

IANO AGM 2023

ORNG Report



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Clinical Research Nurses working within Cancer care in Ireland work under the umbrella of Cancer Trials Ireland, a cooperative body supported by HRB and Irish Cancer Society, who coordinate the management of cancer clinical trials in Ireland.

Cancer Clinical Trials are conducted in 14 hospitals throughout the country all linked to one of the eight Centres of Excellence. All centres carrying out research are affiliated with a University fostering a culture of research.

All Cancer nurses/Research nurses can reassure cancer patients that when on a clinical trial their wellbeing and best interest is always protected. Going on a clinical trial can offer them access to a drug not otherwise available and must never be seen a last resort when there is nothing else available.

Patients should be encouraged to ask if a clinical trial is available and if not, if it is possible to be referred to another institution where a trial is available. Cancer Trials Ireland positively encourage centres to refer patients to other centres where trials are available.

The National Cancer Strategy was published in 2017 (many submissions were made by IANO during the development of this strategy).

A chapter was dedicated to Cancer Research with the aim of developing a culture in Cancer Care that values research that benefits patients and supports those who engage in it stating that 'the positive impact of research activity, including clinical trials on the care of the patient is universally accepted'.

Enrolling 6% of patients to a clinical trial by 2020 was a goal of that Cancer Strategy. Unfortunately due to many unavoidable factors including COVID pandemic and HSE cyberattack this has not been realised but the following recommendations form the core of all Institutions strategic plan.:

- Research staff becoming an integral component of cancer care delivery.
- Time is dedicated to the pursuit of research.
- There will be adequate funding assigned to support this research.
- Posts will be secure and long term.
- Adequate facilities will be provided for Research Staff

Clinical Trials may involve trialling a new drug or looking at a drug already established and well known but now being trialled in a different combination or for a different indication. Some trials do not involve a drug but look at new ways of diagnosing a patient or predicting patients' outcomes.

Research is an integral part of all aspects of nursing and mandated in the role of ANP. Research generates critical evidence to inform decision making and ensures that our practices are evidence based.

In 2019 Dr. Ana Terres, Head of Research and Evidence and Assistant National Director HSE published the HSE Action plan for Health Research 2019-2029.

The key aims of the Action Plan are:

1. Develop and implement a robust governance framework for research activity in the context of evolving healthcare structures to protect and promote the interests of patients and the public in health and social care research.
2. Create research support and management roles, and develop the infrastructure required to underpin, enable and manage the research activity in the HSE.
3. Build research capacity in terms of human and financial capital to enable the sustainable growth of research activity into the future.
4. Implement institutional measures to facilitate the translation of research and innovation into policy and practice and increase dissemination of knowledge.
5. Support and promote the involvement of patients and the public in all levels of research activity.
6. Establish strong collaborative working relationships with key external stakeholders and contribute to the national health research system in a meaningful way.

Speaking on World Cancer Day Dr. Mark Lawler referenced the Journal of Cancer Policy by highlighting that 'patients treated in research active hospitals have better outcomes than those who are not. Research is a necessity not a luxury.'

Findings from research and clinical trials are leads to changes in practice and lead to a better patient outcome- a goal we all want realised. This is an exciting time to be working around Cancer Clinical Trials and Research.

Ms Helena McCallig, a member of our SIG won the IANOs president prize in 2022 and travelled to Sloane Kettering Memorial Hospital in USA where she learned about ongoing research and visited the clinical trials unit.

She is a member of EONS and will be speaking on the role of the Cancer research nurse at the EONS meeting in October.

The IRNM continues to support the educational and professional needs of Clinical Research Nurses & Midwives in Ireland. See <https://irnm.ie/>

