

The Qualities and Role of our Future Doctors – Prof Paul Finucane

Prof Paul Finucane, head of Graduate Medical School at the University of Limerick spoke to the session about the qualities and role of our future doctors in Ireland, primarily exploring how to best foster the professional and personal growth of incoming students as they navigate their way through the education system.

Prof Finucane discussed the changing nature of both medical practice and of practitioners in a modern setting. Medical practice has changed significantly, from being 'keepers' of knowledge to doctors having to stay on top of the vast amount of information and constantly updating their education. Doctors have gone from being autonomous in how they practice with long hours to being more accountable and wanting to achieve a better work/life balance.

By drawing on examples from around the world and how different countries have adapted, Prof Finucane also addressed the changes in how Ireland has shifted the view and practice of medicine along and with the necessary changes in the regulatory framework.

Primary to this is the eight domains of professionalism outlined by the Medical Council, being:

- Patient safety and quality patient care,
- Relating to patients,
- Communication and interpersonal skills,
- Collaboration and teamwork,
- Management (including self-management),
- Scholarship,
- Professionalism, and
- Clinical skills

A large part of this process is the continuous professional evaluation, either by patients or doctors themselves. The development of these key areas are vital for modern doctors. In summary, Prof Finucane concluded that many countries are now choosing to make these domains of professionalism explicit rather than implicit for the better development of doctors.