

PROJECT NO TEARS - CONTINUING IN 2025

As we begin the new year, we in the OTRG and the NO TEARS team want to share some highlights of the exciting progress we've made in 2024, one year on from our first events to address patient needs in DED treatment. This last year has been a remarkable journey, filled with collaboration, discovery, and most importantly, getting the chance to work more closely with the members of the Dry Eye community.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC AND PATIENT INVOLVEMENT (PPI)



Photo: Dr Niall O'Reilly, Dr Laurence Fitzhenry, and Ms Tess Ames accept the Irish Pharma Research and Development Achievement Award, Oct 30, 2024

One of our proudest achievements last year has been the development of a dedicated PPI framework which we are continuing to build at SETU. This framework emphasizes the integration of patients' voices at every stage of our research. By engaging directly with those impacted by DED, we aim to ensure that our work is not only scientifically robust but also deeply aligned with patient needs and experiences. [We've presented this work at major conferences in Seattle, Belfast, Waterford, Madrid, and are hopeful to continue to share this work outwardly.](#) It was also recognized at the [Pharma Industry Awards](#) as contributing to outstanding Research Programmes.

[Click here to see some of the work that's been presented.](#)

We're excited to continue refining this framework in the coming year and welcome further input from our community. A huge thanks to our patient contributors on this project, Donna McGreevy, Mary Bradley, Yvonne Desmond, and our Patient Advocacy Rep, Shannon Lee of Fighting Blindness.

UNDERSTANDING THE PATIENT JOURNEY TO DED **DIAGNOSIS**

Our PhD student, Dorsa Golestaneh, has made significant strides in her research on the patient journey to a DED diagnosis. By combining qualitative interviews and data-driven analysis, she hopes to uncover key insights into the barriers and challenges faced by patients. We would like to send a huge thanks to the members of the Steering Committee, which includes two Patient Contributors, as well as clinical experts and patient advocates. This work will provide critical guidance for pre-clinical lab work in creating new treatments for DED. A huge thanks to all of you in the community who responded to the chance to review her most recent proposal abstract, which was recently awarded the [Fighting Blindness Career Development Award](#). This will allow her to present in an international conference next year and gain more insight into the global needs of the DED community.

LOOKING AHEAD: OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE

As we continue into 2025, we are eager to expand our network and create more opportunities for collaboration. Whether you are a patient, healthcare professional, researcher, or advocate, we invite you to join us in shaping the future of eye health. We have submitted two large funding applications, and are in process of a third, which all incorporate Public and Patient Involvement, particularly around DED, at the core of the work.

If you'd like to stay up to date with the latest in Dry Eye Disease research and programmes in the OTRG, email Tess.Ames@setu.ie to sign up to the mailing list.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We couldn't have achieved so much without the incredible support of our partners, collaborators, and the wider community. Your enthusiasm and commitment fuel our mission to transform the landscape of dry eye disease research.

From all of us in the Ocular Therapeutics Research Group, we wish you a joyful holiday season and a fantastic start to the new year. Let's continue to work together in 2025 to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those affected by DED.



Photo: Researchers in the Ocular Therapeutics Research Group at SETU