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# Life Health Features

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## Brave mum Marina needs €100k for treatment of rare illness in US



Marina Jordan Killoran with husband Alan and daughters Shannon and Erin before she was affected by her illness

Luke Byrne    
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The family of a mother-of-two is appealing for help in raising €100,000 for a potentially life-saving operation.

Marina Jordan Killoran (45) - originally from Tallaght in West Dublin, but now living in Newbridge, Co Kildare - was a fitness fanatic who loved to run and swim before she became ill from deadly auto-immune illness Systematic Scleroderma Syndrome 10

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years ago.

Her husband, Alan Killoran, told the Herald the illness slowly began to destroy her life.

"She was so fit, far more than me. She used to run and swim and she ate very healthily.

"Of all the people in the family, she was the least likely you would have thought would get sick," he explained.

"Now she spends around six-and-a-half days a week in bed. You can just imagine the psychological impact that it would have," he said.

Former Bank of Ireland worker Ms Killoran's illness is a chronic and progressive auto-immune disease.

It is caused by the over-production of the protein collagen - the same protein which is injected in cosmetic surgery to smooth wrinkles on the face - which thickens the connective tissues of the body.

This process leads to scar tissue building up on the internal organs, such as the lungs, heart, kidneys and liver. The illness is extremely rare and, as such, has undergone scarce research.

However, one treatment in the US has proven to be somewhat effective in fighting the illness, which involves stem cell transplants. Mr Killoran has said that if Marina receives this treatment, it's hoped some of the damage to her organs will improve.

### Normal

Her family believe there is a good chance she will resume a normal life if she gets the treatment. "If she even had a 20pc increase in her quality of life, that would be amazing," her husband said.

She has recently returned from America, where she had a consultation with Dr Richard Burt, a specialist in the field, at the Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

She has been deemed a candidate for the stem cell treatment, but now must raise around €100,000 for the procedure and six weeks in the hospital. The couple's two daughters Shannon (20) and Erin (17) have been great helpers to their mother.

"They have more or less grown up with a sick mother," Mr Killoran said.

A number of events have been lined up to help raise funds, including a swim at the Forty Foot in Dun Laoghaire and a music night in Crumlin.

*A fundraising page has been set up at: [https://www.ifundraise.ie/2267\\_stem-cell-transplant-for-marina-jordan-killoran.html](https://www.ifundraise.ie/2267_stem-cell-transplant-for-marina-jordan-killoran.html)*

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