

Over 90% of high profile medical professionals and communicators have experienced abusive behaviour | Dublin City University

By David R Grimes, Laura J Brennan, and Robert O'Connor

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A new study has found that over 90% of high profile medical professionals and communicators have reported significant abuse while working, both online and off, including persistent harassment and in some cases, physical violence and intimidation. A substantial number also received vexatious complaints to their employers.

The study, Establishing a taxonomy of potential hazards associated with communicating medical science in the age of disinformation, was authored by Dr. David Robert Grimes from DCU's School of Physical Sciences, patient advocate Laura Brennan and Dr. Robert O'Connor, head of research at the Irish Cancer Society.

Patient advocate Laura Brennan was herself living with a terminal diagnosis of cervical cancer up until her death in March 2019. She dedicated her life to health advocacy to empower girls and their parents to choose vaccination against HPV and worked with the HSE here in Ireland and the World Health Organisation (WHO). She actively encouraged parents to get the facts and spread the message that "the HPV vaccine is the best tool we have to prevent this cancer from happening." Recent Irish figures show that the uptake of the HPV vaccine has risen to over 70%, up from 51%, with the uptake up to 90% Laura's home county of Clare.

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