

## Press Release

### ***CARING Perspectives: Public Forum on Living with Dementia and the Caregiver Experience***

Who cares for the caregivers? This is one of the questions that will be on the agenda of a public forum to be held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2016 at the Lewis Glucksman Gallery, UCC from 2pm-6pm. The symposium will provide a number of different perspectives from key stakeholders on the caregiver experience, including caregivers, researchers, clinicians and public figures. In coming together they will share their experiences and increase awareness of caregiving for dementia.

An increasing number of people in Ireland are providing care for a relative with dementia. This important unpaid work comes with an underappreciated cost to the health of the caregiver. Evidence suggests that dementia caregiving is associated with heightened psychological stress, as well as other problems such as depression.

“Our HRB and HSE-funded research examines the impact of dementia caregiving on the stress levels of caregivers, and how this in turn affects their health and wellbeing” said Dr Gerard Clarke, Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioural Science, UCC and the APC Microbiome Institute. “This includes the impact of stress on the gut microbiota as well as the potential of psychological interventions to counteract such effects.”

Speakers include Professor Eamon O’Shea (NUI, Galway) who will discuss current issues in dementia care in Ireland and internationally, Ms Vanessa Bradbury (The Alzheimer Society Of Ireland) who will discuss her work as a dementia adviser and evaluations from caregiver training courses conducted, Ms Betty Cogan who will discuss caregiving from a carer’s perspective, Ms Helen Rochford-Brennan, a leading spokeswoman on dementia and also chair of the Irish Alzheimer Society’s National Dementia Working Group will talk about living with younger onset Alzheimer’s and Dr Andrew Allen (APC Microbiome Institute, UCC) will discuss his research on stress in caregivers.

Artwork will also be on display at the Glucksman which was developed in a series of workshops for caregivers and their loved ones following on from a very successful scientific seminar on Caregiver Stress which took place in June at UCC.

“Participating in art related activities can have significant health benefits to those who are living with dementia or caring for a loved one with dementia, said Dr Andrew Allen, Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioural Science, UCC and the APC Microbiome Institute. “Often therapeutic and a form of relaxation, art can improve quality of life and create a positive environment.”

Held in collaboration with the Lewis Glucksman Gallery and St Finbarr’s Hospital, the workshops gave caregivers the chance to create unique pieces of artwork that illustrated what dementia caregiving meant to them. The workshops were guided by expert art therapists, Ms Karen Meikle, Mr Killian O’Dwyer and Ms Tina Whelan.

Participants were able to experiment with paint, magazine cut outs, tissue paper and various other materials. Towards the end of each workshop, everyone was given the opportunity to describe the personal meaning of the unique artwork produced. Caregivers found the experience to be both enjoyable and enlightening.

The Symposium is hosted by UCC's Department of Psychiatry & Neurobehavioral Science and Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation, together with the APC Microbiome Institute. The Health Research Board (HRB) is supporting this symposium through a Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination Award which aims to maximize the uptake of research findings into policy and/or practice.

Registration is free and all are welcome to attend, but registration is required. To register, please email [clarkelab@ucc.ie](mailto:clarkelab@ucc.ie) with your name and contact details.

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For further information please contact Dr Gerard Clarke, Department of Psychiatry & Neurobehavioral Science & APC Microbiome Institute, UCC tel 021 4901408; mobile 086 3528192; email: [g.clarke@ucc.ie](mailto:g.clarke@ucc.ie); or Dr Andrew Allen, Department of Psychiatry & Neurobehavioral Science & APC Microbiome Institute, UCC tel 089 9526518; email [andrewallen@ucc.ie](mailto:andrewallen@ucc.ie) or Dr Catherine Buckley, Communications & Outreach Manager, APC Microbiome Institute; tel 021 4903362; mobile 086 8554744; [email: c.buckley@ucc.ie](mailto:c.buckley@ucc.ie)

### **About the APC Microbiome Institute**

The APC Microbiome Institute The APC Microbiome Institute (APC; <http://apc.ucc.ie>) was formed in 2003 with funding from Science Foundation Ireland and in conjunction with key industry partners. It represents a seamless collaboration between University College Cork, Teagasc (the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority) and Cork Institute of Technology. It is widely recognised that the gut microbiota plays an important role in human health and has become one of the most dynamic, complex and exciting areas of research in both food and pharmaceutical arenas. Over the last decade the APC has established itself as one of the leading global centres in gut microbiota research. The APC has made several landmark discoveries and has published over 1000 research articles in peer-reviewed journals, generating many journal covers and associated editorials. The APC comprises over 300 individuals, from the scientific PI's (the APC Faculty) funded by the partner Institutions, the management team, and a dedicated group of research scientists, research assistants and postgraduates students.