From Evidence to Action: Pre-pregnancy, Pregnancy and Postpartum Care for Women with Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is increasingly common among women of reproductive age and presents important challenges across the reproductive journey. Despite growing recognition of the associated maternal and offspring risks, care and research remain predominantly focused on pregnancy, with comparatively limited attention to reproductive health before conception and following birth.

Drawing on current evidence, this presentation will examine the reproductive health and healthcare experiences of women with Type 2 diabetes across the preconception, pregnancy and postpartum periods. The presentation will bring together evidence on women's experiences, potentially modifiable influences on outcomes, and interventions designed to optimise care. Collectively, these perspectives highlight a disconnect between women's reproductive healthcare needs, the factors that may contribute to improved outcomes, and the evidence available to inform effective models of care.

Attention will be given to the fragmentation of reproductive and diabetes care, limited opportunities for proactive conversations about pregnancy and reproductive health, and the concentration of research and interventions within pregnancy rather than across the reproductive continuum. The presentation will consider how these findings can inform a shift from episodic, pregnancy-focused management towards a more proactive, integrated and person-centred approach to reproductive healthcare for women with Type 2 diabetes. It will conclude by considering priorities for clinical practice, service development and research that reflect women's needs before, during and after pregnancy.

Biography

Dr Rita Forde is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at University College Cork and a Visiting Lecturer at King's College London, where she completed her PhD as a doctoral fellow of the Foundation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND). Prior to her academic career, Rita worked as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Diabetes at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin.

Rita's research and clinical expertise focus on women's health and diabetes across the life course. Her research interests include optimising pre-pregnancy care for women with diabetes, gestational diabetes, female sexual health, diabetes-related stigma, and the development of self-management approaches to prevent insulin-related lipohypertrophy.