



The Faculty of Health
Sciences presents:

The Inaugural Lecture of Professor Mary McCarron

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Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Mary McCarron, PhD, MSc, BNS, RNID, RGN, F.T.C.D is Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor of Ageing and Intellectual Disability at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, a leader in multidisciplinary health sciences and an international expert in the fields of intellectual disability, ageing, dementia, and palliative care. The award of a Chair in Ageing and Intellectual Disability reflects Professor McCarron's visionary leadership of this critical research area focused on a too often and too long neglected population, people with an intellectual disability.



Professor McCarron was born in Mullahoran, Co. Cavan and educated at the Convent of Mercy in Granard Co. Longford. She undertook her initial nursing education at Stewarts Hospital in Palmerston and James Connolly Memorial Hospital in Blanchardstown. She was awarded National Nurse of the Year in 1989. Professor McCarron completed her Bachelors in Nursing at Dublin City University and was awarded one of the first Clinical Fellowships in Nursing and Midwifery from the Health Research Board. She completed her PhD at the School of Nursing and Midwifery Trinity College in 2002 and was appointed to the lecturing staff there in 2003. From 2005 to 2011 she held senior leadership roles within the School, including Director of Research and Head of School. In 2011 she was awarded Honorary Fellowship of Trinity College Dublin and was elected Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences.

As the first nurse leader appointed to the role of Dean of the largest Faculty of Health Sciences in Ireland, Professor McCarron is leading the related schools of Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Dental Science in developing creative responses to health challenges. As stated in the mission, the Faculty pursues:

- The highest quality of care being offered to each individual;
- Research to find new solutions to complex health concerns;
- Translation of the results of research to improve bedside care, manage risk factors, prevent disease, ease convalescence and maintain quality of life; and
- Seeing the individual as more than disease and symptoms.

In realizing this mission, Professor McCarron is supporting the finding of new, creative strategies to work smarter and deliver the best quality of care, even when there are fewer resources.

Professor Mary McCarron, is leading the first ever longitudinal study of Ageing in Persons with an Intellectual Disability (IDS TILDA), conducted in tandem with TILDA, a general national ageing study. As well as tracking the key determinants of health and wellness for people with an intellectual disability as they age, the IDS-TILDA team's innovative and inclusive approach of involving participants from the design stage of the study to dissemination has been recognised as exemplary.

A growing research agenda includes world leading and internationally recognized work on dementia in persons with Down syndrome, spanning brain training for older adults with Down syndrome in collaboration with Cambridge University and Down syndrome Ireland; assessment and diagnostics and person centred and end of life care. This work has informed the design of the Daughters of Charity Disability Support Service Willow View and Meadow View House designed to support and respond to the needs and concerns of persons with intellectual disabilities with mid-stage dementia and complex nursing and palliative care for persons with late-stage dementia. These homes received the 2014 Specialist Care Centre of the Year and the 2014 Building Project of the Year Irish Healthcare Centre Awards. At the official opening, Minister of State Kathleen Lynch TD said the two homes "will serve as a model for all dementia care initiatives in Ireland. They are not just about new construction and interior design, they also include innovative programming approaches. The development has potential to influence the strategies that will be considered and implemented for all persons with dementia."

Professor McCarron is a consultant and spokesperson on ageing-related issues for key organizations and her research is a source of data for the Irish government supporting evidence-based policy making and the tracking of policy outcomes for persons with an intellectual disability.

An active member of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD), Professor McCarron has taken a leadership role in establishing the European Research Group on Palliative Care and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.

Ageing has been identified by Trinity College as a strategic research theme and Professor McCarron plays a critical leadership role in Trinity EngAGE, where 140 academics are involved in researching the ageing-related domains of The Mind, Body, Social environment and built environment. In 2010 in conjunction with Professor Heleen Evenhuis, Professor McCarron led the development of a PhD exchange programme between the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Trinity College and the Department of Intellectual Disability Medicine, Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Professor McCarron holds a Research Professorship at the Centre for Excellence in Ageing & Community Wellness at the University at Albany NY and has consulted there on nationally significant dementia assessment, environmental design and care management approach projects led by Professor Philip McCallion. She also actively supports building humane responses to people who are ageing with an intellectual disability in Hong Kong, Taiwan and India.

Widely published, a sought after speaker and an inspiring teacher, Professor McCarron is the developer of cutting edge postgraduate programs in ageing, dementia and palliative care that advance improvements in care for those with chronic illness and dementia.

She lives in Donadea, Co Kildare with her husband Noel, and their two children, Louise and Cathal.

