Fionnuala Sweeney

Atlantic Fellow at GBHI
Trinity College Dublin
Home Country: Ireland
Field of Employment: Journalism

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Professional Profile

Key Areas: journalism, reporting, storytelling

Fionnula Sweeney is an award-winning broadcast journalist with more than two decades' international experience. During this time, she has observed firsthand the power and reach of communication, and how information—or lack thereof—can alter people’s lives. With the support of GBHI, she intends to help change the narrative of dementia by using her journalistic skills to communicate the condition’s impact on the patient, caregiver, family, and wider community. Sweeney is particularly passionate about reaching areas where access to information and treatment might not be readily available. Dementia is a global epidemic, and while advancements are being made in diagnosis and treatment, the challenge remains of communicating these developments and their resulting impact on society. Her work will focus on finding a way to change social attitudes by weaving the latest developments in treatment with the stories and experiences of those directly impacted by dementia.

“Dementia touches everyone. It may pass you or me by, but it will find another close to us. I want to break dementia down into tiny little pieces, so that by sharing, a global epidemic becomes a bite-sized problem.”
Bio: Fionnuala Sweeney anchored prime time news programs for CNN International from London and Atlanta. She also reported from around Europe and the Middle East on major stories, including CNN’s Emmy and Peabody Award-winning coverage of the fall of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 and the network’s Emmy-nominated live coverage of the 2011 Libya Revolution as rebels entered Tripoli and the Gadhafi Compound. In 2006, she anchored and reported from Haifa during the Israel-Hezbollah Conflict, which earned CNN an Edward R. Murrow award. Most recently, as vice president and executive editor of the Cipher Brief, a Washington-based security and intelligence digital platform, she managed daily editorial focus and operations, including special security-related coverage of President Trump’s incoming administration. She also launched several podcast streams on the site and conducted interviews with leading US and European intelligence and security figures.