## Istituti Fisioterapici Ospitalieri – Provider n. 1270

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| **Titolo evento, Edizione** | **8th Workshop IRE on Translational Oncology: "EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX IN CANCER: TUMOR MICROENVIRONMENT DYNAMICS AND TRANSLATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES"** |
| **Sede di svolgimento dell'evento** | Centro Formazione Bastianelli (via Fermo Ognibene 23, Rome) |
| **Data di svolgimento** | **19-20 ottobre 2026** |
| **Destinatari dell'attività formativa** | **Medico chirurgo (tutte le discipline), biologi** |
| **Obiettivi Formativi** | |
| **Numero crediti previsti** | |
| **Responsabile Scientifico** | **Giovanni Blandino** |

**Lunedì 19 ottobre 2026**

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| h. 13.30-14.00 | Welcome Address<br>Livio De Angelis<br>CEO Istituti Fisioterapici Ospitalieri<br>Rome, Italy<br><br>Giovanni Blandino<br>Scientific Director<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy<br><br>Claus Jørgensen<br>Deputy Director of the Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute<br>Manchester, UK |
| Session I | Chairperson:<br><br>Mario Colombo<br>IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori<br>Milano, Italy<br><br>Anna Bagnato<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h. 14.00-14.30 | Forcing inflammation-dependent tumor initiation and progression<br>Valerie Weaver<br>University of California<br>San Francisco, USA |
| h.14.30-15.00 | The dual role of inflammation in cancer immunity<br>Santiago Zelenay<br>Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute<br>Manchester, UK |
| h.15.00-15.30 | Targeting Pin1 to Break ECM-Driven Immune Evasion<br>Giannino Del Sal<br>University of Trieste<br>Trieste, Italy |

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| h.15.30-16.00 | Coffee break |
| h. 16.00-16.30 | Mechanosensitive adhesion networks in cancer: linking the extracellular matrix to gene regulation.<br>Adam Byron<br>The University of Manchester<br>Manchester, UK |
| h. 16.30-17.00 | Beyond the Actin Cytoskeleton: MENA as an Architect of the Extracellular Matrix and the Tumor Immune Microenvironment in Lung Cancer<br>Paola Nisticò<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h. 17.00-17.30 | Stroma-related immunosuppressive and Immunocompetent niches in Cancer<br>Fatima Mechta-Grigoriou<br>Institut Curie<br>Paris, France |

**Martedì 20 ottobre 2026**

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| Young Investigator Session | Chairpersons:<br><br>Marta di Martile<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy<br><br>Roberto Dinami<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h. 09.30-09:45 | The Role of Plasticity and Heterogeneity in Small Cell Lung Cancer Invasion<br>Martin Baker<br>University of Manchester<br>Manchester, UK |
| h. 09:45-10:00 | The lox-mena-ecm axis to define spatial immunity and immunotherapy response<br>In nsclc patients<br>Nicla Porciello<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h. 10:00-10:15 | The endothelin a receptor senses stiff extracellular matrix to guide drug response in high-grade serous ovarian cancer<br>Piera Tocci<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h. 10:15-10:30 | The role of matrix stiffness in driving head and neck cancer recurrence<br>Martina Dragonetti<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h. 10:30-11:00 | Coffee break |
| h. 11:00-11:15 | Finding KRAS's Partners in Crime<br>Nasir Haider<br>Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute<br>Manchester, UK |
| h. 11:15-11:30 | Metabolic plasticity of cancer-associated fibroblasts enables stromal reprogramming in pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma<br>Francesca Romana Auciello<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h. 11:30-11:45 | From metabolic stress to hepatocarcinogenesis: hipk2 role in shaping the premalignant |

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| | microenvironment<br>Silvia Sozzi<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h. 11:45-12:00 | Age-associated Changes in the Lung Microenvironment that Impact Melanoma Metastasis<br>Lutong An<br>Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute<br>Manchester, UK |
| h.12.30-14.00 | Lunch |
| Session II | Chairperson:<br><br>Claus Jørgensen<br>Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute<br>Manchester, UK<br><br>Paola Nisticò<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy |
| h.14.00-14.30 | A 3D morphogenetic blueprint for metastatic outgrowth in breast cancer.<br>Stefano Piccolo<br>University of Padua<br>Padua, Italy |
| h.14.30-15.00 | Targeting Pathophysiological ECM Remodeling in Tumor Microenvironments<br>Irit Sagi<br>Weizmann Institute of Science<br>Rehovot, Israel |
| h. 15.00-15.30 | Tissue phase transition in cancer evolution and immune response<br>Giorgio Scita<br>IFOM – The AIRC Institute of Molecular Oncology<br>University of Milan<br>Milan, Italy |
| h. 15.30-16.00 | Coffee break |
| h. 16.00-16.30 | Therapy-induced extracellular matrix remodeling and its potential clinical implications<br>Yuval Shaked<br>Technion – Israel Institute of Technology<br>Haifa, Israel |
| h. 16.30-17.00 | ECM and immunotherapy resistance in head and neck cancer<br>Amanda Psyrri<br>National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) – School of Medicine<br>Athens, Greece |
| h. 17.00-17.30 | Closing remarks<br>Giovanni Blandino<br>IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute<br>Rome, Italy<br>Claus Jørgensen<br>Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute<br>Manchester, UK |

**Referenti organizzativi:**
**Tel/Fax 3451685168 email: alessandra.sulmicelli@mitcongressi.it**

## Profili Professionali

**AN LUTONG:** Postgraduate Researcher and PhD candidate at the Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute, within the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health at The University of Manchester.
As a key member of the *Skin Cancer & Ageing Research Group*, led by Dr. Amaya Virós, her research focuses on melanoma tumor evolution, molecular characterization, and the microenvironmental factors that drive metastasis. Specifically, their work investigates how biological aging and tissue-specific lipid signaling influence the aggressive invasion of cancer cells. An Lutong has co-authored notable studies on the intersection of aging and epithelial cancer progression, contributing to a deeper understanding of high-growth melanomas.

**AUCIELLO FRANCESCA:**
**CLLFNC87M69F839K**
Francesca Romana Auciello, PhD, is a Research Scientist at the Regina Elena National Cancer Institute (IFO, Rome, Italy). She obtained her PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biology at the University of Dundee (UK) and subsequently worked at the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute in Glasgow. Her research focuses on pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, with particular interest in the metabolic interplay between cancer cells and the tumor micro- and macroenvironment, cancer-associated fibroblast heterogeneity, and the identification of early biomarkers for cancer detection through translational approaches.

**BAGNATO ANNA TERESA:**
**BGNNTR60E56H224H**
Her research has been pointed to define the role of endothelin-1 (ET-1) axis in tumor, focusing on ovarian cancer, identifying ET-1 receptors (ET-1R) as a novel targets for anticancer therapy. In particular her group characterizes the pleiotropic effects exerted by ET-1R on tumor cells and on the tumor microenvironment, modulating tumor growth, metastasis progression and response to therapy. Recently she demonstrates that blockade of ET-1R, with the repurposing of dual ET-1R antagonists, reduces tumor growth and metastasis in patient-derived preclinical models.

**BAKER MARTIN:** Martin J. Baker, Ph.D., is a Research Fellow at the University of Manchester, specialising in cancer cell biology and intracellular signalling. His research focuses on the role of RAC1 and related signalling pathways in tumour plasticity, heterogeneity and metastasis, with particular expertise in small-cell lung cancer and prostate cancer. He obtained his Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from the University of Cambridge and has held research positions at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Manchester. Dr Baker has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications, received an Early Investigator Award from the US Department of Defense, and serves as an editorial board member and reviewer for several scientific journals.

**BLANDINO GIOVANNI:**
**BLNGNN65L24I535M**
Giovanni Blandino is a medical oncologist and researcher with extensive experience in translational oncology. He currently serves as Acting Scientific Director and Director of the Translational Oncology Research Unit (UOC) at the Regina Elena National Cancer Institute. As part of institutional initiatives aimed at developing platforms for translational research to advance precision medicine in solid tumors, Dr. Blandino coordinates clinical and preclinical studies approved by the Institute's Ethics Committee. These studies focus on the generation and characterization of tumor organoids, used as surrogate models to evaluate personalized therapeutic strategies in real time. He has also established and currently leads a multidisciplinary intramural team including surgeons, medical oncologists, pathologists, molecular biologists, and bioinformaticians. This integrated approach optimizes the workflow from biopsy to ex vivo functional assessment of therapeutic responses.

**BYRON ADAM:** Adam is a Lecturer and group leader in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Manchester and a member of the Manchester Cell-Matrix Centre. Adam's research aims to understand how cellular interactions with, and mechano-responses to, the tissue microenvironment elicit signals at the nucleus that control fundamental aspects of cell behaviour, including regulation of gene expression, in health and disease. He uses systems-level approaches, integrating proteomics, sequencing, bioinformatics, functional cell biology, super-resolution imaging and disease models, to discover new properties of cell adhesion networks, with a focus on their dysregulation in cancer. Adam studied Biochemistry at the University of Warwick and spent a year of his degree working at AstraZeneca. He received his PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Manchester, where he studied cell adhesion in the laboratory of Professor Martin Humphries, and where he stayed to undertake postdoctoral work. Here, he developed methodologies for the isolation and proteomic analysis of integrin adhesion complexes, which led to the description of the first experimentally defined integrin proteomes and insight into the complexity of the molecular machinery of cell adhesion. He then moved to the research group of Professor Margaret Frame at the University of Edinburgh, where he used integrative 'omic approaches to investigate the dysregulation of cell adhesion proteins in cancer. He later took up

a Research Fellow position in the Institute of Genetics and Cancer, University of Edinburgh, where his interdisciplinary research revealed new roles for adhesion proteins in the nucleus of cancer cells. In 2022, he was recruited to an independent lectureship and group leader position at the University of Manchester.

**COLOMBO MARIO PAOLO:**
**CLMMPL55P25B300B**

Mario P Colombo is internationally recognized as an expert in tumor immunology, who contributes to several discoveries from DC MHC-I presentation of soluble protein (JEM 183:317, 1996) and, in vivo, cytokine and co-stimulatory genes transduction for innate response (JEM 173:889, 19991;) and for vaccination and cross-priming of tumor cell antigen (JEM 190:125, 1999), to the description of the peculiar role of co-stimulatory molecule OX40 on Treg (Blood 105:2645, 2005; Immunity 29:771, 2008; JEM 205:825, 2008;) and first description for harnessing M2 macrophages conversion into M1, in vivo, directly within the tumor microenvironment (Cancer Res 68:3437, 2005). He has been one of the firsts perceiving the extracellular matrix as functional part of tumor microenvironment molding the local immune contexture (JEM 198:1475, 2003) and metastasis (Cancer Res 68:1253, 2008) studying SPARC as a prototype molecule. Using SPARC and Fas double KO mice his group modeled human CLL in mice providing an experimental link between autoimmunity and lymphomagenesis (Cancer Discov 4:110, 2014). Using mice with the same lymphoproliferative spur (Fas-null) but deprived of osteopontin (Spp1-null), the emerging lymphoma was of diffuse large B cell type (DLBCL) (Mol Cancer. 2022). With this background, he developed the concept that the extracellular matrix (ECM) plays an active role in shaping the fate of nascent tumors, as part of the tissue's attempt to repair initial perturbations, either directly or through interactions with myeloid cell partners also involving bone marrow adapted hematopoiesis. More recently, he has proposed an additional layer of complexity in ECM interactions with steroid hormone–sensitive tumors aiming at identify the key regulatory nodes governing these processes. Since 2004 he is serving as Senior Editor for Cancer Research and has served to other AACR related activities and committees. He has been member of the Pezccoller Foundation stirring committee and of ESMO educational committee for immunology. He has been one of the founders of the Italian Network of Biotherapy (NIBIT) and he is currently in the board of directors.
Total publications 365 (PubMed), times cited 28,805, without self, 27,806, H-index 87 (Web of Science).

**DEL SAL GIANNINO:**
**DLSGNN59P14I040O**

a Full Professor of Applied Biology and former Director of the Department of Life Sciences at the University of Trieste, Italy.
He serves as the Head of the Molecular Oncology Unit at the National Laboratory of the Interuniversity Consortium for Biotechnology (LNCIB) in Trieste, and as a Principal Investigator and Group Leader at IFOM ETS (The Institute of Molecular Oncology) in Milan. An elected member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO), Professor Del Sal is an internationally recognized expert in cancer molecular biology. His groundbreaking research focuses on tumor evolution and metastasis, particularly pioneering the study of mutant p53 gain-of-function mechanisms, the prolyl isomerase Pin1 as a therapeutic target, and the complex cross-talk between tissue mechanical cues, metabolic pathways, and cancer cell plasticity.

**DI MARTILE MARTA:**
**DMRMRT88S42C632J**

Ho conseguito la mia laurea magistrale in Biologia Cellulare e Molecolare all'Università di Roma Tor Vergata nel 2013 e il mio Dottorato di Ricerca in Morfogenesi ed Ingegneria Tissutale presso l'Università Sapienza di Roma nel 2018. Infine, nel 2022 ho conseguito la Specializzazione in Patologia Clinica e Biochimica Clinica presso l'Università Sapienza di Roma. Attualmente sono Ricercatore sanitario presso l'IRCCS Istituto Nazionale Tumori Regina Elena di Roma. Mi sono sempre occupata di ricerca oncologica ed, in particolare, della valutazione dell'efficacia antitumorale di nuovi agenti e nuove combinazioni terapeutiche. Dal 2025 sono principal investigator di un progetto

finanziato da AIRC.

**DINAMI ROBERTO:**
**DNMRRT86C22I537E**
Dr. Roberto Dinami is a researcher at the IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute (IFO), Rome, Italy, where he works in the laboratory directed by Dr. Annamaria Biroccio. He previously held a three-year FIRC Postdoctoral Fellowship at the same institution. He obtained a Ph.D. in Molecular Biomedicine from the University of Trieste and completed his specialization in Clinical Pathology and Clinical Biochemistry at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Rome.
His research focuses on non-coding RNAs, particularly microRNAs, involved in the regulation of telomere-associated proteins and their potential application as innovative anticancer therapeutic targets. His studies also investigate the role of microRNAs as circulating biomarkers for breast cancer through liquid biopsy approaches, as well as the contribution of the telomeric protein TRF2 to tumor progression and metastasis in triple-negative breast cancer. These studies aim to identify novel molecular mechanisms underlying cancer development and to translate these findings into innovative therapeutic strategies and precision oncology approaches.
In 2024, he was selected for the StartUp Academy – Life Science and TT Accelerator programs of PerfeTTO with the international patent "miRABreC – Therapeutic approach to inhibit Triple-Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC)", aimed at further developing and translating this innovative therapeutic approach toward clinical application.

**DRAGONETTI MARTINA:**
**DRGMTN98R62H501Q**
PhD student in Biomedical Sciences and Technologies at the University of Roma Tre, carrying out her research activity at the Regina Elena National Cancer Institute (UOC Translational Oncology Research Unit, Rome). Her PhD project investigates the role of matrix stiffness as a driver of recurrence in head and neck cancer, exploring how the biomechanical properties of the tumor microenvironment influence tumor cell persistence and reactivation.

**JORGENSEN CLAUS:**
Dr Claus Jorgensen is a senior group leader and Deputy Director at the Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute and Professor of cancer biology at The University of Manchester. Dr Jorgensen obtained his PhD at the University of Southern Denmark in 2005, after which he moved to Toronto, Canada for his postdoctoral training with Dr Tony Pawson at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute. In 2010 Dr Jorgensen started his independent career as a team leader at The Institute of Cancer research, London UK, supported by a CRUK Career Establishment Award and moved to the CRUK Manchester Institute in 2014. Dr Jorgensen has been the Chair of the Pancreatic Cancer UK Research Strategy Group since 2025.
The work in Dr Jorgensen's lab focuses on unravelling how the evolving tumour microenvironment control tumour cell function and response to therapy in pancreatic cancer. The lab employs several techniques including profiling and functional mechanistic analyses to address these relationships.

**HAIDER NASIR:** Nasir is an Associate Scientist in the Systems Biology Group at the Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute. After receiving his PhD at the University of Toronto, he moved to the UK in 2019 specifically to pursue the question of how the tumour microenvironment shapes cancer cell signalling in pancreatic cancer. Joining the Jørgensen Lab at CRUK Manchester Institute, he developed interactomic approaches and advanced three-dimensional patient-derived models to map the signalling networks driving cancer cell-state transitions and treatment resistance. In 2022, he was awarded a Career Foundation Fellowship from Pancreatic Cancer UK to continue and expand this work**.**

**MECHTA-GRIGORIOU FATIMA:**
Dr. Fatima Mechta-Grigoriou is Research Director of Exceptional Class at Inserm and Head of the "Stress and Cancer" laboratory at Institut Curie in Paris. An internationally recognized expert, she investigates tumor heterogeneity, immunosuppression, metastasis, and treatment resistance. Her work has led to the identification of distinct CAF populations and their role in therapy response. She coordinates national research programs on triple-negative breast cancer and leads the Women's Cancer Institute at Curie. Author of numerous high-impact publications, she is also a member of EMBO and holds several patents related to cancer diagnostics and therapeutics.

**NISTICO' PAOLA:**
**NSTPLA58L70C352T**
Her studies, focused on the role of the host immune response in tumor progression, have led to the identification of different isoforms of hMena as biomarkers of invasion in solid cancer. Her pioneering work has produced patents in cooperation with the MIT and Albert Einstein College of Medicine.
She developed and standardized an immune monitoring platform. She is the coordinator of the ACC immunotherapy working group and a member of the AIRC CTS. She will coordinate the study on the role of metabolism of TME components on the response to ICI of lung cancer patients.

**PICCOLO STEFANO:**
**PCCSFN67E19G224Z**
Dr. Piccolo received his PhD from the University of Padua, Italy. He trained as post-doctoral fellow at HHMI-UCLA. He is currently Professor of Molecular Biology at the University of Padua School of Medicine. His pathfinding contribution has been in the field of mechanotransduction, with the discovery that cells convert mechanical, physical and architectural signals from their surroundings into activity of two potent (and highly related) transcription factors, YAP and TAZ. He showed that these mechanisms of cellular "social behavior" are relevant to imbue cell plasticity, and generate novel stem cells during tissue repair. He also showed that responses are corrupted in cancer, where altered mechanical signals drive aberrant YAP/TAZ activation, leading to fate plasticity fueling tumor initiation and expansion of tumor cells endowed with stemness, proliferative and chemoresistance attributes. He also added new dimensions to biomechanical regulation of cell behavior, revealing interactions between mechanical cues, transcriptional regulators and other cellular signals.

**PORCIELLO NICLA:**
**PRCNCL87A58G812G**
Nicla Porciello, PhD is a Researcher in the Tumour Immunology and Immunotherapy Unit, headed by Paola Nisticò, MD, at IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute (Rome, Italy). Following postdoctoral training at the University of Oxford, where she investigated the molecular mechanisms of T-cell receptor signalling, her research focuses on the tumour microenvironment and its role in shaping anti-tumour immune responses. Her work integrates spatial transcriptomics, spatial proteomics, and advanced patient-derived ex vivo models to characterize the complex interactions among tumor cells, immune cells, cancer-associated fibroblasts, and the extracellular matrix, with the aim of identifying biomarkers predictive of response to immunotherapy and uncovering novel strategies to enhance treatment efficacy and benefit a larger proportion of Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer patients.

**PSYRRI DIAMANTO AMANDA:** Professor Amanda Psyrri, MD, PhD, is an internationally recognized medical oncologist and translational researcher specializing in head and neck cancers. She received her MD from the University of Patras, Greece, and completed residency training in Internal Medicine followed by a fellowship in Medical Oncology and Hematology at Yale University School of Medicine and Yale Cancer Center, USA. She is board-certified in Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology in both the United States and Greece and completed a research fellowship in Cancer Virology at Yale University under the mentorship of Professor Daniel DiMaio.
Professor Psyrri served on the faculty of Yale University, where she established a leading clinical and translational research program focused on HPV-associated head and neck cancers. Her research contributed to defining the role of HPV in oropharyngeal cancer and to the validation of p16 as a surrogate biomarker of clinically relevant HPV infection. Her work has also advanced the understanding of molecular pathways driving resistance to targeted therapies and identified HRAS as a therapeutically relevant target in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma.
She is currently Professor and Chair of Medicine at the 2nd Propaedeutic Department of Internal Medicine and Translational Research Unit of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and, since 2025, Director of the Clinical and Translational Research Program in Head and Neck Cancer at the European Institute of Oncology.
Professor Psyrri has held numerous international leadership positions, including Translational Research Chair of the EORTC Head and Neck Cancer Group, Chair of the Head and Neck Cancer Group of the Hellenic Cooperative Oncology Group, founding member and European Representative of the Head and Neck Cancer Intergroup, and Secretary of the International Head and Neck Cancer Group. She currently serves as Chair of the National Societies

Committee and member of the Council of the European Society for Medical Oncology.
Her research focuses on biomarker discovery, immunotherapy, HPV-driven carcinogenesis, and precision oncology. Professor Psyrri has led numerous investigator-initiated and international clinical trials and is widely invited as a speaker at major oncology meetings, including ASCO, ESMO, AHNS, ASTRO, and EUROGIN. She has authored over 250 peer-reviewed publications and serves on the editorial boards of several leading oncology journals, including Annals of Oncology and the Journal of Clinical Oncology.

**SAGI IRIT:**
Prof. Irit Sagi joined the Faculty of Chemistry at the Weizmann Institute of Science in 1998 and currently holds the Maurizio Pontecorvo Professorial Chair. She served as **Dean of the Feinberg Graduate School** from 2014 to 2019, after which she was appointed **Vice President for Innovation and Technology Transfer** and Chair of the Board of Directors of Yeda, the Institute's technology transfer and commercialization arm. In this role, Prof. Sagi established a comprehensive innovation ecosystem at the Weizmann Institute to support the translation of fundamental research into impactful technologies (2019–2025). As of December 1, 2026, she has been appointed the Institute's first **Head of Strategic Partnerships and Translational Innovation.**

**SCITA GIORGIO:**
**SCTGRG63B09B034X**

Giorgio Scita graduated in Biology and specialized in Food Chemistry and Technology at the University of Parma. He pursued his postdoctoral training at the University of California, Berkeley, and at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

In 1995, he joined the European Institute of Oncology (IEO) in Milan, and since 2003 he has been a Principal Investigator at IFOM ETS – The AIRC Institute of Molecular Oncology. Since 2006, he has served as Professor of General Pathology at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of the University of Milan. He has been an EMBO member since 2014, was awarded an ERC Advanced Grant in 2012, and an ERC Synergy Grant in 2022.

**SHAKED YUVAL:**
Yuval Shaked (PhD) is a Professor at the Department of Cell Biology and Cancer Science, Rappaport Faculty of Medicine, Technion, Israel. He served as the vice dean at his faculty, and also as the director of the Rappaport Technion Integrated Cancer Center (RTICC). He is a former president of the International Cancer Microenvironment Society (ICMS), and current congress president of the federation of the Israeli society for experimental biology (FISEB). He obtained his PhD from the Department of Neurology at Hadassah University Hospital (Israel) where he studied biochemical aspects of neurodegenerative disorders. Subsequently, he was trained at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, University of Toronto, Canada, and studied cancer biology and therapy. In 2008, Prof. Shaked, started his independent academic career at the Faculty of Medicine, Technion, Israel. In his research, Prof. Shaked has pioneered the idea that the host in response to therapy alters the tumor microenvironment sometimes to the tumor advantage, therefore suggesting a double-edged sword of cancer therapy. Prof. Shaked received a number of awards including the Yigal Allon fellowship, Krill Prize from the Wolf foundation, Youdim prize for Excellence in Cancer Research, and the Andre Cohen Deloro Award for scientific achievements. He is supported by national and European grant agencies including ISF and ERC. Prof. Shaked is an author of over 150 published studies. Throughout his career, Prof. Shaked supervised more than 20 graduate students who continued their career in academia or industry. Prof. Shaked is also an entrepreneur and founded two companies in the space of cancer diagnosis and therapy.

**SOZZI SILVIA:**
**SZZSLV97B58H501T**
Silvia Sozzi is a Research Fellow at the IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute in Rome, Italy. She recently completed a PhD in Biomedical Sciences and Technologies at Roma Tre University. Her research focuses on the role of HIPK2 in shaping the tissue microenvironment, with particular interest in liver fibrosis, metabolic liver disease, and early pancreatic tumorigenesis. She investigates how HIPK2 regulates hepatic lipid handling, inflammation, and extracellular matrix remodeling under chronic metabolic stress, using liver tissue, hepatic organoids, molecular analyses, histology, and quantitative imaging.

**TOCCI PIERA:**
**TCCPRI86L48F152P**
Senior Scientist presso il laboratorio della Dr.ssa Bagnato, ha focalizzato la propria attività di ricerca su: 1. Caratterizzazione dei meccanismi molecolari attivati dall'endotelina-1 e coinvolti nella progressione del carcinoma ovarico, nella sua interazione con il microambiente tumorale e nella resistenza alle terapie, come quelle basate sull'uso di regimi a base di platino e sull'impiego dei PARPi e 2. Sullo sviluppo di strategie terapeutiche combinatoriali, che includono antagonisti dei recettori dell'endotelina-1 (ET-1R) per il trattamento di questa neoplasia.

Ha recentemente ottenuto un finanziamento quinquennale (My First AIRC Grant), sostenuto da AIRC, per sviluppare un progetto di ricerca indipendente, volto a delineare come la cooperazione tra la segnalazione mediata da endotelina-1 e le forze meccaniche regoli la risposta ai PARPi nel carcinoma ovarico.

**WEAVER VALERIE MARIE:**

Dr. Weaver is Professor and Director of the Center for Bioengineering and Tissue Regeneration in the Department of Surgery, with a cross-appointment in Bioengineering and Therapeutic Sciences at UCSF. She has a BSc in Chemistry from the University of Waterloo, and an Honors BSc and PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Ottawa, Canada. She completed brief postdoctoral training at the Canadian NRC in Ottawa, Canada, and thereafter trained extensively with MJ Bissell at LBNL, Berkeley California. After completing her training, she joined the Pathology Department at the University of Pennsylvania and IME after which she relocated to San Francisco to join the Surgery Department at UCSF. In recognition of her seminal contributions on the biochemical and biophysical properties of the extracellular matrix in tissue development, morphogenesis and cancer she is an elected fellow of the AIMBE and ASCB and has received numerous accolades including DOD BCRP Scholar and Scholar expansion awards, an ASCB WICB Midcareer award, The Colin Thomson Medal of Honor from Worldwide Cancer Research, an Outstanding Investigator award from NC, the Shu Chien Lifetime achievement award from BMES and most recently the 2025 ASCB Keith Porter Lecture amongst other awards.

**ZELENAY SANTIAGO:**

Santiago Zelenay obtained his bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Buenos Aires in 2002 and completed his PhD in Immunology at the Institute Gulbenkian of Science, where he studied the origin and function of regulatory T cells. He subsequently joined the CRUK London Research Institute, later The Francis Crick Institute, where he investigated innate immune pathways controlling dendritic cell activation and anti-tumour T cell responses.

In 2015, Santiago joined the CRUK Manchester Institute to establish the Cancer Inflammation and Immunity group. His laboratory combines fundamental and translational research to investigate the signals and pathways that dictate the establishment and maintenance of tumour inflammatory environments that promote or restrain malignant cancer growth naturally or following immunotherapy. His research spans basic mechanisms of tumour-immune interaction through to translational studies enabled by close collaborations with medical oncologists at The Christie NHS Foundation Trust.

Santiago leads the Cancer Immunology Branch of the Lydia Becker Institute of Immunology and Inflammation and the Immunology theme of the CRUK Lung Cancer Centre of Excellence.

In 2017, he was awarded the CRUK Future Leaders in Cancer Research Prize and, in 2019, along with co-authors of Zelenay et al. Cell 2015, he received the inaugural BIAL Award in Biomedicine.