



THE IRHEC NETWORK NEWSLETTER

International *Reproductive Health* Education Collaboration

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|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| 01 | Chair's Welcome
By Professor Bola Grace | 02 | IRHEC at the ESHRE 2026
Network Meeting & Session 19 |
| 03 | Working Group Updates
Education . Research . Communication | 04 | NES
Introducing our new NES |
| 05 | Member Spotlight
New Steering Committee & NES members | 06 | Membership & Contact
Get involved with the Network |

OUR MISSION

IRHEC is a multidisciplinary global collaboration. Our mission is to increase **reproductive health awareness** using the **life-course approach**, improving reproductive health and facilitating informed decision-making in family planning among adolescents, people of reproductive age, healthcare and education professionals, and policymakers - through the development, evaluation, and dissemination of inclusive educational resources.

CHAIR'S WELCOME

A Welcome from our new Chair



Prof Bola Grace
Chair, IRHEC

It is a great pleasure to take on the role of Chair of IRHEC. I am delighted to be part of a strong international community that brings together such a diverse and committed community of professionals working to advance reproductive health education across the life course. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a welcome to Professor Mara Simopoulou, our new Chair elect, and warmly thank our previous Chair, Dr Maria Ekstrand Ragnar and outgoing Immediate Past Chair, Professor Joyce Harper for their leadership, commitment and invaluable contribution to IRHEC. Their dedication has helped strengthen the network and laid an important foundation for its continued development.

In this issue, you will find updates on the ESHRE 2026 Annual Meeting in London, highlights from our research activities, and news from across the IRHEC Network. I hope you enjoy reading about the work of our members and the exciting activities underway.

I look forward to working with the IRHEC community as we continue to strengthen collaboration, share knowledge and advance evidence-based, inclusive reproductive health education.

Bola Grace

Prof Bola Grace
Chair, IRHEC

Save the Date — IRHEC Network Meeting

Don't miss our next online Network Meeting! Join us online on Wednesday, 14th October at 10:00 CET for our next IRHEC Network Meeting. We will cover updates from the newly formed Network Engagement Sub-Committee (NES), upcoming initiatives, and open discussion for member input. A calendar invite will be sent to all registered IRHEC Network Members. You can also join just by clicking the link below!

Click [here](#) to join the meeting:  | Meeting ID: 936 545 929 931 | Passcode: PZ7Jw9



IRHEC at the ESHRE 42nd Annual Meeting



Annual In Person IRHEC Network Meeting 2026

Sunday 5 July 2026 · ExCeL London

Just before the ESHRE 2026 Opening Ceremony, IRHEC held its Annual In-Person Network Meeting, a wonderful afternoon gathering during which we reconnected with colleagues, welcomed new members, and shared fresh ideas to advance our mission.

Discussions during the meeting reflected the depth and diversity of expertise across our Network, from clinical practice to research and education and reaffirmed our shared commitment to advance evidence-based reproductive health education. We were especially encouraged by the enthusiasm of new members joining the Network bringing renewed energy and perspectives to our ongoing work. As we look ahead, we are excited to build on the momentum from this gathering, and we thank everyone who took the time to join us.

Session 19: IRHEC Update

Monday 6 July 2026 · ExCeL London

On the second day of the Annual ESHRE Meeting in London, IRHEC took the stage with its dedicated IRHEC session. Our Past Chair Dr **Maria Ekstrand Ragnar** opened the session with an overview of IRHEC's mission, achievements, and future directions. Dr Ekstrand Ragnar highlighted the network's growth, ongoing research activities, educational resources, and IRHECs continued initiatives and efforts to strengthen communication work and knowledge sharing.

We were also honoured to welcome Dr **Danielle Schoenaker** (Senior Research Fellow, University of Southampton), who presented on community awareness of preconception health, a timely reminder that reproductive health education has to start well before pregnancy. A lively discussion followed, reflecting just how engaged our IRHEC Network members and the wider ESHRE community are in advancing reproductive health education worldwide.



Dr Danielle Schoenaker, ESHRE 2026 London



Dr Maria Ekstrand Ragnar, ESHRE 2026 London

Read more:

M. Ekstrand Ragnar, B. Grace, A. Carvalho, M. Fardilha, J. Harper, I. Popova, M. Serdarogullari, C. Antoniadou Stylianou, R. Sylvest, M. Simopoulou, L26/O-071 IRHEC update, Human Reproduction, Volume 41, Issue Supplement_1, July 2026, deag083.071

D. Schoenaker, L26/O-072 Community awareness of pregnancy preparation and preconception health, Human Reproduction, Volume 41, Issue Supplement_1, July 2026, deag083.072

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Working Group Updates: Education, Research, Publication & Dissemination



Education Working Group

The Education Working Group continues its work towards the ongoing development and refinement of IRHEC's educational resources. Education in reproductive health is a dynamic and evolving process. Ensuring that our materials remain relevant and evidence-based requires continuous effort, reflection and renewal.

A Roadmap for the Evolution of Education. The development of educational resources is a step-by-step process, encompassing the creation and validation of materials, gathering feedback, assessing impact, and identifying opportunities for improvement. This iterative cycle allows resources to evolve in response to evidence, experience, and the needs of the international community they serve. Continuing our work on the Teacher's resources project involving school curricula is the next phase.

New Materials and New Directions. We are currently entering a period of rigorous brainstorming as new definitions are introduced in the scientific community. Our immediate aims include revisiting and updating standing resources, focusing on IRHEC's Educational leaflets, while working towards setting new goals on new educational materials.



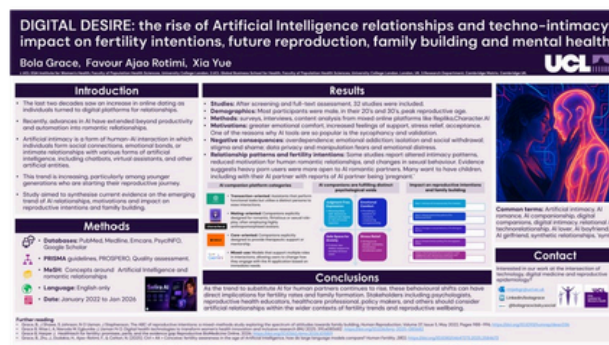
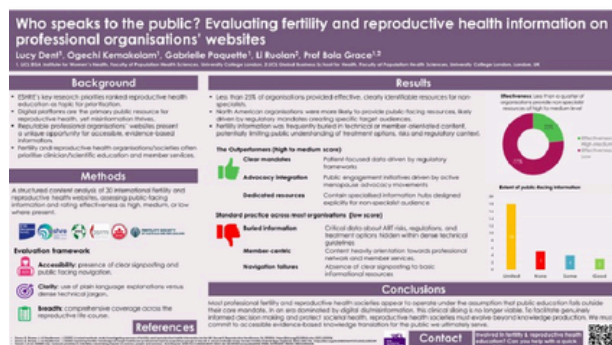
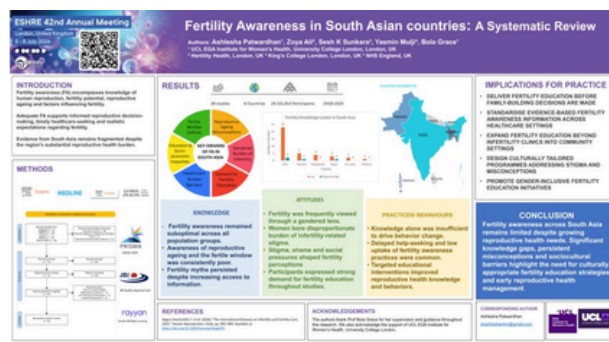
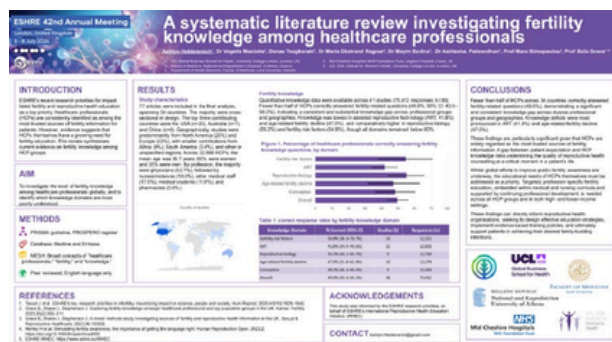
A Collaborative and Dynamic Network. Meaningful educational development depends on constructive feedback and collaboration. As this work progresses, we will be drawing from the dynamic of our Network to gather perspectives, encourage contributions, and ensure that the evolution of our educational resources remains a truly collaborative effort. We encourage all Network members to **explore, use, and share the freely accessible IRHEC Educational Resources** within their teaching, professional practice, and wider networks. Together, we can help ensure that high-quality reproductive health education and fertility awareness continues to reach and empower diverse communities worldwide.



Research & Publications Working Group

The Research Working Group examines global research gaps, with a focus on Fertility Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviours across diverse population groups.

Recent presentations: At the recent ESHRE 2026 Annual conference, several papers were shared in line with our aims and objectives.



Read more:

- A. Heidenreich, E. Maziotis, D. Tsagaraki, M. Ekstrand, R. Ragnar, M. Badiru, A. Patwardhan, M. Simopoulou, B. Grace, L26/P-563 A systematic literature review investigating fertility knowledge among healthcare professionals, Human Reproduction, Volume 41, Issue Supplement_1, July 2026, deag083.896
- A. Patwardhan, Z. Ali, S.K. Sunkara, Y. Mulji, B. Grace, L26/P-434 Fertility-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in South Asia: a systematic review, Human Reproduction, Volume 41, Issue Supplement_1, July 2026, deag083.768
- L. Dent, O. Kemakolam, G. Paquette, B. Grace, L26/P-437 Who speaks to the public? Evaluating fertility and reproductive health information on professional organisations' websites, Human Reproduction, Volume 41, Issue Supplement_1, July 2026, deag083.771
- B. Grace, F. Ajao, Rotimi, L26/P-575 Digital Desire: the rise of Artificial Intelligence relationships and techno-intimacy; impact on future fertility, reproduction, family building and mental health, Human Reproduction, Volume 41, Issue Supplement_1, July 2026, deag083.908

Call for Publications: our database on the ESHRE webpage is a valued resource for the global research community. Share relevant work by emailing IRHEC_ESHRE@outlook.com with the subject line "publications". Please visit: [IRHEC Publications database](https://www.eshre.eu/ESHRE/Pages/IRHEC-Publications-Database.aspx). This is an ongoing initiative, and we value your input. Reach out to get involved!

Spread the word. Conferences, meetings, and workshops are vital opportunities to promote IRHEC's mission and recruit clinicians, researchers, young scientists, and patient representatives. Please use IRHEC materials in your clinic, at conferences, and in presentations.

COMMUNICATION GROUP UPDATES

Communication Group Updates: Introducing the NES & New Social Media Campaigns



Communication Working Group

Introducing the new Network Engagement Sub-Committee (NES)!

We are delighted to introduce IRHEC's newly formed Network Enhancement Subcommittee (NES), established to strengthen engagement and connection across the wider IRHEC Network in support of our mission to advance reproductive health education.

We are pleased to welcome the following network members to the NES:

- **Ms Alba Andreu**, Department of Endocrinology and Nutrition, Hospital Clínic Barcelona, Spain
- **Dr Anabel Salazar Vera**, IVI Madrid, Spain
- **Ms Sara Somers**, Clinical Trial Coordinator/Research midwife, Women's Clinic, Ghent University Hospital, Ghent, Belgium
- **Dr Yulia Bandrivska**, Obstetrician-Gynaecologist, PhD Medicine, IVF Medical Centre "Professor Stefan Khmil Clinic", Ternopil, Ukraine
- **Ms Helen Yuanyuan Cao**, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Zurich

In the coming months, the NES team will be reaching out to connect with members across our Network in order to create an "IRHEC Network Expertise Map". This will ensure opportunities for knowledge transfer and collaboration are fully utilised and diverse perspectives are considered across all our initiatives. If you would like to connect with NES please email IRHEC_ESHRE@outlook.com with the subject line "NES".



IRHEC Social Media Campaign

Latest on Social Media Platforms

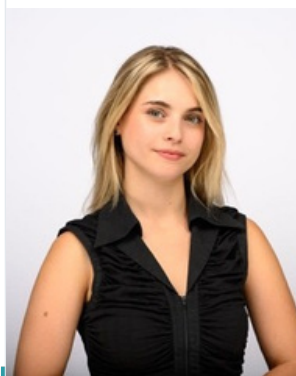
Participate in our forthcoming social media campaigns, ongoing polls, share your perspectives, and help drive open conversation on the questions that matter most in reproductive health education. Please email IRHEC_ESHRE@outlook.com with the subject line "Social Media" to be connected with our new Social Media Lead, Ms. Danae Tsagkaraki. IRHEC remains active on Instagram and LinkedIn, with new collaboration opportunities continuously developing to maximise engagement and impact.

Putting faces to the mission

BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST · GREECE

Danae Tsagkaraki

Research Unit of Physiology of Reproduction and Clinical Embryology, Medical School, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens · Joined Steering Committee in July 2026



"I am Danae Tsagkaraki, a Postgraduate Researcher at the Research Unit of Physiology of Reproduction and Clinical Embryology of the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. Alongside my research activity being my primary calling, I am honoured to serve as Coordinator of an international postgraduate programme on "Advanced Clinical Embryology" bringing together professionals and educators across borders — an experience that has shown me first-hand the value of exchanging knowledge across countries and different areas of expertise. With education at the forefront of my professional development, I'm naturally drawn to the International Reproductive Health Education Collaboration (IRHEC). At a time when we are experiencing the slippery slope of overstimulation and misinformation, evidence-based knowledge only truly reaches people when passionate individuals join forces to communicate it responsibly and accessibly. Being part of IRHEC has shown me exactly what becomes possible when science crosses borders through collective effort rather than individual voices alone. As a new member of the Steering Committee, I am eager to contribute to this vibrant, joined-up exchange of research, knowledge, and perspectives — and to help empower people worldwide to make informed decisions about their reproductive health and family building choices. I look forward to contributing to evolving the shared purpose of my IRHEC colleagues."

LECTURER IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH · UNITED KINGDOM

Dr Daniel Marcu

PhD, MSc, FHEA · UCL Institute for Women's Health · Joined Steering Committee in July 2026



"I am Dr Daniel Marcu, a Lecturer at University College London's Institute for Women's Health and a Visiting Research Associate at the University of East Anglia. My interest in fertility research took shape during my MSc in Prenatal Genetics and Fetal Medicine at UCL, where I worked on a project applying genome editing to generate sperm from infertile individuals — work that set the direction for everything that followed. I went on to complete a PhD in Sperm Biology and Genomics at the University of East Anglia, combining genomics, transcriptomics, and proteomics to better understand and improve sperm selection for fertility treatment. It was through that research that I became increasingly aware of the gap between what's scientifically possible and what actually reaches patients and clinicians. That gap is what led me to co-found Virilitas Labs, where we're building rapid diagnostics for male fertility, and it's the same gap that draws me to IRHEC. Good science on its own isn't enough if it stays locked in journals or gets drowned out by noise and misinformation online — it needs people willing to translate it, explain it, and put it into the hands of those making real decisions about their reproductive health. Joining the IRHEC feels like a natural extension of the work I'm already doing across research, diagnostics, and education, and I'm looking forward to contributing to that mission — helping make sure evidence-based reproductive health knowledge is something people everywhere can access and act on."

★ ONE OF OUR NEW NES MEMBERS

CLINICAL DIETITIAN-NUTRITIONIST & PhD RESEARCHER · SPAIN

Alba Andreu

Nutritionist, Department of Endocrinology and Nutrition, Hospital Clinic Barcelona, Spain · Joined Network Engagement Sub-Committee in July 2026



"I am Alba Andreu, a Clinical Dietitian-Nutritionist at Hospital Clínic Barcelona and a PhD researcher. My work focuses on women of reproductive age who are living with obesity or have undergone metabolic and bariatric surgery. In my clinical practice, I take a patient-centred, non-stigmatising approach to eating behaviours, lifestyle and emotional wellbeing. I believe that women should never be reduced to numbers or outcomes: their autonomy and lived experiences must remain central to care. My doctoral research explores how metabolic and bariatric surgery shapes women's reproductive journeys, from fertility and preconception health to pregnancy outcomes. Through this work, I aim to generate evidence that strengthens personalised preconception care and supports women's fertility goals. As a new NES member, I look forward to amplifying diverse voices, strengthening international collaboration and helping translate research into more personalised, integrated care. Outside work, I enjoy reading books by women writers and running around Barcelona."

GET INVOLVED

Membership & Contact



Just Joined the IRHEC Network?

Welcome, we're delighted to have you on board

IRHEC is a dynamic, collaborative international community united by a shared commitment to education, advocacy, inclusivity, and meaningful impact in reproductive health. As a member, you can look forward to:

Two Online Meetings a Year

Connect with members, exchange ideas & discuss reproductive health education

Social Media Participation

Support campaigns, contribute content & amplify key conversations

Research Opportunities

Contribute to initiatives, share ideas, & collaborate on future projects

Annual In-Person Gathering

Meet colleagues at the ESHRE Annual Meeting & strengthen connections

Educational Resource Support

Receive guidance on using & disseminating IRHEC materials within your professional communities

Know someone passionate about reproductive health education?

The more, the merrier, so share our joining link and help the Network grow!



[Join the IRHEC Network](#)

STAY CONNECTED

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Email IRHEC_ESHRE@outlook.com