

#SundayWiMIN23 Week 19: Professor Roisin Connolly

Professor Roisin Connolly was appointed as the Professor Gerald O'Sullivan Chair in Cancer Research at University College Cork (UCC) and Cork University Hospital in September 2019. Prior to same, Roisin was an Associate Professor of Oncology (Breast and Ovarian Cancer Program) and Co-Director of the Developmental Therapeutics Program at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center (SKCCC) at Johns Hopkins, US and continues to hold an adjunct position. She graduated with a 1st class honors medical degree from Trinity College, Dublin in 2001 and completed medical oncology fellowship training in both Ireland and at Johns Hopkins.

Prof Connolly is a medical oncologist and clinical investigator with expertise in the development of biomarkers of response to anti-cancer therapies, and the design and conduct of clinical trials that test investigational new drugs in the treatment of patients with both early- and late-stage cancers. She has led numerous multicenter clinical trials in collaboration with the Cancer Therapy Evaluation Program (CTEP) at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the Translational Breast Cancer Research Consortium (TBCRC), and the Eastern Co-operative Oncology Group (ECOG)-ACRIN in the US. Professor Connolly is Study Chair for the international phase III ECOG-ACRIN study (E2112) investigating the epigenetic agent entinostat in combination with hormonal therapy in patients with metastatic breast cancer. She recently received the prestigious ECOG-ACRIN Young Investigator Award 2019 for excellence in clinical investigation.

Roisin is Director of Cancer Research @UCC and a Principal Investigator with Cancer Trials Cork at CUH. In 2020, Prof Connolly took on the role of Co-Chair of the Cancer Trials Ireland Breast Disease Specific Group. Roisin is a member of the AICRI Steering Committee

Roisin has been awarded a 2.37M HRB grant (4.2M with co-funding) to support the UCC Cancer Trials Group, which encompasses the active Oncology Clinical Trials Units in both Cork and Waterford. This will lead to expansion of the portfolio of innovative clinical trials available to patients in the South/Southwest, and investigator-led clinical projects. The award has a dedicated focus on training the next generation of cancer researchers and research staff, and she has received co-funding from Breakthrough Cancer Research for a Clinical Research Fellowship which commences June 2022.

Roisin has received an Irish Cancer Society grant to support a Women's Cancer Survivorship Clinic in Cork, which she is leading with Professor Josephine Hegarty (School of Nursing) and multiple collaborators across the region. Her goal is to improve outcomes for patients with cancer through innovative clinical and translational research, in collaboration with UCC, national and international researchers.

She is incredibly supportive, not just to the junior medical and nursing staff and students, but also to her administrative team in the UCC Cancer Trials Group. Staff wellbeing is very important to her.