

ASI Research Newsletter

Autumn 2024



THE **Alzheimer**
SOCIETY OF IRELAND

Dear Colleague,

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter of 2024!

The Research & Policy team has been bustling with activity throughout the summer, diligently organising and supporting events while collaborating closely with our colleagues across the organisation. As we step into September, we're excited to celebrate World Alzheimer's Month. This year's theme is Time to Act on Dementia, Time to Act on Alzheimers.

Thank you for being part of our community. Let's make this Autumn a season of impactful action and awareness.

Dementia Dialogues: Breaking Down Research ASI's Newest Webinar Series 2024



Dementia Dialogues : Breaking Down Research

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is hosting a free four-part webinar series on various dementia research topics. These webinars will give you an opportunity to learn about the latest research from leading academics and clinicians in the dementia space. Each webinar will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour and will include a Q&A segment with the audience.

Our second webinar will take place on October 2nd at 11am in collaboration with Dementia Research Network Ireland.

Topic: Disease Modifying Therapies

Presenter: Prof Sean Kennelly, Tallaght University Hospital & Trinity College Dublin

Prof Kennelly will present on the some of the most recent research in the area of disease-modifying therapies and updates in the field of dementia research.

To register for the event, check out our website or email research@alzheimer.ie.

Dementia Research Network Ireland & ASI Event - The Science of Dementia for the Non-Scientist



On September 12th, Dementia Research Network Ireland and The ASI co-hosted a knowledge exchange event for the public, The Science of Dementia for the Non-Scientist.

The event focused on an exploration of dementia and the brain, with a series of expert speakers presenting on different topics. This included DRNI co-Chair Prof Sean Kennelly and Prof Ian Robertson who gave the keynote presentation. We were also thrilled to have a panel discussion featuring those with the lived experience with Marguerite Keating (member of the Irish Dementia Working Group), Janice Nolan-Palmer and facilitated by Nuala Paley (both members of the Dementia Research Advisory Team).

Videos from the event will be available soon.

Thank you to everyone who came to the event, supported the day and helped us bring this really insightful event together! A special thank you to the HRB Conference and Event Sponsorship Scheme who funded the event.

HRB / HRCI Joint Funding Scheme Announcement



We're proud to share that a project supported by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has been awarded funding under the HRB/HRCI Joint Funding Scheme 2024.

The INNEACH project, led by Dr Catherine Houghton from the School of Nursing and Midwifery at The University of Galway has been awarded funding which will focus on intergenerational programmes to enhance social connectivity for those living with dementia. This 24-month initiative promises to make a significant impact on the lives of individuals and families across Ireland.

Collaboration is key, and we're excited to work alongside the research team, PPI contributors, and other stakeholders. Together, we're committed to creating a future where every person with dementia can remain connected and valued in their community.

Leqembi / Lecanemab Drug Therapy Updates

European Medicines Agency

On July 25th, the European Medicines Agency said they do not recommend Leqembi (previously called Lecanemab) for approval. They believe the risks of taking Leqembi for Alzheimer's Disease are greater than the benefits. This was disappointing news in Europe, but research for other treatments is still ongoing worldwide. Also in July, another treatment called Donanemab was approved by the FDA in the United States, and there is hope it will be may be approved in Europe too.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHPR) (UK)

On 22nd August, the MHPR approved Leqembi for use in the UK. However, shortly after, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommend Leqembi for use on the NHS because they deemed it to not be cost effective.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland's Thoughts

At The Alzheimer Society of Ireland we believe that people living with dementia in Ireland deserve the same opportunities for treatment as those in the UK and elsewhere. Fighting dementia is a global challenge, and everyone should have access to new therapies. Read more about these therapies on our website, www.alzheimer.ie.

Walking the Talk for Dementia



In August, two of our Dementia Research Advisory Team members (John & Kathleen) began trekking the Camino de Santiago as part of the Walking the Talk for Dementia immersive conference.

The walk culminated in a research conference and it was a very emotional time for everyone.



Our Research & Policy Manager, Dr. Laura O'Philbin, also joined in the Walking the Talk for Dementia and took part in a panel discussion as part of the conference.



Photo credit: João Barbosa & Max Shulte



World Alzheimer's Day | WTD 2024

Walking the Talk for Dementia

John & Kathleen also participated in a global awareness campaign as part of #WorldAlzheimersDay on September 21st to challenge stigma.

A sincere thank you to everyone involved in Walking the Talk for Dementia.

You can watch the video on Youtube!

Recent Publications



a) In September, The Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disabilities held their launch of the Post Diagnostic Dementia Support Guidelines for people with an intellectual disability.

This work was funded by the Health Research Board and The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, under the HRB/HRCI Joint Funding Scheme.

Research & Policy Manager, Dr. Laura O'Philbin, joined a panel as part of the online launch who shared their insights about the development and implementation of these guidelines. They will have a meaningful impact, informing care and provide insights for healthcare practitioners and providers who deliver post-diagnostic dementia support.

b) The 2024 Report of The Lancet Commission on Dementia Report, from a team of 27 global experts on dementia, highlights the addition of two potentially modifiable risk factors; untreated vision loss and high cholesterol. New evidence presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC 2024) in early August highlighted two new potentially modifiable risk factors in dementia prevention, in addition to the 12 factors previously identified.

Read The Lancet Commission Report online.

c) The team from the Institute of Memory and Cognition at Tallaght University Hospital recently published research highlighting how a blood test to detect proteins in the brain related to Alzheimer's Disease has the potential to speed up diagnosis and reduce the need for other investigative procedures.

This research was published in Alzheimer's Research & Therapy and found that this new blood test (plasma p-Tau217) was more than 90% as accurate as the outcome from lumbar punctures, a more invasive procedure currently in use. This could also have implications in terms of invasiveness, length of time to a diagnosis and it may also cut down on costs.

Read the scientific paper online.