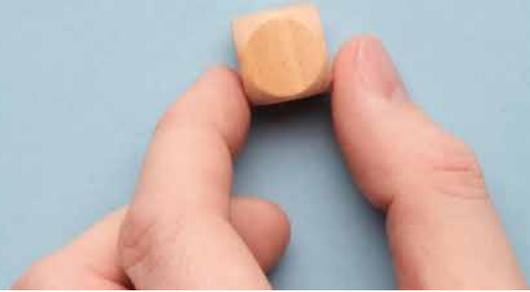


2021



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End of Year: Thrombosis Ireland A Year in Review



Written by Ann Marie O'Neill, CEO,
Thrombosis Ireland

It has been the busiest year in the history of Thrombosis Ireland. The worry of Covid-19 and the different vaccines has caused confusion and so much added anxiety and fear among thrombosis patients, their families & carers. We have worked hard to ensure that everyone had access to the latest guidelines and recommendations from the National Coagulation Centre, St. James Hospital, so that they could make correct and informed decisions for themselves. Our phone lines remained open, VTE education sessions with healthcare professionals and patients/families continued throughout the year but were moved online. Our continued effort to reach every household in the country in 2020-2021 with our VTE National awareness advertising campaigns on television, national radio, local radio, digital media and all social media platforms, was a great success, reaching millions of Irish citizens with our life saving message but we are acutely aware that there is so much more to do.

Thrombosis refers to abnormal, life-threatening blood clots that form in the artery or vein. A clot in the vein (usually in the leg or pelvis) is known as a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and a clot that breaks off and travels to the lungs is known as a pulmonary embolism (PE). Together, DVT and PE make up venous thromboembolism

(VTE). 60% of all blood clots happen as a direct result of a hospital stay or in the 90 days post discharge.

The devastating impact of VTE cannot be over-stated. We frequently encounter patients who have survived a life-altering thrombotic event, but are left with significant physical, psychological and emotional burdens. More-over, despite advances in care, many people who experience VTE do not survive. It is alarming to note that VTE remains a leading cause of death for hospitalized patients, it is the leading cause of death in cancer patients, after the cancer itself and the No.1 cause of direct maternal death in our maternity hospitals. It is also disappointing to learn that many VTE related deaths are potentially preventable but that opportunities to identify high-risk individuals and to implement preventative measures, such as VTE risk assessment of all patients and pharmacological thromboprophylaxis, are frequently missed.

Thrombosis patients frequently report that they were unaware of the signs and symptoms of VTE prior to their diagnosis and were not aware of their own level of risk. This has been reported, particularly in the setting of patients with cancer. The risk of thrombosis is significantly elevated in this population and VTE is

recognised as being the second leading cause of death among patients with cancer, second only to cancer progression itself. Efforts to improve awareness of thrombosis risk in this patient group but also among others including pregnant women and hospitalised patients must be prioritised in order to avoid any unnecessary delays in obtaining a diagnosis and initiating potentially life-saving treatment. Efforts to ensure that healthcare providers are continually reminded of the risk of thrombosis must also be made in our hospitals and in community practice/primary care.

However, in recent years, significant advances have been made in the field of VTE and Thrombosis Ireland are proud to support the efforts being made by hospitals and many of our healthcare providers to improve the quality of VTE prevention and treatment in this country. In recognition of these efforts, Thrombosis Ireland launched our inaugural **VTE Exemplar Awards 2021**. These awards celebrated

high levels of achievement in a number of key areas and are intended to showcase outstanding individuals and hospital teams/hospital groups who have excelled in areas such as **leadership & education, quality improvement, research & innovation and patient safety**.

The entry categories:

- VTE Scientific Advancement Award Maternity Hospital/Acute Hospital
- VTE Quality Improvement Award Maternity Hospital/Acute Hospital
- VTE Best Hospital Award
- VTE Best Hospital Group Award
- VTE National Champion Award

We are delighted to announce the winners in each category

2021 VTE Scientific Advancement Award in our Maternity Hospitals was awarded to Prof. Brian Cleary, Chief Pharmacist & Dr. Jennifer Donnelly,





Thrombosis Ireland

Spot The Signs... Save A Life

Consultant Obstetrician and their multidisciplinary team in The Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. Brian & Jennifer and their multidisciplinary team, developed an electronic risk assessment tool called Thrombocalc, which calculates a simple risk score and makes recommendations on thromboprophylaxis based on each woman's VTE risk factors. Through collaborative research and quality improvement, Thrombocalc was embedded in routine care in the Rotunda Hospital, leading to increased compliance with VTE risk assessment, appropriate prevention and a trend to reducing the number of blood clots.

2021 VTE Quality Improvement in our Maternity Hospitals was awarded to Sile Gill, ADON and Dr. Samah Hassan and the maternity team in Mayo University Maternity Hospital. Sile & Samah led a QI program to monitor the hospitals practice regarding VTE prophylaxis in mothers and to implement measures to increase compliance. The introduction of a specially designed preforma, visual aids for staff and mothers 'Do you know your VTE Score?' and education sessions for doctors and nurses. The service was audited in January and then July 2021 and showed a huge increase in compliance with VTE Risk Assessment.

2021 VTE Scientific Advancement Award in our Acute Hospitals was awarded to Ireland East Hospital Group, VTE Service Review Working Group, with particular acknowledgement to the work of Mick Fitzpatrick for their VTE Incidence Data Dashboard. Developed in 2018, the VTE dashboard shows VTE incidents and burden of Hospital Acquired Thrombosis. This gives real-time VTE incidence patterns, which is crucial to VTE improvement, service provisions and advancement of clinical research. It is the first of its kind in Ireland and inpatient episodes are extracted, processed and uploaded for analysis.

Management and teams at group and hospital level, now have line of sight of VTE activity, raising VTE awareness and local initiatives.

2021 VTE Quality Improvement Award in our Acute Hospitals was awarded to St. Vincents Private Hospital Clinical Pharmacy Team for their VTE Prophylaxis Dashboard. Using the Meg audit tools, an app was developed with the help of VTE Ireland, Prof. Fionnuala Ni Ainle, Dr. Barry Kevane & Dr. Tomas Breslin to audit VTE Prophylaxis efficiently. This App has enabled SVPH to develop a quality of service and improve patient safety. It identifies areas that are underperforming and areas that continue to improve. Auditing of VTE prophylaxis is reported in real time and can be acted on immediately. The long-term vision is that it would be used in all Irish hospitals and that all data would be collected into a National System.

2021 VTE Best Hospital was awarded to Limerick University Hospital. This hospital DVT nurse led service was set up in 2019 with referrals from ED or directly from GP's. It has a 98% patient satisfaction rating. Out of 2100 patients seen to date only 2% have been admitted and 78% are discharged from clinic within 2-4 hours. In 2020 a virtual nurse-led clinic was set up to review and discharge patients with superficial thrombophlebitis, reducing attendance to the anticoagulation clinic. They have ongoing education of staff, patients and public in prevention and treatment of VTE. There are plans to set up a stand-alone Thrombosis Unit with a Warfarin Clinic & DVT and low risk PE management clinic. This will include an initiative surrounding the psychological impact of VTE on patient's health and well-being.

2021 Best Hospital Group was awarded to Ireland East Hospital Group. IEHG comprises 11 hospitals and cover greater than 1,000,000 people. This group

demonstrates above others its commitment to the provision of VTE excellence. Their focus is to promote evidence based care pathways for prevention of, diagnosis of and treatment of VTE and to harmonise pathways across hospitals with a Patient/HCP collaborative approach. They are the first group nationally to determine VTE incidents and the burden of hospital acquired thrombosis events within their hospital.

Thrombosis Ireland also wanted to honour the following VTE Warriors for their commitment on a daily basis, to ensure their patients receive optimal safe care and education in a truly compassionate and holistic way. This kind of care aids both physical and psychological recovery.

- 2021 VTE Warrior in our Maternity Hospitals was awarded to **Jacinta Byrne, CNMS, National Maternity Hospital.**
- 2021 VTE Warrior, **Catriona O'Leary, CNS Anticoagulation Services and cANP at Cork University Hospital.**
- 2021 VTE Warrior, **Sarah Garvey, ANP, Emergency Department, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin.**
- 2021 VTE Warrior, **Ciara Kirke, Clinical Lead, National Medication Safety Program, HSE.**
- 2021 VTE Warrior, **Niamh O'Hanlon, Chief II Pharmacist, St. Vincents University Hospital, Dublin.**
- 2021 VTE Team Warriors, **Prof. Fionnuala Ni Ainle & Dr. Barry Kevane, Consultant Haematologists, The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin.**

2021 VTE National Champions was awarded to **Dr. Su Maung & her exceptional VTE Working Group in Our Lady's Hospital, Navan, Co. Meath.** In the three years since the formation of the

VTE Working Group in Our Lady's Hospital, Navan, this team have managed to:-

- Implement VTE Risk Assessment and appropriate prophylaxis for all patients.
- Prospective data collection and incidence reporting for HAT
- Guidelines for management of superficial thrombophlebitis
- DVT diagnostic pathway & nurse led DOAC Clinic.
- Electronic prompt for Wells Score when ordering ultrasound, Doppler/CTPA
- Ongoing staff & Patient education
- Plans to set up VTE Patient support group

Congratulations to all our award winners. We look forward to many more 2022 nominations when the competitions open next April.

Thrombosis Ireland continue to advocate for a National VTE Clinical Program. VTE patients deserve a fully funded, clear, streamlined pathway through diagnosis, treatment and recovery no matter what hospital they attend, to ensure the best possible outcome. Mandatory VTE risk assessment for all patient will save lives. Every patient should be informed of their risk, the signs and symptoms of blood clots and the importance of getting medical attention fast. This is particularly important when they are being discharged from hospital, as they are still at increased risk of thrombosis for a further 90 days. Blood clots are preventable in many cases and treatable if diagnosed in a timely manner but potentially fatal if ignored. Preventable death from VTE is not and never will be acceptable. Continuous education of healthcare professionals is crucial to VTE Patient Safety. It is a matter of life and death.