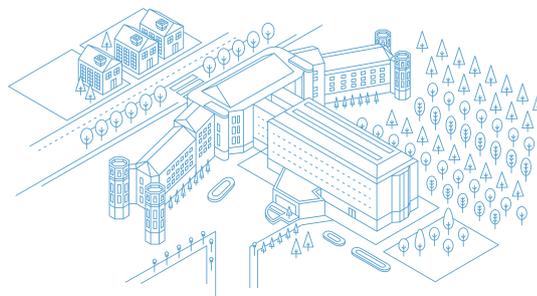


CNIO FRIENDS

newsletter

Latest news from the Spanish National Cancer Research Centre



 COLUMN

New partnerships with companies

More partners for our ‘Friends of CNIO’ community. On this occasion, it is Grupo CLH, the leading oil transport and storage company in the Spanish market, which has decided to support us by becoming a sponsor. The Group’s CEO, José Luis López de Silanes, has signed a research and researcher training cooperation agreement with CNIO.

During the first quarter, we published our yearly report for 2015 that lists the activities performed by our research groups as well as our training and innovation activities. Transferring the outcomes of our research to clinical activities is one of the Centre’s strategic goals. During the past year, thanks to the effort of more than 40 inventors, the CNIO has become the leading public institution regarding the transfer of technology and innovation in Spain and an important link in the search for cancer treatments.

I would like to invite you to access this data and become familiar with our latest research projects via the following link: bit.ly/CNIOAnnualReport15

—MARIA A. BLASCO
Directora



 CNIO SCIENCE NEWS

The Telomere and Telomerase Group, headed by Maria A. Blasco, has made considerable progress studying aplastic anaemia, a rare blood condition in which the bone marrow does not generate enough cells. Researchers have proven that a therapy based on the telomerase gene can reverse the disease in animal models. These studies prove that the rejuvenation of the telomeres using this enzyme is a therapeutic option for diseases in which tissue loses its regenerative capacity (1). The Genome Instability Group, directed by Óscar Fernández-Capetillo, has discovered the molecular structure by which the USP7 protein regulates the DNA replication process. This discovery brings into question the antitumoural power of USP7 inhibitors, a strategy that is being studied to improve chemotherapy (2). This team has also discovered why, in the case of certain cancer patients, chemotherapy presents poorer

results. The key lies in the levels of the CDC25 protein, which may provide clues to identify people who will respond better to treatments (3). A project conducted by the Tumour Suppression Group headed by Manuel Serrano and the University of Valencia has detected that an overall increase in the anti-oxidising defences of the organism may delay ageing and ageing-related illnesses, such as cancer. Animals used in the study and treated with this improvement aged more slowly and were healthier than those that were not treated (4). Erwin Wagner and his Genes, Development and Disease Group have discovered that psoriasis is connected to a generalized loss of bone mass and they have suggested possible therapies to prevent it. These results may also have significant implications for other autoimmune diseases, such as intestinal inflammation (5).

 OUR CENTRE

Towards the middle of March, our Centre published its annual report, which includes the year’s main research milestones and results. Among other achievements, the reports states that 2015 has been the best year in the history of the CNIO regarding its scientific output, based on the number and quality of the papers published. The Human Cancer Genetic Programme also doubled the number of genetic counselling cases for families with a history of cancer in 2015 when compared with the previous year. The complete report can be found at: bit.ly/CNIOAnnualReport15

On 8 March, the CNIO’s Women in Science Office welcomed the mountain climber, Edurne Pasaban, on occasion of the International

Women’s Day. Pasaban gave an inspiring speech on how perseverance can overcome gender barriers in fields such as science or sport (more information in the “Profile” section).

Paula Martínez, a researcher in the Telomere and Telomerase Group, was awarded the Meridiana Prize by the Junta de Andalucía in March. The jury valued Martínez’s contribution to the fight against cancer as a way of highlighting women scientists.

The Foro de Foros came to the CNIO on 5 April to visit our facilities and learn about our R&D activities. The Foundation’s goal is to discuss current social issues and serve as a universal platform in the search of solutions.



«I want the CNIO to have a competitive edge at international level»

Carolina Pola's career has included prestigious scientific journals, pharmaceuticals and research centres. She is now joining the CNIO to head the search for new strategic partners to ensure the Centre's position at the forefront of the international biomedical panorama.

What strategy do you want to follow?

The most important aspect when seeking the appropriate partner to understand CNIO's goals and needs, and the key pillar when building enriching alliances will be to work in close cooperation with the Direction, the researchers and the Innovation and Scientific Management Departments. Among others, one of the first steps will be to publicise our research capacity, know-how and interest in science even more. I firmly believe that highlighting the potential of the Experimental Therapeutics Programme with a view to generating solid long-term alliances with industry will boost the drug development programme. One of the priorities will also be to build a network of contacts with my counterparts at other research centres, making key contacts at scientific consortiums of interest and with possible industrial partners to open a fruitful channel of communication. The core idea on which the strategy is based is to provide the CNIO with a competitive edge at international level.

Are you excited to be working at a centre like the CNIO?



Carolina Pola
International Relations
Director

I am very excited at belonging to one of the most important centres in the field of oncology. CNIO's level of expertise and the professional careers of its researchers have made the Centre, and Spain, a reference point in cancer research. For a Spanish scientist trained mostly abroad, working for a top Spanish and international scientific centre like the CNIO is a great opportunity that will encourage me to do my best.

How will finding strategic partners for research benefit cancer research?

Proactively seeking partnerships with industry will help the CNIO to improve in open innovation, which is a complicated and rather heterogeneous field, and it will enable our personnel to have access to training and experience in innovative projects. Equally, entering into scientific partnerships with international consortiums and world level academic centres will promote the Centre's goal of developing competitive programmes for international students seeking top level scientific training and this will also prepare them for a competitive future.

PROFILE



Edurne Pasaban
Mountain climber

On occasion of the International Women's Day, the mountain climber Edurne Pasaban, the first woman to crown the 14 highest peaks in the world, delivered an inspirational speech on how to use one's determination to persevere, overcome barriers and reach the summit. The conference took place on 8 March, within the "Women in Science" cycle of the CNIO-WISE office.

Pasaban explained the challenges she has had to face throughout her career and how she has overcome them thanks to a highly particular mix of ingredients: ambition, a desire to improve, determination and doing what she really likes.

She also asserted that attitude is very important: "In the face of difficulties, we can choose to play the role of a victim or of the leader: we have to be the leaders. In addition, we need a good dose of self-belief, something that is particularly difficult for many women".

The event, which included some fun and exciting moments, was attended by secondary school students from the Pintor Luis Sáez Secondary School, Burgos. With this initiative, the CNIO's Women and Science Office is seeking to combat gender inequality among young people and promote careers in science among women, encouraging those who want to occupy positions of responsibility in the future.

INVITED SEMINARS

DISTINGUISHED SEMINARS

4 MARCH
MICHAEL SIEWEKE
Marseille-Luminy Immunology Centre (France)

11 MARCH
NICHOLAS DYSON
Harvard Medical School (USA)

15 APRIL
ANDRAS NAGY
Mount Sinai Hospital (Canada)

22 APRIL
HERBERT WALDMANN
Max Planck Institute of Mol. Phys. (Germany)

29 APRIL
NAVDEEP S. CHANDEL
Northwestern University (USA)

CNIO WOMEN IN SCIENCE OFFICE SEMINARS

8 MARCH
EDURNE PASABAN
Mountain climber (Spain)

