

November 2019

The Drug Discovery Zone was a themed zone, supported by Wellcome. There were six scientists taking part in the zone:

- Sudhin Thampi is a gastroenterologist researching new implant materials with different shapes/structures to help suit individual patient conditions.
- Sergio Saldana is an immunology researcher trying to develop a device to help treat MS.
- Katie Fala investigates how bacteria communicate through chemical signals, and how drug treatments can interrupt this communication.
- Frances Shiely is an epidemiologist looking at ways to improve the way we conduct and communicate about clinical trials.
- Diarmuid Kenny works with proteins to see how medicines work and try to find new ones.
- Aoife Campbell researches how different parts of the brain connect with each other, and what happens when it goes wrong.

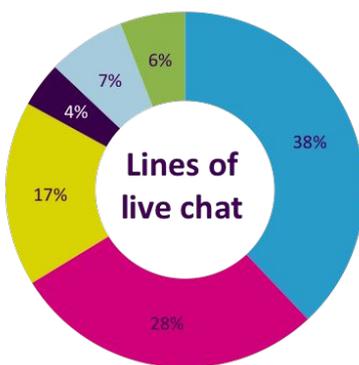
Key figures

All the scientists took an active role in the zone, with Aoife and Katie accounting for over 50% of all answers in ASK and live chat lines.

The zone was on topic, with students asking about bacteria, medicines, diseases and the brain.

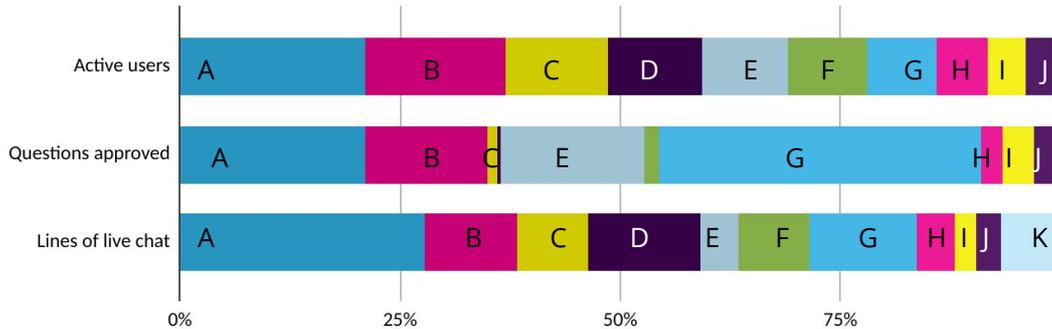
	DRUG ZONE	NOV '19 ZONES AVERAGE	2012-19 ZONES AVERAGE
Schools	11	11	11
Students logged in	381	367	372
% of students active in ASK, CHAT, VOTE, or comments	86%	87%	86%
Questions asked	809	851	692
Questions approved	470	384	303
Answers given	668	529	511
Comments	61	69	67
Votes	356	281	304
Live chats	21	17	16
Lines of live chat	6180	5092	4359
Average lines per chat	294	293	271

Scientist activity



SCIENTIST	PLACE
Aoife Campbell	1st
Katie Fala	2nd
Sergio Saldana	3rd
Sudhin Thampi	4th
Diarmuid Kenny	5th
Frances Shiely	6th

School activity



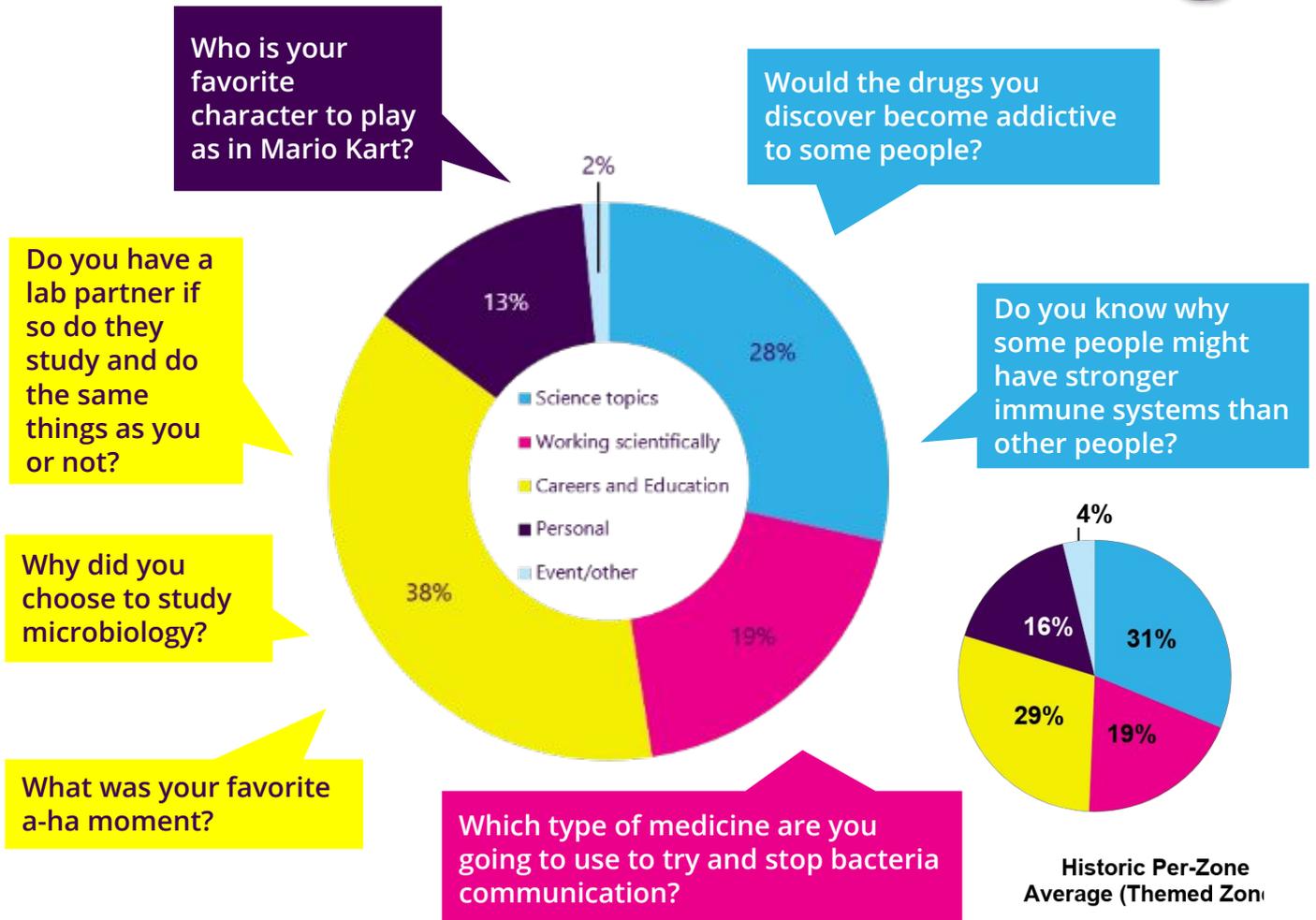
	YEAR GROUP(S)	CLASSES
A Colaiste Pobail Setanta, Dublin (U)	2nd Year	3
B Leixlip Community School, Kildare (U)	Transition Year	3
C Blessington Community College, Wicklow (U)	Transition Year	2
D Drumshanbo Vocational School, Leitrim (U)	3rd, 5th Year	2
E Killinarden Community School, Dublin (DEIS/U)	Transition Year	1
F Piper's Hill College, Kildare (DEIS/U)	Transition Year	2
G Skerries Community College, Dublin (U)	1st, 2nd Year	2
H Grange Community College, Dublin (DEIS/U)	1st Year	1
I F.C.J. Secondary School, Wexford	2nd Year	1
J Scoil Dara, Kildare (U)	Transition Year	2
K Queen of the Universe NS, Carlow (U)	6th Class	1

We try to reach schools that are less likely to receive visits and benefit from other engagement activities. Find out what we mean by under-served SFI target schools (U) and Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), and how you can support us in working with these at about.imascientist.ie/2016/widening-participation

Frequent words used in live chats by students and scientists



Question analysis



Examples of good engagement

Students asked about the scientists' interests outside of work with conversations about music and video games. This helps the students to see the scientists as "normal" people who might be "like me", and builds a rapport so they can feel like they really get to know someone who works in science, helping to build on their Science Capital:

*"Sergio what music do you listen to?" - **Student***

*"Classical when I need to be really focused. Also I like some classic spanish singers. You?" - **Sergio, Scientist***

*"I don't mind classical, i mainly listen to arctic monkeys, gorillaz and bands like that" **Student***

*"I was in two Arctic Monkeys concerts. One in Valencia (Spain) and other in Lisbon (Portugal). Good taste!" - **Sergio, Scientist***

*"Deadly!!! Do you play any video games?" - **Student***

*"I am now playing The Witcher III and Tomb Raider for PS4. But I want to buy the new Star Wars game :)" - **Sergio, Scientist***

*"New star wars game looks deadly" - **Student***

Students also took an interest in the scientists' work, and wanted to know more about it:

*"Diarmuid what diseases are you trying to cure?" - **Student***

*"There is a disease called Huntington's disease, where a protein builds up in the brain causing brain damage. I am working on a drug that will reduce the amount of the protein in the brain and hopefully stop the damage" - **Diarmuid, Scientist***

*"how many people are affected by huntington's" - **Student***

*"Huntington's affects around 5 people per 100,000 thousand. So in Ireland its around 1000. but worldwide its much higher obviously" - **Diarmuid, Scientist***

*"does it mainly affect adults or children?" - **Student***

*"Always adults. Mostly people in their late 40's, early 50's. There is a gene and if you have it you are 100% going to get huntington's. If you do not have it you are 100% not going to get it" - **Diarmuid, Scientist***



Scientist winner: Aoife Campbell

Aoife's prize money plans: "I would run an event during brain awareness week in March 2020 in conjunction with Angelman Syndrome Ireland. FutureNeuro help coordinate a campaign during Brain Awareness Week called Love Your Brain, when I would work with ASI to run an event to promote the Angelman research that is happening in Ireland. I would like to involve the children with the disease and their parents to co-design the event and to help us to raise awareness and understand the disease more."

Read Aoife's [thank you message](#)

Student winner: jump42can

As the student winner, jump42can will receive a certificate and a gift voucher.

Feedback

We're still collecting feedback from teachers, students and scientists but here are a few of the comments made about November's *I'm a Scientist*...

I think it will have made a difference in smashing the stereotypes of scientists and, in doing so, will make science more accessible. I love the fact the students can ask whatever they want too. The caliber of scientists that took part was incredible! Everyone in my zone had amazing communication skills and it was great to see how into it everyone got!
— Scientist

[We took part] for the first time this year. The students THOROUGHLY enjoyed it and wanted me to thank the organisers of such a successful event. It was extremely easy from the teachers point of view and during our live chats yesterday and today, the students were so amazed at getting their answers back immediately. It was great fun! Many thanks and we look forward to joining up again next year!
— Teacher

[The students] have really enjoyed their time on I'm a Scientist and are spending their Friday afternoon making posters about all they have learned. They now LOVE science!!! They are still interested in so many answers coming their way!
— Teacher

thank you for coming on and answering lots of questions! i've enjoyed taking part in i'm a scientist get me out of here! thank you very much :)
— Student