

EXPERTS RAISE VITAL POINTS ON WHAT PARAMEDICS DO

To mark International Paramedics Day on 8 July, the Irish Paramedicine Education & Research Network (IPERN) hosted a panel discussion on the different and diverse roles in Irish paramedicine. Ann-Marie Bright, Assistant Professor in Mental Health Nursing at the University of Limerick and Lead of the IPERN Mental Health Special Interest Group, provides an overview.



The panel included a diverse range of experts who work in the paramedicine field, such as Ann McDermott – Community Paramedic (National Ambulance Service), Damien Gaumont – Critical Care Paramedic (National Ambulance Service), Dorett Fuelgraff – Community First Responder (Killarney CFR), Eamonn Byrne – Paramedic Researcher (Trinity College Dublin), Fearghal Murphy – Student Paramedic (Dublin Fire Brigade) and Phillip Wren – Flight Paramedic/Technical Crewman (Irish Coast Guard).

Discussions started with what people enjoyed about their roles: ‘autonomy’ and ‘problem solving’ were among the positives of working as a community paramedic as described



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by Ann McDermott, while Dorett Fuelgraff described “giving back to the community” as what she enjoyed best about **#WhatParamedicsDo**.

Critical Care Paramedic, Damien Gaumont discussed the importance of learning how other healthcare professionals do their job. He also identified that the idea that paramedics are mere ambulance ‘drivers’ is starting to disappear. There were many discussions around the professional identity of those working in paramedicine and the need for paramedics to be involved and to contribute to inter-professional education and similar initiatives, to help increase a general understanding of **#WhatParamedicsDo**.

IMPORTANCE OF MENTORSHIP

Paramedic Student Fearghal Murphy outlined the challenges he faced during callouts and how not all patient presentations resemble what one actually reads in the textbooks! The conversation progressed to discuss how providing and availing of mentorship is important in any paramedicine role.

Flight paramedic Phillip Wren identified those more experienced in the role as the natural choice for mentors, as they have the most exposure in **#WhatParamedicsDo**. Moving from a clinical setting, paramedic researcher Eamonn Byrne, who accrued 25 years’ experience with the HSE National

Ambulance Service at the coalface before commencing his PhD studies, identified the importance of research and its role in translating stories and opinions into ‘data’. This data will help drive future policy to dictate **#WhatParamedicsDo**.

Finally, the panel shared **#WhatParamedicsDo** after work and recommended several ways to relax after being on duty, such as a mountain walk, playing x-box, listening to podcasts, gardening and walking the dogs.

Special thanks to our panel of experts who gave of their time to contribute to this discussion. Special thanks also to Michelle O’Toole, RCSI for her support on the day and the rest of the IPERN team who are always on hand for advice, guidance and support. One thing is for sure, paramedicine and the future of paramedicine is in good hands!



IPERN
IRISH PARAMEDICINE EDUCATION & RESEARCH NETWORK

To watch the panel discussion, visit IPERN social media channels for a link to the recording. Sign up to IPERN’s mailing list for upcoming events by email ipern999@gmail.com or visit <https://ipern.blog/>