pdf)

Tim Blackstone, Psychosexual Therapist, wrapped up the workshops on Day 1 as he spoke about Sexual Dysfunction Disorders in both males and females, and specifically in relation to the impact that modern society, social media, internet access, porn and drug use have had on the prevalence and severity of these symptoms and conditions amongst young in the modern world. He also touched on the growing problems related to chemsex. He advised on the importance for healthcare professionals to listen attentively to the patients who present, to always show respect and be non-judgemental, to seek to educate on normal sexual health and behaviour, and to signpost and refer to appropriate support services. (Interesting/useful links: <http://sexpression.org.uk/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhFE5WMRoZo>)

Later that evening, following a break to enable all the delegates to refresh themselves after a long and extremely warm day, we were treated to a beautiful meal in the relaxed surrounds of EGO Restaurant, just a short walk from our accommodation at the University of Liverpool.

Day 2 then kicked off with Psychologist and former Midwife, Dr Emma Mathews, giving a fantastic presentation on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She described how the most recent DSM-V definition stated that PTSD could arise in anyone exposed to death/threatened death, actual/threatened serious injury or actual/threatened sexual violence. She detailed how young adults/students were at increased risk compared to the general population, with over 4% being victims of violence each year and how females were 3 times as likely as males to suffer sexual assault and that nearly two-thirds of these victims would suffer PTSD as a consequence. She went through the various psychological and physical reactions that people can experience due to PTSD. An overview was given of the various recommended

pharmacological options, as well as in-depth description of the methods used and the benefits of Trauma-Focused CBT and Eye Movement Desensitisation & Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. She finished referencing a basic PTSD assessment tool for healthcare professionals in primary care, the 'PC-PTSD', which if positive could then be followed up with the more detailed PCL-5 questionnaire.

(Interesting/useful links: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/screens/pc-ptsd.asp> and https://www.mirecc.va.gov/cih-visn2/Documents/Clinical/PCL-5_with_Info_Sheet.pdf)

Dr Emma Mathews subsequently provided a second workshop on 'Common Sexual Problems in Students'. She presented on the DSM-V definitions and formal diagnostic criteria for the various Sexual/Psychosexual Disorders with which students can present, including Primary & Secondary Erectile Dysfunction, Ejaculatory Disorders, Sexually Compulsive & Addictive Disorders and Genitopelvic Pain Disorders (previously and more commonly known as Dyspareunia/Vaginismus). She listed the precipitating and maintaining factors for these various problems and different practical management measures or psychological interventions that can be used to try to deal with and overcome them.

A large crowd gathered for one of the final workshops, titled 'The Importance of Good Sleep', which was led by Dr Paul Reading, Consultant Neurologist with a special interest in sleep disorders and President of the British Sleep Society. He began by describing the constituent phases of normal sleep and the particularly vital slow-wave sleep, of which we need approximately 90 minutes per night. He outlined the various physiological functions of sleep and how much sleep is needed at various stages in life, with students ideally needing 7-9 hours per night. The serious impact of inadequate sleep on our physical and psychological health, both in the short and long-term were then highlighted. Various drugs which impair sleep and the best pharmacological treatments to manage insomnia were then listed and discussed. Dr Reading described his preference for Melatonin, or Agomelatine if seeking to concurrently treat both depressive disorder and insomnia.

The educational component of the conference was brought to a close with an inspirational lecture from Richard Lawrence, a former Captain in the British Army and veteran of Afghanistan, who gave a presentation on 'Being Battle Ready', in which he focused on harnessing and developing resilience and discipline in order to improve management and leadership skills when under pressure and faced with difficult situations in our work environment.

A significant highlight from the conference was the presence of two workshop presentations from the field of Irish Student Health. Dr Michael Byrne of UCC discussed the REACT Project as a method to tackle alcohol related harm across 3rd level institutions, while there was a presentation from NUI Galway on the significant beneficial impact their recently appointed Mental Health Support Worker has had on the lives of students, both from a personal and academic perspective.

The Conference concluded with a lovely social evening with a Black Tie Annual Dinner hosted in the historic and atmospheric Crypt Hall, below Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, followed by some dancing until the late hours of the night to the lively and broad range of music provided by a fantastic 2-piece local Liverpoolian band, The Cubans.

The Conference overall provided a truly wonderful combined educational and social experience, and we are hopeful that we may have succeeded in enticing some of our UK colleagues to make the reciprocal journey to visit our ISHA Conference in 2019!

Copies of the various presentations and workshops from the UK Student Health Association 2018 Conference will be posted on the ISHA website, once these are made available to us by our colleagues in the UK SHA.