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**The Faculty of Health Sciences**  
presents

# The Inaugural Lecture of Professor Blánaid Daly

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# Dental Health: from the margin to the mainstream

Professor Blánaid Daly  
BA B Dent Sc FFGDP (UK) PhD FFPHM FHEA



Blánaid Daly is Professor of Special Care Dentistry and in 2022 was appointed Dean of Dental Affairs at the School of Dental Science, TCD.

Blánaid was born in Dublin and graduated in Dentistry from TCD in 1983. She worked in the Irish Community and Hospital Dental Services from 1984 to 1990. Blánaid moved to the UK to pursue higher training and joined the Dental School at King's College London (KCL). She planned to stay in the UK for a short period but stayed for 25 years! While at King's, she combined her

academic interest in Dental Public Health (DPH) with the clinical specialty of Special Care Dentistry (SCD). She was course director for the MSc in DPH and the MSc in Community Dental Practice and developed both programmes to be delivered as face to face and blended learning formats. Her PhD explored the oral health needs of homeless people and was informed by her work setting up and providing direct dental care services to homeless people in three London boroughs.

In 2010 Blánaid became academic lead in Special Care Dentistry at KCL. SCD as a new specialty had evolved predominantly as a clinical specialty but research and evidence base were sparse. The recognition of SCD as an academic discipline was essential to provide the evidence base for SCD interventions and also to enable development of skills and competences in SCD at dental undergraduate, specialty and CPD level.

*Inaugural lectures provide newly appointed professors with the opportunity to showcase their academic activity to the College community and members of the public. An inaugural lecture is a significant event in an academic staff member's career. At Trinity College, inaugural lectures are a ceremonial occasion, which is why academic robes are worn by the inaugural professor and the rest of the platform party.*

Blánaid returned to TCD in 2016 as Professor of Special Care Dentistry and (2017) Head of the Department of Public & Child Dental Health. Her overarching research and advocacy interests have remained the reduction of oral health inequalities, and widening access to dental care particularly amongst vulnerable groups and people living with disability. In 2019, she was a contributing author to the Lancet series on oral health that highlighted the global public health importance of oral diseases and the need for a radically different policy agenda to tackle this major public health problem. In 2020 she was appointed to the Lancet Commission on Global Oral Health Inequalities and was joint winner of the Aubrey Sheiham award for distinguished research in Dental Public Health from the International Association of Dental Research (IADR).

As Dean of Dental Affairs since 2022, Blánaid is keen to ensure dental curricula are inclusive and equip graduates with the skills and competence to meet the oral health needs of the Irish population including those who are vulnerable and marginalised. She is also a strong advocate for retention, participation and inclusion of women in academic dentistry and in STEM research.

Blánaid is grateful to her long-suffering family and in particular to her husband Wyn who has supported her at all times and throughout her career.