



Dear Colleagues

What a year 2021 has turned out to be, we thought 2020 was a challenge!

This year we have seen surges of COVID-19, a cyber-attack on our health service, a power outage impacting some of the most critical parts of the building and some of the highest attendance numbers to our Emergency Department in six years!

Despite the challenges, we have still managed to introduce new innovative services to benefit our patients and their care, our facilities & estates colleagues have rolled out a new energy contract that will see the Hospital significantly cut our carbon emissions and the ICT team working with a large number of disciplines across the site have introduced Phase I of Synergy, our Electronic Patient Record.

Another highlight of the year was the further development of the Innovation Centre, we have a long and very product tradition of Innovation and I am delighted to see the positive engagement Dr's. Cole and O'Keeffe have received from staff but also the industry to progress innovation in the Hospital.

I know this Christmas is again not the one we would plan for ourselves. With continuing restrictions, high rates of COVID in our community and a new variant to contend with, I on behalf of the Hospital Board and Executive Management Team want to thank you our GP colleagues and your colleagues for your support and engagement throughout the year.

Every best wish for a restful and peaceful Christmas with your family and friends.

Best wishes

Lucy Nugent
Chief Executive
Tallaght University Hospital

Strategic Healthcare Partnership Established

The Hospital were delighted to extend an excellent working relationship with TU Dublin recently signing a Memorandum of Understanding with TU Dublin, healthcare providers UPMC and ExWell Medical.

The partnership will explore several areas of mutual interest, including academic programme development, access to TU Dublin research expertise and facilities, and identifying technology that could expand health and fitness initiatives created by UPMC and ExWell Medical.

Remarking on the wide-ranging possibilities of the new partnership, **Thomas Stone, Vice President for Partnerships** at TU Dublin, said



Pictured left to right at the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding were Dr. Noel McCaffrey, Founder & Medical Director of ExWell Medical; President of TU Dublin, Professor David FitzPatrick; Lucy Nugent, Chief Executive of TUH and John Windle, General Manager, UPMC Ireland

"We are hugely excited to embark on this new relationship which aligns with the University's commitment to creating synergies with partners that can optimise our societal impact. TU Dublin already has a close working association with TUH, having hosted a ['Health Hackathon'](#) with the hospital in 2019, and launched a [Digital Health Internship Programme](#) for TU Dublin students earlier this year."

"The work we have undertaken with TU Dublin and ExWell has already benefitted our patients and our hospital. We are excited about the potential of this new partnership and how, working together, we can focus on making our vision of people caring for people to live better lives a greater reality," commented Lucy Nugent, Chief Executive of TUH.

New Continence Care Service for Inpatients

Part of Victoria's role will be to provide a comprehensive assessment for patients incontinent of urine, follow up the findings from the assessment and give recommendations for further referral as needed.

She can also provide education for any recommendations found following the assessment i.e. timed toileting program, three day bladder diaries and bladder retraining. Another part of the role is also to raise awareness of early removal of urinary catheters and continence wear for baseline continent patients.

The service is run by Victoria Doyle, Continence Care CNM2 for older persons in TUH and is for any patient over 65 years experiencing urinary incontinence. The aim of the service is to provide education, continence promotion, support and advice for the patient and staff.



Victoria Doyle, Continence Care CNM2 for Older Persons at TUH

CHI at Tallaght OPD & Emergency Care Unit Opens

The new Children's Outpatient & Emergency Care Unit at Children's Health Ireland (CHI) at Tallaght opened on Saturday, November 15th.

CHI at Tallaght will accommodate the existing children's emergency care unit and relocated and expand outpatient services to children and young people from Dublin South West, South City and the surrounding areas of Kildare and Wicklow.

The opening of this new facility in CHI at Tallaght marks a significant milestone in the children's hospital project and the expansion of services being delivered to children, young people and their families. It follows the successful opening of a similar facility in CHI at Connolly in Blanchardstown in July, 2019.

Services offered in the new building include;



Emergency Care Unit

Open 24 hours, 7 days a week



Outpatients Department

8am – 5pm Monday – Friday



- General Paediatrics
- X-ray & Ultrasound
- Fracture Clinics
- Neurodisability
- St. Louise's and Laurels clinic is moving from its current location in CHI at Crumlin



ESO Stroke Unit Certification

The European Stroke Organisation (ESO) aims at increasing the quality of stroke care in Europe, encouraging hospitals across Europe to apply for an ESO certification for their stroke care. The TUH Acute Stroke Unit was recently accredited by the ESO. Meeting ESO standards is an accomplishment, which certifies that the Hospital meets the European standard of excellent stroke care. This is a remarkable achievement for the department and the entire hospital organisation.

It has been a long road for the stroke service, from the 1st stroke unit in Ireland being opened in the Meath Hospital in 1995 to the opening of the TUH ASU in 2009. This accreditation has been driven by an ambitious stroke multidisciplinary team responsible for the development of well-rounded services that reach a standard of care worthy of this accolade. TUH is now the second Hospital in Ireland to hold this certificate.

This certification provides a benchmark for quality of stroke management, establishing high levels of quality care, with access to urgent treatment for stroke patients. TUH has demonstrated an emphasis on establishing a consistent approach to care for all stroke patients with the establishment of quality clinical practice guidelines. ESO auditors have significant experience in stroke care, provide expert advice and follow well-defined criteria for evaluation.

Certification provides the clinical team with common goals and a concrete validation of their combined efforts. Certification also promotes a culture of excellence across the organisation. Achieving certification makes a strong statement to the community highlighting the efforts to provide the highest quality service, strengthening community confidence in the quality of services in TUH.

Interdisciplinary AFib Clinic

Did you know that TUH has an Interdisciplinary AFib clinic including Cardiology and Gerontology/Stroke Physicians, Pharmacy & Nursing?

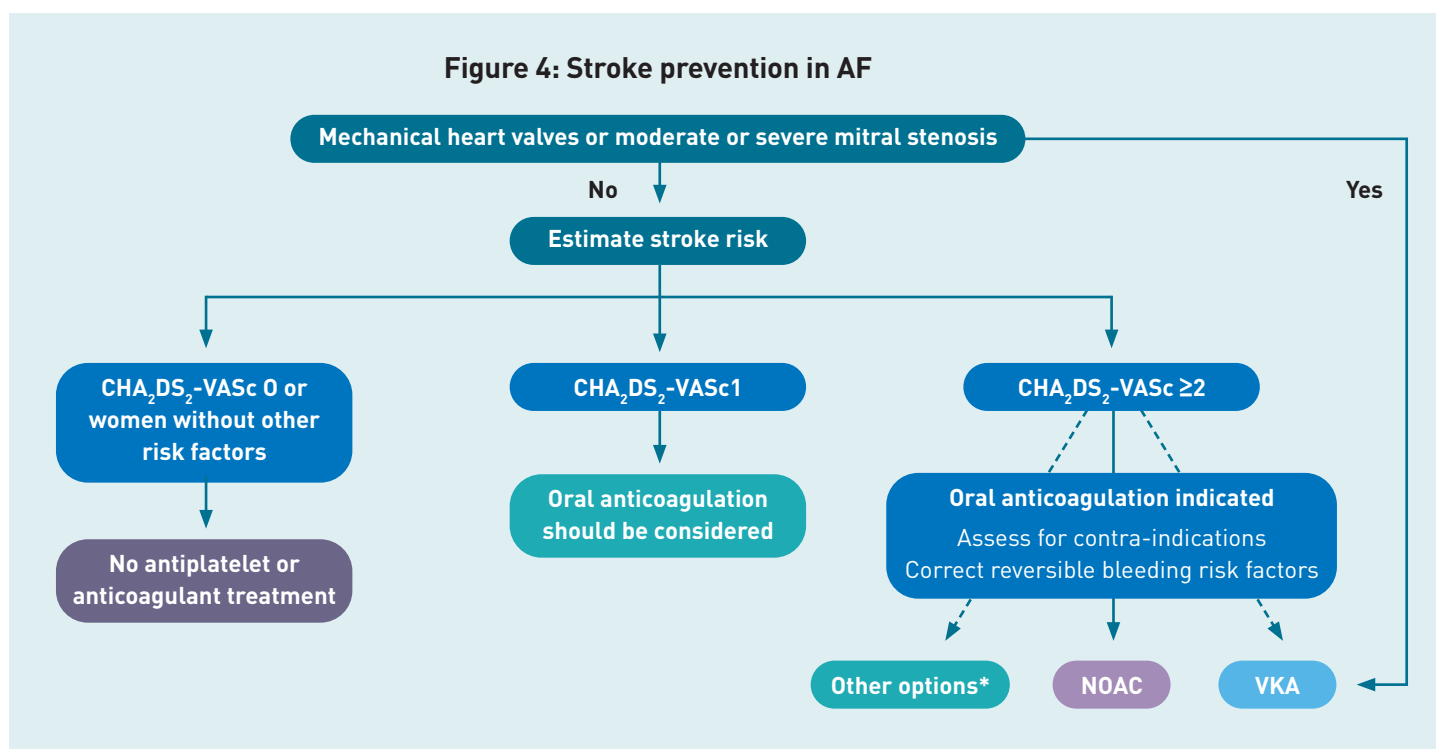
Given the evolution of anticoagulant treatments and monitoring practices, there is a need for an interdisciplinary approach to management of AFib patients.

Referrals to the clinic are accepted from GPs, ED and all disciplines within TUH when the **appropriate referral form** is completed with **evidence of AFib attached** (e.g. ECG, rhythm strip, cardiac monitor, holter or interrogation of implanted device).

The AFib Clinic has developed a 7 Step Guide to managing patients while awaiting appointment at the AFib Clinic.

1. **Assess Stroke risk using the CHA₂DS₂-VASc score.**
2. **Decide whether to anticoagulate, the following is the current ESC guidance:**

Figure 4: Stroke prevention in AF



*Note: Men with a score of 0 and women with score of 1 still have some risk of stroke and need a specialist opinion.

3. What is the risk of bleeding?

Recommended bleeding risk tool is the **HAS-BLED** score. Caution is advised when using anticoagulation where the HAS-BLED score is 3 or greater. However the risk of bleeding may not be equivalent in seriousness to a stroke. Discuss with the patient, weigh up risk and advise.

4. How do I prepare to start anticoagulation?

- ▶ Take a detailed medical history and bleeding history.
- ▶ Address factors that increase risk of bleeding before starting anti-coagulation such as:
 - Uncontrolled hypertension
 - Alcohol excess
 - Antiplatelet or NSAID or SSRI/SNRI use
 - Consider a PPI if risk of GI bleeding
- ▶ Discuss any proposed surgery or dental work

- ▶ Check bloods (renal & liver profile, FBC, coagulation, thyroid function)
- ▶ Calculate renal function using the Cockcroft-Gault Equation

5. What options do you have regarding anticoagulants?

ESC recommends a NOAC as first-line therapy. NOACs are renally excreted, therefore it is important to ensure accurate calculation of creatinine clearance to guide dosing.

6. Before writing the prescription?

Provide patient education and check for potential interactions or contraindications with their pre-existing medications. Start anticoagulation if safe to do so.

7. REFER!

Please refer the patient to the AFib clinic. The referral form is available on the TUH website, simply search AFib or click on this [link](#).

Win for Pancreatic Research Group at the Irish Society of Gastroenterology Winter Meeting



Laura Kane, PhD student with the Department of Surgery, was awarded first prize in the Best Scientific Abstract session at the Irish Society of Gastroenterology Winter Meeting. This was for her presentation entitled “Multi-omic profiling of pancreatic cyst fluid for the identification of a novel biomarker of patient cancer risk.”

Under the supervision of principal investigators Dr. Stephen Maher, Ussher Assistant Professor at TCD, and Prof. Barbara Ryan, Consultant Gastroenterologist at TUH, Laura’s work focuses on early detection of patients who are at risk of developing pancreatic cancer. Pancreatic cancer is an extremely aggressive cancer, with less than 5% of patients surviving five years or more after diagnosis. The winning study focuses on patients with pancreatic cystic lesions, fluid-filled structures that can be found inside or on the surface of the pancreas.

Some patients who develop these pancreatic cysts are at an increased risk of developing cancer, however, the ability to reliably identify these high-risk patients is poor.

With the aid of Dr. Gregory Mellotte at TUH, who also coordinates patient recruitment to the study across three Dublin Hospital sites, Laura is currently analysing the fluid from these cysts and patient blood, to identify factors, such as proteins and genetic material that can be used as biological markers, or biomarkers, to more effectively distinguish low- and high-risk patients.

To-date, the team have developed a panel of protein- and microRNA-based biomarkers, which when used in combination, can distinguish high-risk patients from low-risk patients with an accuracy of 96%. The team are currently working to further analyse and refine the biomarker panel and develop it as a minimally invasive test. This important research is funded by the Meath Foundation at TUH, Viatrix, and the TCD boost programme.

Survival Guide to Christmas Eating

The festive season can help remind us about the joy of sharing food and spending time with friends and family. However we know between all of the celebrations and indulgent foods and drinks, it can be somewhat of a challenging time to eat well.

Eat Mindfully: It’s normal to look forward to these treats and enjoy them. Mindful eating is about paying attention to our food, the smell, the taste, the texture without judgment. By eating food more mindfully, you may find yourself being satisfied by less.

Be careful what you buy: Christmas is a great excuse to fill up the shopping trolley with tins of biscuits and boxes of sweets, but who is going to end up eating them? This year like last year, if you are only having guests over for a couple of days at Christmas, buy just what you need for those days. Very few people will arrive unannounced so you don’t need to stockpile goodies ‘just in case’.

Exercise: Most of us have a few days off over Christmas, which makes it a great time to get some exercise. Doing some extra walking will help to balance out the extra food you’re eating. Walking in the fresh air is also one of the best way to clear your head, whether that be from stress or following festivities from the night before - so now you have two reasons to get going!



If you would like any more information about any articles in the Connect or have suggestions for future editions please do get in touch

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