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South East  
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University



# IRISH NEURODIVERSITY RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2025

## Where

Haughton Building,  
South East Technological University,  
Kilkenny Road Campus,  
Carlow, R93 V960

## When

Tuesday, 18 February 2025

## ABOUT

The second Irish Neurodiversity Research Conference will bring together researchers from across higher education institutions (HEIs) of Ireland and academics interested in neurodiversity research.

This one-day conference, hosted by the Autism and REACH Research Groups at SETU aims to prioritise collaborative interdisciplinary and knowledge exchange of neurodivergent research in Ireland.

This conference aims to encourage research students, post doctorate researchers and academics to present their research to peers in a supportive and collaborative environment across the following themes:

- Education
- Genetics
- Physical Activity
- Public patient involvement
- Enabling landscapes for neurodiverse individuals

## POSTERS AT HAUGHTON BUILDING FOYER

### DR AIDAN ROARTY (HSE)

Referrals to a Specialist Adult ADHD Service: A Review of Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS) and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) referrals and their Clinical Outcomes. A Retrospective Chart Review.

### DR CHLOE BEATTY (MIC)

Final Evaluation of Phase One of the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) Programme.

### DR ETAIN QUIGLEY (MU)

Neurodiversity in Third-Level Education: The Lacuna between Strengths-Based Rhetoric and the Lived Experience.

### FIONA RIGNEY (SETU)

Identifying key knowledge questions for healthcare professionals: An international Delphi-based study.

### DR MARY-KATE BURKE (SETU)

The Perspectives of Veterinary Students with Disabilities, Neurodiversity and/or Chronic Conditions on a Career in Equine Practice. A Qualitative Study.

### HELEN CAHILL (TCD)

Neurodevelopmental traits and cognition in a family-based study of a rare neurodevelopmental-related genetic condition.

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## AGENDA

Time	Title	Speaker	Location
10:00	Opening Address	<b>Dr Paula Rankin</b> Head (Carlow) of Faculty Health Science, Faculty of Science and Computing, SETU.	L115, Haughton Building
10:05	Neurodivergent Research at University of Galway	<b>Prof. Geraldine Leader</b> University of Galway	L115, Haughton Building
11:00	Tea & Coffee / Poster viewing		Haughton Foyer
11:30	Session 1		
	The Effects of Wearing Minimalist Footwear on Gait Parameters in Autistic and Non-Autistic Children: A Quasi-Experimental Study	<b>Aneta Kuczynska</b> SETU	L106, Haughton Building
	Effects of a Motor Skill-Based Physical Activity Programme on Fundamental Motor Skills in Irish Primary Aged Autistic Children	<b>Edel Ryan</b> SETU	L106, Haughton Building
11:30	Session 2		
	Supporting Educators to Create a More Inclusive Learning Environment in SETU	<b>Dr Caroline Mc Garry</b> SETU	L108, Haughton Building
	Collaborative Autistic Research Empowerment (CARE): Project Report on Building a Community Panel for Inclusive and Impactful Research Partnerships in Autistic Research	<b>Dr Sally Whelan</b> UG	L108, Haughton Building
11:30	Session 3		
	"I like being autistic": Assessing the benefit of autistic-led psychoeducation for autistic children	<b>Dr Sinead Mullally</b> (NCL, UK)	L109, Haughton Building
	A Co-Produced Qualitative Exploration of Autistic Student Experiences at an Irish Higher Education Institution	<b>Assoc. Prof. Neil Kenny</b> DCU	L109, Haughton Building
12:00	FASD: Ireland's silent epidemic	<b>Tristan Casson-Rennie</b> Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Ireland	L115, Haughton Building

<b>12:45</b>	<b>Lunch (Central Services Building) and Poster viewing (Haughton Building foyer)</b>		
<b>13:30 - 14:00</b>	<b>Breakout sessions</b>		
<b>13:30</b>	<b>Session 1</b>		
	<b>Findings from AFUN Platform Trials: Enhancing Motor Skills in Autistic Children Through Augmented Reality Interventions</b>	<b>Mark Power</b> SETU	<b>L106, Haughton Building</b>
	<b>Feasibility and Usability Testing of 'MoveMuse', an AI Chatbot to deliver a brief intervention to promote physical activity for Autistic College Students</b>	<b>Garry Rodgers</b> UL	<b>L106, Haughton Building</b>
<b>13:30</b>	<b>Session 2</b>		
	<b>Examining the associations between emotion dysregulation, parental stress and parenting self-efficacy beliefs in parents with and without ADHD and parents awaiting assessment: quantitative online anonymous survey</b>	<b>Sinead Walsh</b> DCU	<b>L108, Haughton Building</b>
	<b>A Cross-Sectional Study of Rett Syndrome Characteristics in the Irish Population</b>	<b>Zade Komal</b> TCD	<b>L108, Haughton Building</b>
<b>13:30</b>	<b>Session 3</b>		
	<b>Developing the University Understanding and Managing Adult ADHD Programme (UniMAAP): A qualitative study to identify recommended student-friendly adaptations to psychoeducation with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for third-level students with ADHD</b>	<b>Dr Christina Seery</b> ADHD Ireland	<b>L109, Haughton Building</b>
	<b>"What do you mean you're autistic?" A Qualitative Exploration of the Experiences of Autistic Academic Staff working in Higher Education in Ireland</b>	<b>Assoc. Prof. Neil Kenny</b> DCU	<b>L109, Haughton Building</b>
<b>14:00</b>	<b>Autistic SPACE: a novel framework for meeting the needs of autistic people in healthcare and beyond</b>	<b>Assoc. Clinical Prof. Mary Doherty</b> University College Dublin	<b>L115, Haughton Building</b>
<b>15:00</b>	<b>Empowering Neurodiverse Patients within the Healthcare Context: The Importance of Self-Determination and Supported Decision Making</b>	<b>Dr Brian Abery</b> University of Minnesota	<b>L115, Haughton Building</b>
<b>15:50</b>	<b>Closing address</b>	<b>Prof. John Wells</b> Head (Waterford) Faculty of Health Sciences, SETU.	<b>L115, Haughton Building</b>

## EVENT SPEAKERS



### Dr Mary Doherty | Clinical Associate Professor, University College Dublin (UCD) School of Medicine

**Dr Mary Doherty** is an autistic consultant anaesthetist, as well as being the founder of Autistic Doctors International (ADI). ADI is a community of over 1,000 autistic medical doctors that aims to adopt a neurodiversity-affirmative approach to work centering on peer support, advocacy, research, and education.

Mary's research interests focus on two separate, but related, areas: the experiences of autistic doctors and medical students; and the healthcare experiences, access barriers, and adverse outcomes for the autistic adult community.

Some of her most recent research projects include: the experiences of autistic doctors, in particular autistic psychiatrists; the experiences of autistic medical students; and barriers to healthcare for autistic adults.

Mary also has significant experience as an autistic representative ("A-Rep") on the AIMS-2-Trials autism research consortium. She developed the Autistic SPACE framework as a potential solution to the challenges faced by autistic people in healthcare settings, whether as patient or healthcare provider.



### Professor Geraldine Leader | University of Galway

**Prof. Geraldine Leader** is a Professor at the School of Psychology at the University of Galway. She is a behavioural psychologist who specialises in the area of neurodevelopmental conditions, especially autism and intellectual disabilities.

She is the Director of the Irish Centre for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Research. Her research focuses on the expansion of our understanding of the autism spectrum and thereby enhancing the life experience and potential of individuals with autism and their families. She studies autism across the lifespan with an emphasis on increasing the quality of life of children, adolescents, and adults through evidence-based research. She has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles in the leading journals in her field.



### Tristan Casson-Rennie | Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Ireland

**Tristan Casson-Rennie** is the founder and CEO of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Ireland. FASD Ireland is one of the first organisations of its kind in Ireland providing education, awareness, and support for those effected by FASD. As a father to three boys, two of whom live with FASD, Tristan has first-hand experience of the challenges this disorder presents for those living with the condition and their families. Tristan has been a strong advocate for his own children and for other parents of children who require support.

Tristan is also a qualified Interactive Hypnotherapist, working with people coping with early years trauma and stress anxiety. He has also previously worked as an Additional Education Needs Governor at a primary school.



### Dr Brian Abery | University of Minnesota

**Dr Brian Abery, Ph.D.** is the Co-Director of the Research and Training Center on HCBS Outcome Measurement, National Center for College Students with Disabilities, and the Global Disability Rights and Inclusion Program at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration (ICI) as well as a faculty member within the Special Education Program at the University.

Keynote title: 'Empowering Neurodiverse Patients within the Healthcare Context: The Importance of Self-Determination and Supported Decision Making'

Brian has been Principal Investigator or a Co-PI of over ninety externally funded projects which have included investigations designed to enhance the self-determination of youth and adults with IDD, improve the quality of HCBS outcome measurement, better understand the impact of technology on the quality of life of adults with disabilities, and both develop and assess the impact of inter-professional education on healthcare services provided to this segment of the population.

Brian's most recent work has focused on the development of person-centered outcome measures associated with the delivery of services to people with disabilities, understanding the impact of the Special Olympic Unified Champion School Program on the social emotional learning and self-determination outcomes, and study of the efficacy of a program he is co-developing with people with intellectual disabilities designed to enhance supported decision making capacities.

Brian holds a doctorate in educational psychology and has an extensive background in research, program development, and evaluation. He has published instrumentation, journal articles, reports, and products on the topics of inclusive service learning, social inclusion, self-determination, and outcome measurement, and transition, and is currently, or in the recent past, has been the PI or Co-PI on NIDILRR, ACL, USDE, USDOS, UNICEF, and UKAID funded research.

### **Programme Committee**

Dr Sharon Kinsella, SETU (Chair)  
Prof. Martina Gooney, SETU  
Dr Zeta Dooly, SETU  
Mary Moylan, SETU  
Dr Dave Allen, SETU  
Dr Dean McDonnell, SETU  
Edel Ryan, SETU  
Fiona Rigney, SETU  
Assoc. Prof. Timothy Frawley, UCD  
Assoc. Prof. Neil Kenny, DCU  
Helen Cahill, TCD  
Dr Sally Whelan, University of Galway  
Dr Craig Coffey, TUS

### **Contact**

All questions about the conference can be emailed to  
[NeurodiversityConference2025@setu.ie](mailto:NeurodiversityConference2025@setu.ie)