2013 The Year of Sport

Time and again, our students have been crowned champions in rugby, rowing, hurling, camogie... Find out more about our year of sporting successes.

Read more inside.

Inside this Issue:

Page 4 Rise in the Rankings
Page 6 Research in Action
Page 12 News in tweets

... and more!

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RESEARCH IN ACTION

From the lab to the library archives, our researchers produce work that has an impact on the world around us. Over the past three months, the following research stories have made the headlines.

REMEDi is leading a major new partnership with the Irish Blood Transfusion Service to provide access to revolutionary new cell-based therapies. The initial focus will be on stem cell manufacturing, and using regenerative medicine to treat a range of illnesses including arthritis, burns and diabetic wounds. "It has the potential to provide patients in Ireland with new, ground-breaking therapies," according to Professor Frank Barry (REMEDi).

In a separate study, researchers at REMEDI are working with Cardium Therapeutics to utilise their Excellagen® gel as part of a potential treatment for diabetic foot ulcers. The gel is being used in pre-clinical studies as a delivery agent for a proprietary stromal cell therapy developed by Orbsen Therapeutics.

A major report on Irish children’s health behaviour has discovered that more children are reporting high life satisfaction levels. The report also found that fewer children today are smoking or drinking compared with previous studies. Despite many positive results, Dr Saoirse Nic Gabhainn (Health Promotion Research Centre), who led the national study, cautions that “still more needs to be done to improve their health, in particular around physical activity.”

Fourteen marine scientists, led by Dr Louise Allcock (Zoology), recently returned to Galway following a three-week deep sea research survey aboard the Marine Institute’s RV Celtic Explorer. Their survey investigated a wide diversity of habitats and underwater communities in the Whittard Canyon system on the Irish Atlantic margin. Pictured above is one of the rare hydroids they discovered there.

Dr John Walsh (Gaelige) is involved in a new cross-European research project, which aims to document ways in which minority languages such as Irish are acquired by non-traditional means and in non-traditional settings. The New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe project is examining the potentially important role that 'new speakers' can play in the future of these languages.

A new collaboration between Microbiology and Earth and Ocean Sciences is searching for microbial life in ancient rock types called evaporites. The Geomicrobiology Research Group has successfully recovered DNA from recent samples found in Death Valley, California. The group, which includes Professor Martin Feely, Dr Alessandra Costanzo (both from Earth and Ocean Sciences) and Dr Cindy Smith (Microbiology), has already presented their findings to collaborating universities around Europe.

A research partnership between the School of Nursing and Midwifery and three UK universities has found that women who receive midwife care throughout their pregnancy have better outcomes. Researchers found that the women were less likely to give birth pre-term and required fewer interventions during labour and birth. According to Professor Declan Devane (Nursing and Midwifery), "other countries are using this to inform their maternity care policy and Ireland should do likewise."

Researchers in the School of Political Science and Sociology are leading the Irish arm of an international project addressing the problem of child to parent violence. According to Declan Coogan, a lecturer in the School, "social workers, psychotherapists, and others working with families across a range of services have pointed to the need for greater awareness and for skills development when faced with child to parent violence."

Researchers at the University’s HRB Clinical Research Facility have been conducting free blood pressure checks for people with sleep problems. The study, in association with the charity Cres, is part of ongoing research into reducing the risk of a heart attack or stroke. Recent research has shown that poor sleep can increase the risk of high blood pressure and obesity, which are major risk factors for the diseases.