



## **3U Partnership Diabetes Research Conference**

Islet transplantation, a treatment not currently available for people with type 1 diabetes in Ireland, was a major focus of the Fourth Annual 3U Partnership International Diabetes Conference entitled 'Current Challenges in Diabetes Research' which took place at RCSI (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland) in Dublin on Friday 16th January 2016. DRIVE researchers from Irish partners Dublin City University (DCU), Boston Scientific, University College Dublin (UCD) and RCSI were among the attendees.

Among the speakers was DRIVE Coordinator Dr Garry Duffy (RCSI) who introduced the DRIVE Consortium's smart biomaterial technologies, which have the potential to improve this therapy and broaden its applicability to more type 1 diabetes patients by enhancing the survival of transplanted islets and abolishing the need for systemic immunosuppressive drugs, which have significant negative side effects.

Professor James Shaw, Chair of the UK Islet Transplant Consortium, presented an overview of the advances made in this therapy throughout the UK. Islet transplantation has made a huge difference in the lives of recipients, completely preventing dangerous hypoglycaemic attacks, which prior to the transplant could occur without warning.

3U Diabetes Partnership members and DRIVE Principal Investigators Prof Seamus Sreenan and Dr Diarmuid Smith (both RCSI) organised the conference, which brought together leading diabetes researchers from the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Ireland. The conference focused on hot topics in research into both type-1 and type-2 diabetes.

Diabetes is a priority research focus of the 3U Partnership, which brings together the academic strengths of Maynooth University and DRIVE partner institutions DCU, and RCSI to enhance education and research opportunities across the three partner institutions.

DRIVE's Dr Diarmuid Smith, Consultant Endocrinologist at Beaumont Hospital remarked "Transplant of islets can be life-changing for some type 1 diabetes patients; in particular

those who struggle to recognise and manage low blood sugar readings (hypoglycaemia) due to insulin treatment. Although this treatment has been available for almost twenty years in centres in North America and Europe, Irish patients are still not able to avail of it. Over the past couple of years we have been working to develop a programme for Irish patients who would most benefit from it with support from colleagues in the UK, but investment locally is now required to get this programme off the ground.”



Keynote speakers and 3U Partnership researchers at the 4th annual 3U Partnership Diabetes Research Conference.

Left to right:

Dr Josephine Egan, Chief, Diabetes Section, National Institute of Aging, Baltimore, USA

Prof Seamus Sreenan (3U Diabetes Partnership and RCSI) Consultant in Diabetes and Endocrinology at Connolly Hospital, Dublin and DRIVE Principal Investigator

Dr Garry Duffy (RCSI), DRIVE Project Coordinator

Prof Domenico Accili, Director, Columbia University Diabetes and Endocrinology Research Centre, New York, USA

Prof Stephanie Amiel, RD Lawrence Professor of Diabetic Medicine, Kings College, London

Dr Ronan O’Gorman, 3U Diabetes Partnership Director, School of Health and Human Performance, DCU

Dr. Ronan Canavan, Irish National Clinical Lead for Diabetes, Consultant Endocrinologist at St. Vincent’s University Hospital, Dublin

Dr Diarmuid Smith (3U Diabetes Partnership and RCSI), Consultant Endocrinologist at Beaumont Hospital, Dublin and DRIVE Principal Investigator



DRIVE researcher Dr Laura Breen, National Institute for Cellular Biotechnology (NICB), DCU with keynote speaker Prof James Shaw, Professor of Regenerative Medicine for Diabetes, Newcastle University and Chair of the UK Islet Transplantation Consortium