

AllCaN Oesophageal Newsletter

March 2025



Welcome Message

Dear AllCaN Oesophageal Community,

I am delighted to welcome you all to the very first edition of the AllCaN Oesophageal newsletter. This marks an exciting milestone in our journey, as we reflect on the progress we have made over the past year. Through collaboration, dedication, and innovation, our all-Ireland consortium continues to drive forward vital research aimed at improving outcomes for those affected by Barrett's Oesophagus (BO) and oesophageal cancer (OC). This newsletter serves as a platform to showcase the groundbreaking work undertaken by our talented trainees, who are at the heart of our research efforts. Their commitment, in partnership with our valued patient representatives, has led to new insights that are shaping the future of OC diagnosis, treatment, and care. We are proud of the impact they are making and look forward to sharing their achievements with you. We are also thrilled to highlight our success in securing additional funding, which has strengthened our capacity to expand the AllCaN Oesophageal network. These resources enable us to broaden our research horizons, foster new collaborations on the island of Ireland, and allow us to continue to drive scientific discoveries that will ultimately benefit patients worldwide. None of this would be possible without the selfless contributions of our patients, who generously donate their samples to support our research. Their willingness to contribute to our research is the cornerstone of our work, and we are deeply grateful for their trust and commitment. We also extend our sincere appreciation to our funders, whose belief in our vision has made the AllCaN Oesophageal programme a reality. We hope you find this newsletter informative and inspiring. Thank you for being part of the AllCaN Oesophageal journey—we look forward to sharing more updates with you in the months ahead.

Warm regards, Professor Jacintha O'Sullivan (Lead, AllCaN Oesophageal Consortium).

What is AllCaN Oesophageal?

The Breakthrough All-Ireland Cancer Network (AllCaN) Oesophageal programme represents a new, focused effort to implement advances in BO and OC research as rapidly as possible through the creation of a collaborative, translational cancer research network. The most talented and promising researchers across Irish institutions have been assembled into an All-Ireland Research Network forming an optimal configuration of expertise needed to solve key problems in OC research and positively impact patients in the near future. AllCaN Oesophageal will combine interdisciplinary approaches and world-renowned resources to address major health problems on the island of Ireland in BO and OC. By combining data and resources across the island, AllCaN Oesophageal will uniquely identify appropriate prevention strategies, lifestyle interventions and novel diagnostic platforms and therapeutics through enhanced understanding of the BO-OC progression.



Kelly



Rachel



Órla



Victoria



Pousali



Lorraine



Richard



Abigail



Sam



Diana

Our Trainees

We are proud to announce the recruitment of ten very talented trainees to the AllCaN Oesophageal programme. These include six PhD candidates, one MPH candidate, one MPhil by research candidate and one postdoctoral research fellow.

Barrett's Oesophagus – Did you know?

- Those with BO have a higher risk of developing OC.
- People with BO experience little to no symptoms, making regular check-ups important.
- Men over 50, anyone with a family history of the condition and those who smoke or are overweight are more likely to develop BO.
- Researchers are exploring less invasive screening methods to detect BO early.
- Knowing how to manage acid reflux through lifestyle changes and medications can help reduce further damage.



Breakthrough Cancer Research CEO Ms. Orla Dolan with AllCaN Oesophageal leaders Profs. Helen Coleman, Juliette Hussey and Jacintha O'Sullivan at the launch of the programme.



@allcan_BCR

AllCaN Oesophageal Symposium 2024



QUB Delegates Travelling from Belfast



The OCF Team



Open Discussion Forum



AllCaN Oesophageal and Breakthrough Cancer Research Leaders

Our inaugural AllCaN Oesophageal Symposium took place in the Durkan Lecture Theatre, Trinity Translational Medicine Institute, Trinity College Dublin, St. James's Hospital (Dublin) on 23rd October 2024. The symposium aimed to address challenges and advancements in the understanding, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of Barrett's oesophagus and OC while fostering the collaboration and the exchange of insights amongst clinicians, scientists, industrial partners, charity partners and patient advocates from across the island of Ireland. As a joint initiative across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, AllCaN Oesophageal strived to unify research and clinical practices in oncology, with a particular focus on patient-centred solutions. The symposium structured discussions around AllCaN Oesophageal's four core work packages: Prevention, Intervention, Targeted Diagnostics, and Novel Therapeutics, providing a comprehensive look at current research and development efforts in Barretts Oesophagus and OC care. Notable speakers included Prof. Maeve Lowery (Academic Director of the Trinity Centre Cancer Institute), who discussed the significance of AllCaN Oesophageal's efforts in enhancing patient management for oesophageal disease. Tomas Adell, Director of Elective Care and Cancer Policy from the Department of Health Northern Ireland, who highlighted governmental support and policies aimed at addressing cancer care across Ireland. Dr. Debra Higgins (OncoAssure) presented the audience with advanced oncology platforms coupled with personalized diagnostics, paving the way for tailored patient care. Dr. Ciara Durin White (Deciphex) discussed a digital pathology and AI-supported workflow aimed at improving diagnostic accuracy for gastrointestinal cancers. Moreover, Dr. Declan Soden (CEO Mirai Medical) discussed Pulsed Field Ablation, a novel, less invasive treatment for Barrett's oesophagus, emphasizing its safety and precision. All trainees also showcased their exciting research project plans on the day.



Brad



Stewart



John



Peter



Lorraine



Brendan



Johnny



Mark



Fergal

The AllCaN Oesophageal PPI Committee

To accomplish AllCaN Oesophageal's research objectives, we are honoured to have enlisted such a dedicated public and patient involvement (PPI) panel who provide regular feedback across our research projects and outreach activities. Our extensive PPI panel importantly reflects those with lived experiences of either BO or OC. Vitality, they help to evaluate the short- and long-term impact of the work delivered through the AllCaN Oesophageal programme. In doing so, AllCaN Oesophageal ensures that patient voices have equal weight at all governance levels and will remain deeply committed to working with those with lived experiences. Notably, this collaborative discussion helps the programme leaders, and the wider AllCaN Oesophageal team, to shape all the research projects presented in the network and map out how the short- and long-term impact of this work could improve the lives of these and other patients across the Island of Ireland.

AllCaN Oesophageal Goes To Rome



Trainee Ms. Lorraine Smith presenting her work titled 'Electroporation treatment alters the inflammatory tissue microenvironment in the human inflammatory condition, BO', at the 5th World Congress on Electroporation in Rome on 18th September 2024.

OCF Hosts Patient Support Meeting



Mr. Cian Gargan, Prof. Jacintha O'Sullivan, Mr. Sam Cahill, Ms. Lorraine Smith & Ms. Aoibhinn O'Reilly attend the OCF patient support day in Dublin on Saturday 25th January 2025.

Announcement

The AllCaN Oesophageal Symposium 2025 will take place in Queen's University Belfast in October 2025. Visit our website closer to the date for detailed programme information and details on how to register.

Acknowledgments

AllCaN Oesophageal would like to thank our primary funders Breakthrough Cancer Research, The Oesophageal Cancer Fund (OCF) and the CROSS Charity for supporting our research activities. We would also like to thank all patients who have consented for all research activities across the network.

