Background:
Similar to other countries, Ireland has a national policy for palliative care provision requiring that palliative care be provided at different levels of expertise from specialist to basic, embedded in clinical practice. Perinatal palliative care is defined here as the planning and provision of supportive care during life and end-of-life care for a fetus, newborn infant or infant and their family in the management of an appropriate candidate condition. The British Association of Perinatal Medicine (BAPM) suggests that neonatal palliative care be considered in five categories namely:

1. An antenatal or postnatal diagnosis of a condition which is not compatible with long term survival.
2. An antenatal or postnatal diagnosis of a condition which carries a high risk of significant morbidity or death.
3. Babies born at the margins of viability, where intensive care has been deemed inappropriate.
4. Postnatal clinical conditions with a high risk of severe impairment of quality of life and when the baby is receiving life support or may at some point require life support.
5. Postnatal conditions which result in the baby experiencing “unbearable suffering” in the course of their illness or treatment, where palliative care is in the baby’s best interests.

This proposal seeks to systematically review the literature to support the development of integrated care pathways for neonates with life limiting conditions in an Irish setting. It is anticipated that the review will inform a doctoral study undertaken by Denise.

Short bio
Ms Denise McGuinness is a Clinical Midwife Specialist (Lactation) at the National Maternity Hospital, Dublin and a Clinical Tutor in Midwifery at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin. Denise graduated with a Masters in Research in January 2013 from the UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Sciences. This research study explored the experiences of mothers as they suppressed lactation following late miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death. A national breast care leaflet and post-natal leaflet to support bereaved mothers following the loss of a baby was an outcome of the study. The first paper reporting key findings from the study was awarded Best Research Paper of the Year at the Irish Healthcare awards 2014. Denise subsequently received the INMO CJ Coleman Research Award and the Director of Midwifery Award in 2015.