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The Faculty of Health Sciences
presents

The Inaugural Lecture of Professor Joseph Keane

19 January 2023

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Tubercular Challenges; Disruptive Research

Professor Joseph Keane



Professor Joseph Keane was appointed Professor of Medicine in 2018. He is a fellow of Trinity College Dublin, a member of the Royal Irish Academy, and a Consultant Respiratory Physician at Saint James's Hospital. As an opinion leader in tuberculosis he has published widely on the topic, covering the spectrum from molecular science to clinical practice.

Professor Keane was born in County Clare and graduated with honors from Trinity College in 1988. After general professional training in the Federated Hospitals, he passed his Irish membership and United Kingdom membership exams in 1990 and 1991, respectively. He began respiratory specialist training at Saint Vincent's Hospital with MX FitzGerald; and then became board certified in Pulmonary Medicine after completing a pulmonary/critical care fellowship at Boston University. After fellowship he remained on as faculty in Boston University and successfully competed for independent NIH grant research funding. This led to his article with the FDA, on the association of tuberculosis and the use of biological therapies. The article, 'Tuberculosis associated with Infliximab, a tumor necrosis factor a neutralizing agent' was published in the New England Journal. It has been cited over 4500 times, making it the most cited article in the research field, since its publication.

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.

In 2002 he was appointed as consultant at Saint James's Hospital. Through the support of Dr. Finbarr O'Connell and with HRB funding, Professor Keane re-established his research lab in Trinity/St. James's. The Trinity/St. James's TB Immunology Group works in the Trinity Translational Medicine Institute and continues research and collaboration with other Dublin schools such as Biochemistry and Immunology Trinity College Dublin, and the School of Veterinary Medicine UCD. His research is funded by the Royal City of Dublin Hospital Trust (RCDH), the Science Foundation Ireland and the Health Research Board. RCDH funding to the TB Immunology Group provides the systemic supports required to generate a new pipeline of clinician scientists for Ireland.

Tuberculosis remains a public health concern in Ireland, and Professor Keane advocates for developing a national TB service. This new endeavor is led by Dr. Mary O Meara, who is our new director of public health national TB lead. At the center of this plan is the work of the SJH TB Multi-Disciplinary Group. This team includes public health doctors and nurses, the Irish Mycobacteria Reference Laboratory, and the Saint James's clinical service led by Prof. Anne Marie McLaughlin.

For three years Professor Keane has served as Chief Clinical Academic Officer for Trinity/ Dublin Midlands Hospital Group. In that regard, he is an advocate for the model of Academic Health Sciences Centers to under-pin Irish health care - not just in the domain of patient service but also in education, training, research and innovation.

Professor Keane lives in Clontarf with his wife Valerie and daughter Anna Sophia, with occasional visits from Elva, Brian and Maccon.