

[#SundayWiMIN23](#) Week 18: Dr Margaret Kelleher

Dr Margaret Kelleher (née Fitzsimons) is a GP, currently in her 60th year of practise, qualifying in 1964 from University College Cork. She completed her internship and early medical training in the Bons Secours Hospital, Cork under the tutelage of Mr John Kelly (FRCS), Mr Kevin Kearney (FRCS) and Professor PK Kiely. In September of 1966, she moved to London with her husband Dr Michael J. Kelleher who was appointed to the Maudsley hospital training programme under the supervision of Professor Sir Aubrey Lewis and Professor Michael Shepherd.

She began training in Public health in South London in the borough of Southwark and Lambeth under Dr Christine Walsh. Throughout her 10 years in London, she worked as a medical officer caring for children attending schools and nurseries in the borough. She also established one of the first clinics for care of the elderly along with Dr Eithne Power (COH) during this time. Additionally she set up family planning clinics in Lambeth.

On their return to Cork, Michael was appointed clinical director of North Lee Mental Health services at St Ann's hospital and later clinical director of psychiatric services for the then Southern Health Board. Throughout all this time Margaret and Michael raised 5 children. Following a conversation with Dr Dermot Walsh, a reforming Consultant Psychiatrist, Margaret joined the recently established Irish College of General Practitioners.

She established her own general practice in Gerald Griffin Street, Blackpool, near to where her own mother set up a pharmacy in 1933. For over 25 years, she was integral part of the local community in Blackpool and delivered excellent healthcare to many families throughout this time.

She played an important role in the establishment of what became the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) in Cork, led by her husband in collaboration with Dr Maura Daly. Their work, researching suicide and highlighting the need for improved mental healthcare provision, along with the Trojan efforts of Mr Dan Neville, T.D., significantly contributed to the decriminalisation of suicide in 1993. After the passing of Michael in 1998, Margaret endeavoured to continue the work of the NSRF and the completion of post-graduate clinical research along with Dr Helen Keeley, Consultant Psychiatrist.

Margaret has many interests outside of medicine and loves spending time with her 14 grandchildren as well as visiting Lough Ine weekly. Today, Sunday 30th of April, is a milestone birthday for Margaret. Despite reaching the official age for retirement, an unspecified number of years ago, she continues to work and thrive as a GP, a job she still loves, in the heart of Cork's North Lee. She also continues to work as the medical director of the NSRF.

Her general practice colleagues on Cork's Northside continue to be in awe of her determination, drive, and commitment to furthering the wellbeing of the community that her family has served for nearly a century. Her energy and enthusiasm, as well as her knowledge of Cork genealogy, appear to be boundless.

