

## #SundayWiMIN24 Week 15: Professor Maria B. Majella Doyle

Prof Maria B. Majella Doyle is a liver transplant surgeon and Mid-America Transplant and Department of Surgery Distinguished Endowed Chair in Abdominal Transplantation at Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis.

She is Director of the HPB Fellowship Program, Director of Liver Transplant in the Division of General Surgery, Section of Abdominal Transplantation, and Vice-Chair of Clinical Affairs for the Department of Surgery at Washington University School of Medicine, as well as Director of the Paediatric Liver Transplant Program at St Louis Children's Hospital.

Majella Doyle was born in Cork, moved to Dublin at age 5 and then to Wicklow at age 10. She was a keen showjumper as a teenager. After secondary school, Majella studied for a degree in physiology at Trinity.

Soon after completing her science degree, Majella contracted meningitis, and it was while she was in hospital recovering that she first gave serious consideration to studying medicine. She applied to RCSI and was accepted, and flourished there winning medals in anatomy, pharmacy and surgery.

Majella initially thought she was interested in pursuing a career as an obstetrician or gynaecologist but changed her mind after rotations in surgery in Beaumont and Drogheda in her final medical year. "We got to scrub in a lot and I was hooked," she remembers.

After her intern year in Beaumont, vascular surgeon Professor Sean Tierney encouraged her to apply for the surgical training scheme, and Majella secured a spot at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital. "I was working with Professor P. Ronan O'Connell and Mr Gerry McEntee in GI surgery and on the vascular team with Professor O'Malley. I was also exposed for the first time to Hepato-Pancreatico-Biliary (HPB) surgery, which I really enjoyed."

Majella went on to do a Research Fellowship in the Department of Academic Surgery at Cork University with Professor H. Paul Redmond.

Accepted onto the higher surgical training scheme, Majella then worked at Wexford General Hospital, after which she returned to the Mater. A fortuitous encounter at the IHPBA meeting in Washington DC was to set her career on a path she could not have anticipated.

"I was in my fourth year of training," Majella remembers, "and I was attending a meeting of the IHPBA Association. Gerry McEntee bumped into Professor Will Chapman; they had trained together in liver surgery. Will had just moved to Washington University, and they were looking for a fellow, and I was looking for a fellowship. It's so random the way things happen sometimes!"

Majella completed her surgical training at Tallaght University Hospital and embarked on a Clinical Fellowship in Abdominal Organ Transplant and HPB surgery at Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis, Missouri, in 2005. Subsequently, Professor Tim Eberlein, the Chair of Surgery at Washington University, recruited her to join the department as a member of the Abdominal Organ Transplant and Hepatobiliary Surgery team.

Majella started as an assistant professor and has since progressed to full professorship. She started out performing adult liver, kidney, and pancreas transplants along with liver and pancreas cancer resections before undertaking paediatric liver transplants. Subsequently, she became the Surgical Director of the Paediatric Liver Transplant Programme at St Louis Children's Hospital in 2015. Somewhere along the way, she also found time to do an MBA.

Majella focuses her clinical research interests on clinical outcomes, hepatocellular carcinoma, liver transplantation, and donor management. She is a past president of the Americas Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association and Councilor of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons.

She received an honorary fellowship from RCSI in 2023.

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