THE Alzheimer SOCIETY OF IRELAND

# ASI Research Newsletter: Autumn 2026

Dear @FIRSTNAME@,

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter 2026!

DRATgons' Den 2026 is just around the corner, and we're thrilled to once again provide Early Career Researchers with this valuable opportunity to share their work. We're also looking ahead to the 36th Alzheimer Europe Conference, coming to Dublin this October. In this issue, we celebrate Dr Laura O'Philbin as she begins her prestigious GBHI Fellowship, and share the latest developments, opportunities and updates from the Research & Policy Team.

Read on to find out more!

## DRATgons' Den 2026




**Exciting Opportunity for Early Career Researchers!**

**DRATgons' Den 2026 is now open for abstract submissions!** 🎉

Whether you are just starting out, deep in your research, or approaching the final stages of your Masters or PhD, **we want to hear about your work.**

DRATgons' Den is a unique **PPI-led knowledge exchange event**, where early career researchers get the opportunity to pitch their dementia-related research to the Dementia Research Advisory Team (DRAT) - people with lived experience of dementia and family caring.

Pitch your research to our friendly DRATgons and:

- Get meaningful feedback from people with lived experience of dementia

- Gain fresh perspectives to help shape your research
- Connect with fellow researchers
- Compete for a **€3,000 funding prize** (plus a €500 travel & conference prize for the runner-up!)

Find out more about DRATgons' Den 2026 here.

📢 **Abstract call now open! Submit your abstract here:** Abstract Submission Form

**Travel Bursaries**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is offering a limited number of travel bursaries to eligible ECRs travelling from outside Dublin to attend DRATgons' Den 2026. ECRs are eligible to apply whether they have submitted an abstract or are attending as a member of the audience.

**Apply for Travel Bursaries** ***here.***

*This event is made possible with thanks to the Health Research Board (HRB) Conference and Event Sponsorship Scheme 2026.*

### Watch the highlights from the first ever edition of DRATgon's Den

## Alzheimer Europe Conference - Dublin 2026




Just under a year ago, we announced that The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) would be co-hosting the **36th Alzheimer Europe Conference**, taking place at the **Convention Centre Dublin from 27–29 October 2026**. Now, the countdown is well and truly on!

We are looking forward to showcasing the excellent work being carried out by the Irish dementia research community on a European stage, and to seeing colleagues from across Ireland and beyond come together for this important event.
We are excited for all that is in store, with opportunities to hear the latest advances in dementia research, policy and practice, connect with people living with dementia and their carers, and explore developments across health, psychosocial care, community support, advocacy and policy. **Register today and join us in Dublin this October!** Click here to register.!

## General Research News

**WHO Updates Guidelines on Risk Reduction**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published the second edition of its guidelines on risk reduction of cognitive decline and dementia, updating its 2019 recommendations in light of new evidence. The updated guidance expands the range of risk factors addressed, including sleep, stroke, traumatic brain injury, vision impairment, HIV and air pollution, and provides updated recommendations on interventions targeting multiple risk factors. It also includes guidance on cognitive and social activities for people with normal cognition or mild cognitive impairment, and on the use of hearing aids as part of dementia risk reduction strategies. Access the full guidelines here :Risk reduction of cognitive decline and dementia: WHO guidelines, second edition

**Biomarkers & Disease-Modifying Therapies**

Alongside developments in disease-modifying treatments, there have also been advances in blood-based testing for Alzheimer's disease. In June, Tallaght University Hospital (TUH) launched their National Alzheimer's Biomarker Programme. This will allow the team at TUH to assess how blood tests can help support early Alzheimer's disease diagnosis. For more information please see: Launch of National Alzheimer's Biomarker Programme - TallaghtHospital

Roche's Elecsys® pTau217 blood test received CE marking in Europe and FDA clearance in the US this year. Roche describes the test as a "more convenient, minimally invasive alternative" to existing biomarker testing, using a routine blood draw to assess amyloid pathology associated with Alzheimer's disease.

You can read more about Disease Modifying Therapies on our website here: Disease Modifying Therapies.

## Research Team Updates - ASI at GBHI




The ASI would like to extend our warmest congratulations to Dr. Laura O'Philbin (Research & Policy Manager at ASI) on being selected as an Atlantic Fellow for Equity in Brain Health at the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI) for 2026–27!

The year-long fellowship brings together emerging leaders from across the world to develop their knowledge, leadership and networks in brain health and dementia, with a strong focus on equity and translating evidence into meaningful change.

Laura's work at the intersection of dementia research, policy and advocacy aligns closely with the fellowship's focus. We are incredibly proud of Laura and look forward to seeing her build on this

experience and bring new knowledge, perspectives and connections to her work.

Congratulations, Laura, and every success for the year ahead!

Read more about Laura's work and her fellowship on the GBHI website: Laura O'Philbin, PhD | Global Brain Health Institute

## Interim Research and Policy Manager



We are delighted to welcome Dr. Diane O'Doherty back from maternity leave, who will be leading the team as Interim Research and Policy Manager while Laura is on secondment at Trinity College Dublin.

Diane brings valuable experience in dementia research and evaluation, in conjunction with a background in public health and a passion for research communications.

We are pleased to have Diane back on the team and wish her the very best in the role!

*For any research enquiries, please get in touch at research@alzheimer.ie*

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