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The CNIO is recognised for the relevance and international projection of its Scientific Programmes. This success would not be possible without the hard work of our personnel in training. Indeed, over 60% of the CNIO's workforce is comprised of PhD students, predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows, medical residents and a broad spectrum of visiting scientists. The CNIO places particular emphasis on career development and to that end, our Centre's core mission is to maximise the chances of success of our personnel in training.

In addition to ensuring proper academic supervision, we acknowledge that scientists need soft skills beyond the bench. Therefore, we pay special attention to areas of public communication, management of intellectual property, and the creation of *start-ups* or *spin offs*. These activities are performed in concert with CNIO's Training Programmes, as well as with the Innovation and Communication Offices. We are most grateful to the *Fundación Jesús Serra* for their

continuous support to strengthen career development programmes at the CNIO.

We believe that an informed society is better prepared to understand (and if needed, face) the diseases that constitute human cancer. Therefore, we are actively involved in knowledge dissemination. For example, over 70 CNIO PhD students and postdoctoral fellow volunteers this year took part in the sixth edition of our '*Meet a Scientist, Become a Scientist*' event. This is an open doors activity that we hold as part of the *Marie Skłodowska Curie European Researchers' Night* and was attended by over 250 participants of all ages who learned about daily life at our Centre and had the opportunity to run an experiment side by side with our researchers.

A particularly inspirational event this year was our Annual CNIO Lab Day. We were fortunate to host **Roland Rad**, Director of the Institute of Molecular Oncology and Functional

Genomics at the Technical University of Munich (Germany), who spoke about his experience in the field of data analysis based on a large volume of patient samples. **Marisol Quintero**, CEO of *Bioncotech Therapeutics*, presented a powerful example of how to transfer intellectual property from a research centre to a clinical trial. In addition, **Gustavo Fúster Olaguibel**, from Hoffmann Eitle, discussed his personal view on how it became possible for a pharmacist like himself to end up working in a law firm specialising in intellectual property and patents. We also had 15 outstanding talks given by CNIO trainees that covered exciting discoveries in the fields of epidemiology, epigenetics, proteomics, metastasis and drug development. Progress made in other basic and translational aspects of cancer were presented in over 60 posters, which together emphasised the breadth of research of our different Scientific Programmes.

Another main highlight of the Lab Day was the announcement of the recipients of our '*Director's List Awards*'. These are recognitions to outstanding contributions made by our personnel in 3 categories: (1) predoctoral fellows with publications of the highest scientific impact; (2) excellence in research by postdoctoral and staff investigators; and (3) altruistic volunteering to further the mission of the Centre related to training, scientific divulgation and outreach.

1. Awards for Excellence in Research by Predoctoral Fellows

We are grateful again to the Agüera-Nieto family for their generous donation, in the name of their mother Antonia Nieto, to support an award acknowledging the PhD student authoring the article with the highest impact in a scientific journal. This year, the '*Antonia Nieto Award*' went to **Isidoro Cobo**, from the Epithelial Carcinogenesis Group, for the finding that a gene that increases the risk of pancreatic cancer also controls inflammation in normal tissue (published in *Nature*).

Recipients of other awards in the PhD category were **Panagiotis Karras** (for an article in *Cancer Cell*), **Manuel Sanclemente** (*Cancer Cell*), **Alexandar Kojic** (*Nature Structural and Molecular Biology*) and **Juan José Montero** (*Nature Communications*).

“PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, and in general all personnel in training are key assets for the CNIO. A main objective of our Centre is to train and empower them to fulfil their potential as future influential leaders.”

2. Award for Excellence in Research by Postdoctoral/ Staff Investigators

This award was shared *ex aequo* by **Neibla Priego** (Brain Metastasis Group), for mechanistic and pharmacological findings in brain metastases published in *Nature Medicine*, and by **Carmen Guerra** (Experimental Oncology Group), for her contribution in the training of researchers and her multiple accomplishments in the field of pancreatic cancer.

3. Outstanding Contribution to Outreach and Awareness

Isabel López de Silanes, from the Telomeres and Telomerase Group, received this award to honour her generous and altruistic contribution to CNIO's Women in Science Office, organising seminars and lectures, inviting schools and colleges to attend these events, and securing funding for these activities.

In summary, we are as proud as ever of the achievements of our vibrant community of young investigators at the CNIO. We thank all those public and private contributors that have helped support and fuel their efforts, and we will make sure that the coming years will be even more successful in moving the cancer field forward.