



## UCC to participate in European research project

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**University College Cork (UCC)** is to participate in a new research project that will investigate treatment practices for those who suffer from a mildly underactive thyroid gland.

Dr Patricia Kearney, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health in **UCC** is one of a group of researchers from universities across Europe who will be involved in the study called the "Thyroid hormone replacement for subclinical hypo-thyroidism trial" (TRUST).

Dr Kearney said; "I am delighted to formally announce the launch of the TRUST project. This international collaboration involves four countries - Scotland, the Netherlands, Ireland and Switzerland. It brings together experts in multiple disciplines, including geriatrics, primary care, endocrinology, cardiovascular disease, metabolic

medicine, and biostatistics, as well as the patient support group, Thyroid Federation International.

"The project has the potential to significantly improve the health and well-being of older people with subclinical hypothyroidism, resolving uncertainties about how best to manage this common condition," she added.

The study is funded by a €6 million grant from the EU's FP7 programme, which is the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. The programme is the EU's main instrument for **funding** research in Europe and runs until 2013. It aims to foster and support research in science and technology to address the issues surrounding social, economic, environmental and industrial that affect Europe.

The researchers will follow 3,000 older subjects over five years in order to better

understand how to treat people who suffer from a mildly underactive thyroid, or subclinical hypothyroidism.

Half of the subjects will be treated with the hormone replacement drug thyroxine, while the rest will be given a placebo. Both groups will then be monitored to evaluate how they respond to the treatments.

The condition affects around one in six people over the age of 65 and has been linked to various health problems, such as heart attacks and strokes, in later life.

The project will mean **UCC** academics will collaborate with experts in ageing, thyroid problems and vascular disease from around Europe, including researchers from the Leiden **University** Medical Centre and Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing, Netherlands and **University** of Berne, Switzerland. ■