

Friday, May 22

09:00 - 10:00

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Keynote Lectures

Chair: Carlo Torti (Roma)

09.00 - 09.30 Projected trajectories of life expectancy in HIV: role of new and old disparities

Enrico Girardi, Roma

The advent of combination antiretroviral therapy 30 years ago has dramatically changed the life trajectory patterns of HIV infection. In the pre-cART era the pattern was characterized by short survival, frequent opportunistic infections and AIDS-defining illnesses; high pill burden and toxicity even when ART is used; profound uncertainty and stigma. In the cART era the pattern was characterized by durable viral suppression becomes routine; survival extends toward normal life expectancy; the clinical burden shifts toward non-AIDS, age-related, and treatment-related comorbidities. The presentation will address this evolution and it will discuss the inequalities that lie behind the current heterogeneity of the current life trajectories of persons living with HIV.

Chair: Carlo Federico Perno (Roma)

09.30 - 10.00 Novel Vaccine Platforms: Lessons from HIV

*Dan Hung Barouch, Boston
USA*

In this talk, I will review the vaccine platforms that were developed and tested for candidate HIV vaccines and the unique challenges facing HIV vaccine development. I will then discuss how these platforms have been used successfully for other pathogens, including viral vector and mRNA platforms, with applications to ZIKV, SARS-CoV-2, and influenza. Finally, I will discuss current concepts in vaccine development, including the importance of mucosal immunity.

10:05 - 11:05

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Symposium

Breaking barriers to PrEP and STI management: from testing to access to monitoring

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continue to represent a significant public health burden, with increasing incidence observed across diverse populations. In parallel, the introduction of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) has substantially transformed the landscape of HIV prevention, offering highly effective biomedical strategies to mitigate transmission risk. Nevertheless, the success of these interventions depends not only on their efficacy, but also on equitable access and the rational allocation of healthcare resources. Accessible and timely STI screening plays a pivotal role in early diagnosis, treatment, and interruption of transmission chains. However, in the context of limited healthcare resources, screening practices must be optimized according to epidemiological evidence and tailored to populations at greatest risk. Such rationalization is essential to ensure clinical effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and sustainability, while preserving the fundamental principle of equitable access. Similarly, the broad implementation of PrEP remains a cornerstone of HIV prevention. Despite robust evidence of its efficacy, uptake continues to be hindered by structural, economic, and social barriers. The advent of novel PrEP modalities—including Long-Acting injectable formulations and alternative dosing strategies—represents a crucial advancement, with the potential to overcome existing barriers, improve adherence, and expand prevention to underserved populations. This conference will provide a forum for critical discussion of the dual challenges of expanding access while ensuring the rational use of STI screening and PrEP. By integrating clinical, epidemiological, and public health perspectives, the meeting seeks to promote evidence-based strategies that advance the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of STI and HIV prevention.

Chairs: Salvatore Cecere (Bologna), Barbara Suligoi (Roma)

Discussants: Andrea Antinori (Roma), Cristina Mussini (Modena)


10.05 - 10.20 Scaling Up HIV Cascade Testing Across Clinical and Extra-Hospital Contexts
Manuel Maffeo, Milano
10.20 - 10.35 Unequal Access to HIV Prevention: Structural and Social Challenges in PrEP Implementation
Angelo Roberto Raccagni, Milano
10.35 - 10.50 Consensus statement of the Italian Society for Infectious and Tropical Diseases (SIMIT) on clinical guidance for screening of bacterial STIs
Pietro Leone Giovanni Vinti, Milano
10.50 - 11.05 Discussion
10:05 - 11:05
Sala Pegaso 2
>>> Symposium

Immunization Strategies in Vulnerable Hosts: From Immunodeficiency to Emerging Infections

One of the most complex and multifaceted legacies of the COVID-19 pandemic concerns the expansion of vaccine platforms. New technologies, particularly those related to mRNA vaccine platforms, have burst onto the scene of basic and translational research, offering new possibilities for the development of targeted vaccines against old unresolved infections and new emerging infections. Vaccine protection, in chronic conditions such as HIV and in immunocompromised individuals, provides clinical protection against agents and factors associated with clinical progression, with benefits for clinical status, quality of life, and survival. However, a complex and contradictory legacy of COVID-19 concerns the emergence of vaccine hesitancy in the population, the causes and consequences of which are being studied at the cultural and social levels. This is particularly true among high-risk individuals, such as those with immunodepression, for whom the benefits of vaccine protection are unparalleled. The emergence of vaccine hesitancy even in a population historically loyal to science and treatment, such as people living with HIV, must be carefully analysed and countered through alliances involving the scientific and social communities.

Chairs: Massimo Andreoni (Roma), Nicoletta Frattini (Milano)
Discussants: Pietro Colletti (Marsala TP), Pasquale Giuseppe Macrì (Arezzo)
10.05 - 10.25 Vaccine response and clinical protection to Varicella Zoster Virus in immunocompromised individuals:
Experience in people with HIV (PWH)
Giulia Carla Marchetti, Milano
Experience in other immunodepressed patients
Marco Iannetta, Roma
10.25 - 10.40 Developing new vaccine platforms for emerging infections: the arbovirosis model (dengue and chikungunya)
Emanuele Nicastrì, Roma
10.40 - 10.55 Is there also vaccine hesitancy among persons living with HIV?
Massimo Giuseppe Luigi Cernuschi, Milano
10.55 - 11.05 Discussion



Italian Conference
on AIDS and Antiviral
Research

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10:05 - 11:05

Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

10:05 - 11:05

Sala Mizar

>>> Oral Communications

11:10 - 12:10

Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

11:10 - 12:10
Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

11:10 - 12:10
Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

12:15 - 13:15
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Symposium

Understanding HIV's evolutionary past and future: implications in the control of HIV infection

Despite more than 40 years of research since the discovery of HIV, key aspects of the virus are still not fully understood. Further studies are needed to elucidate how HIV has adapted to humans and, crucially, how our immune system has evolved in response. A critical part of this defense involves restriction factors—intracellular human proteins that inhibit HIV replication. Understanding how these factors influence infection is vital for predicting outcomes and for exploring strategies that may enhance their protective effects. Furthermore, studying the evolution of HIV within a host provides a complete picture of its pathogenesis, guiding the development of new treatments to control or eradicate the virus from tissue reservoirs. To support these efforts, improving current diagnostic assays is essential for accurately assessing the HIV reservoir in both clinical and research settings.

Chairs: Maria Santoro (Roma), Maurizio Zazzi (Siena)
12.15 - 12.30 Host restriction factors in HIV: insights and therapeutic implications
Guido Poli, Milano
12.30 - 12.45 HIV compartmentalization: insights and implications for treatment outcomes
Carlo Federico Perno, Roma
12.45 - 13.00 Diagnostics challenges in the evaluation of HIV reservoir
Ilaria Vicenti, Roma
13.00 - 13.15 Discussion
12:15 - 13:15
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Expert Meeting

COVID-19 in 2026

More than 5 years since the start of the pandemic, most of the severe COVID-19 burden falls upon immunocompromised patients who cannot mount an endogenous immune response after both vaccination and/or natural infection. And COVID-19 continues to threaten public health and health-care systems worldwide. Older individuals and people with comorbidities remain at greatest risk of progression to severe disease. COVID-19 poses a particular threat to people who are immunocompromised, who have impaired immune responses to promote viral clearance, leading to prolonged infection and an increased potential for both viral resistance and severe disease. Although COVID-19 vaccines have drastically reduced the risk of severe disease, hospitalisation, and death for most individuals, patients who are moderately to severely immunocompromised often have suboptimal immune response after vaccination. For these reasons, antiviral treatment is still necessary today for those at risk: current treatment guidelines from the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) recommend that individuals with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 at high risk for progression to severe disease, which includes people with immunocompromising conditions, receive prompt treatment with the antivirals or with anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies if circulating variants are susceptible. This session will review more recent data from scientific research and the evidences in the real-world setting.

Chairs: Giovanni Cenderello (Sanremo IM), Antonina Franco (Siracusa)

12.15 - 12.35 Antiviral therapy against SARS CoV-2 infection today: advantages and opportunities

Giovanni Di Perri, Torino

12.35 - 12.45 Discussion

12.45 - 13.05 Managing COVID in immunocompromised patients

Ivan Gentile, Napoli

13.05 - 13.15 Discussion

12:15 - 13:15

Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

12:15 - 13:15

Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

14:00 - 15:00

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Symposium

STI Prevention and Vaccinations: Emerging Evidence and Evolving Opportunities

A symposium hosted by the journal Sexually Transmitted Infections (BMJ Group)

Vaccination plays an increasingly relevant role in STI prevention, complementing behavioural and biomedical interventions. Hepatitis A and B vaccines remain established pillars of prevention for at-risk groups, while the population-level impact of HPV vaccination continues to expand. Emerging ecological and immunological data indicating a potential protective effect of MenB vaccination against *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* have renewed interest in vaccine-based strategies amid rising incidence and antimicrobial resistance. The Mpox vaccination campaign, particularly among people living with HIV, has further highlighted both the opportunities and the operational challenges of implementing targeted programmes in response to evolving threats. As evidence develops, greater clarity is needed on how these vaccines can be integrated into routine and targeted STI prevention frameworks. This symposium will present current data, biological plausibility, and key research gaps, drawing on clinical, epidemiological, and public health perspectives to support rational and evidence-based vaccination strategies for STI prevention.

Chairs: Anna Maria Geretti (Roma), Stefano Rusconi (Legnano MI)

14.00 - 14.15 The resurgence of hepatitis A in Europe

*Benedetto Maurizio Celesia,
Catania*

14.15 - 14.30 Evidence for MenB protection against *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*

Roberto Rossotti, Verona

14.30 - 14.45 Optimising Mpox vaccination for people living with HIV

Valentina Mazzotta, Roma

14.45 - 15.00 HPV vaccination in people living with HIV: are two doses sufficient?

*Deborah Konopnicki, Bruxelles
BE*

14:00 - 15:00
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

14:00 - 15:00
Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

14:00 - 15:00
Sala Mizar

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

16:10 - 16:35
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Special Session

ICAR 2026 Awards and closing remarks

ICAR support and reward the young excellences of Italian research with special prizes announced and awarded during this Session.

Chairs: Paolo Maggi (Enna), Giuseppe Nunnari (Catania), Ilenia Pennini (Padova), Carlo Federico Perno (Roma)
16.10 - 16.20 ICAR 2026 Scientific Committee Awards

Three prizes for the best Clinical, Basic and Social Science Abstracts

*Paolo Maggi, Enna
 Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania
 Ilenia Pennini, Padova
 Carlo Federico Perno, Roma*
16.20 - 16.30 ICAR Call for Research 2025-2026

Updates on the progress of the ICAR-SIMIT call for research

Antonella Castagna, Milano



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16.30 - 16.35 Closing remarks and ICAR 2027 announcement

Antonella Castagna, Milano

Paolo Maggi, Enna

Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania

Ilenia Pennini, Padova

Carlo Federico Perno, Roma