



Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2026-2029



Funded by
the European Union

GIAMM



Gulbenkian
Institute for
Molecular
Medicine



Executive Summary

Clinical & Translational Acceleration for Research Excellence

GIMM CARE is a research and innovation programme of the GIMM Foundation aimed at **strengthening clinical and translational research in Portugal**. Building on GIMM's expertise in fundamental biomedical research, GIMM CARE adopts a **mission-driven approach** that aligns scientific discovery with specific health challenges. The goal is to shorten the path between research findings and their application in healthcare, contributing to more **timely and relevant solutions** for patients.

Mission-Driven Clinical and Translational Research activity combines solution-focused translational laboratories with shorter term project-based research towards cross-cutting innovation. Complementary approaches ensure adaptability without diluting strategic focus, and all research is developed with defined pathways to impact.

Training and mentoring strategies for professionals within the clinical and translational research ecosystem is the backbone of CARE strategy. By focusing modular content on specific topics identified through continuous needs assessment, CARE Training programmes **capacitate the most critical resource** within the bench to bedside continuum – people.

Clinical Research Support requires significant capacitation, from **infrastructures and coordination** to hands-on study implementation support. GIMM CARE aims to **streamline clinical research workflows through a scalable, multi-centric agile operating model** that connects hospitals, universities, and industry partners to foster innovation, accelerating clinical trials, and improving patient access to cutting-edge therapies.

A well-established **Next Generation Biobank** supports R&I strategy, incorporating biological materials and high-quality annotated data into an internationally competitive digital infrastructure.

Partnership actions promote structured collaboration with hospitals and healthcare providers, industry partners, funding bodies, policymakers and governmental and non-governmental organisations, including patient associations. By involving patients and other stakeholders in co-creating priorities and evaluating outcomes, CARE seeks to ensure that research activities remain aligned with societal needs. These partnerships support the practical relevance of research and facilitate its integration into healthcare settings.



GIMM CARE | Connecting Research and Healthcare. Photo by José Rino.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Contents	3
Scope	5
Background and Rationale.....	7
The Need: Translation of Research Results into Clinical Practice	7
The Solution: GIMM CARE	7
Health Status Data Review	0
Clinical Research Landscape	7
Global Context and Opportunities for Portugal	7
Pillar 1: Mission-driven Research	10
Research Activity Formats.....	10
Missions Framework	11
Translational Labs	13
Microbiome in Health and Disease	14
Advanced Breast Cancer	14
Brain Cancer Dynamics and Therapy	14
Oncology	14
Project-based Research.....	14
Open Calls	14
Flagship Project Calls.....	15
Proof of Concept Project Calls	15
Junior Clinician Calls.....	15
Evaluation Panel 2025-2026	16
Ongoing Projects.....	17
Flagship Projects.....	17
Proof-of-Concept Projects	18
Junior Clinician Projects	19
Strategic Projects	19
Pillar 2: Training and Mentoring	23
Clinical Scientist Training Modules.....	23
Biobanking for Clinical Research Training Programme.....	24
Clinical Trials Training Programme	25
Pillar 3: Clinical Research Support	27
Clinical and Translational Lab.....	27
Accelerator Lab	28
Clinical Research Hub	29
Pillar 4: Next Generation Biobank	31

Operations.....	31
Networks	31
Donation drives.....	31
ESA Exploration Biobank	32
Transversal Actions	33
Outreach and Partnerships	33
Current partners	33
Outreach Events.....	34
Science Rounds	34
GIMM CARE Annual Research Symposium	34
GIMM Festival	35
Digital Transformation	35
Governance.....	36
Direction	36
GIMM CARE Executive Director	36
GIMM CARE Head of R&D	36
GIMM CARE Head of Operations	37
Advisory Board	37
Clinical and Patient Strategy Group	38
Authors and Affiliations.....	40
Contact us	41

GIMM CARE contributes to a more coordinated clinical and translational research landscape in Portugal, supporting **innovative research that addresses concrete health questions** and generates **meaningful benefits for society**.

Scope

This document outlines GIMM CARE's **short- and medium-term strategic priorities**, detailing selected disease-specific missions, key research and innovation actions, open calls for collaboration, and priorities for research infrastructure capacitation, integrating next-generation technologies. **Co-created with the GIMM CARE Direction** and management teams, CARE Advisory Board, Patient and Clinical Strategy Group and key healthcare R&I stakeholders, it **aligns with local, national, and international priorities, guides resource allocation and monitoring**. This document also serves as a central point of reference for those working within CARE and those interested in establishing new partnerships.

Background and Rationale

Background and Rationale

The Need: Translation of Research Results into Clinical Practice

For the healthcare ecosystem to function optimally, citizens and **patients need timely access** to innovative preventative, diagnostic and tailored healthcare solutions. It is also essential that **citizens and patients are actively involved** throughout the R&I process to ensure continued relevance, achieve user-centricity and promote literacy. To better understand the **bidirectional continuum between bench and bedside**, healthcare professionals need **advanced training** in research approaches and researchers need exposure to the realities of healthcare.

Researchers working in academia and industry, and across disciplines, need **comprehensive access to state-of-the-art clinical and translational research infrastructures** to develop their work. With a novel advancement in hand, innovators and entrepreneurs then need expert and continuous support to mature, **protect and scale-up their innovations** to become next-generation solutions, attractive for investment.

To ensure these solutions are tested effectively, clinical and translational research activity, in Portugal specifically, needs **local and systemic reforms to remove key bottlenecks**. To complete the cycle, health authorities and policymakers need access to the **latest R&I results to inform policy** and prioritize investment of public funds. Throughout this pipeline, **all stakeholders need to be able to effectively communicate** across sectors of the health ecosystem to build trust, co-create initiatives and source continued support.

The Solution: GIMM CARE

Kickstarted by 41.75 million EUR from the **Horizon Europe Teaming for Excellence** programme awarded in 2023, the Gulbenkian Institute of Molecular Medicine (GIMM) has established a clinical and translational research branch – **GIMM CARE**. The vision of GIMM CARE is to attain excellence in clinical and translational research, in Portugal and beyond, by adopting a **mission-driven, human-centred, and data-driven approach to address health challenges** in a timely fashion, accelerating access to cutting-edge healthcare solutions. CARE will establish a pioneering Center of Excellence in human-centered clinical and translational research in Portugal, through the joint effort of the GIMM Foundation and the Vall d'Hebron Institute of Research (VHIR).

GIMM CARE is structured around four main pillars of activity:

1. **Mission-driven Research:** design and implementation of focused research and innovation projects;
2. **Training and Mentoring:** advanced modular programs for upskilling healthcare professionals and clinical researchers;
3. **Clinical Research Support:** professionalization of clinical studies and clinical trials management; preclinical acceleration;
4. **Next Generation Biobank:** biological samples and high-quality annotated data.

The four main pillars are complemented by **transversal actions** oriented around **Partnerships** towards interdisciplinary collaborations with key stakeholders and **Digital transformation**, leveraging the reach of new technologies to accelerate the path to innovation across the healthcare value chain.

If you would like to receive further information about GIMM CARE initiative, please visit the website <https://care.gimm.pt/> or email care@gimm.pt

Health Status Data Review

GIMM CARE's overall strategy is defined in **alignment with public regional, national and international research and innovation agendas** and via identification of synergies with key partners.

To complement this, GIMM CARE conducted an initial **health status mapping exercise, collating data from Portugal, Spain and the EU-27**, in collaboration with Pordata¹ (the central database of certified statistics about Portugal) and Moai Consulting² (Figures 1-5).

In summary, a broad comparison of key health status data indicates that Portugal has:

- A significantly high aging index and life expectancy but comparatively **low healthy life expectancy**.
- Significant risk factors coming from **high alcohol consumption, lack of physical exercise and low % with tertiary education**.
- A comparatively high incidence of **Colorectal cancer and Diabetes** (within the top 5 most common diseases also include Ischemic heart disease, Chronic pulmonary obstruction disease and Lung cancer).
- Comparatively **high out-of-pocket healthcare costs**, creating financial barriers in access to healthcare.

Many of the identified population-level challenges have primarily structural causes. For this reason, GIMM CARE takes a **broad approach to innovation goals**, aiming to develop solutions across the clinical spectrum, from **prevention and early detection, diagnosis, treatment and quality of life**. In parallel, GIMM CARE takes seriously our ethical responsibility to mitigate innovative research outputs operating as a high-end niche market and to ensure we work to develop and provide **healthcare solutions for all**.

¹ <https://www.pordata.pt/>

² <https://www.moai-consulting.com/>

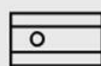
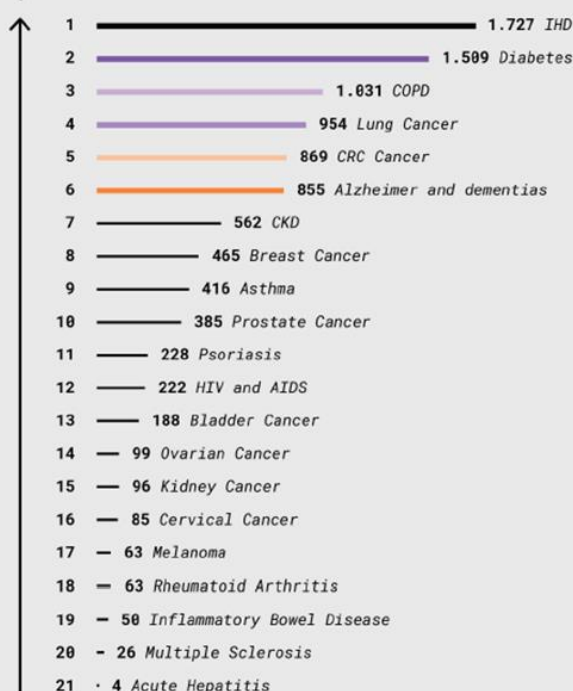


DISEASE RANKING

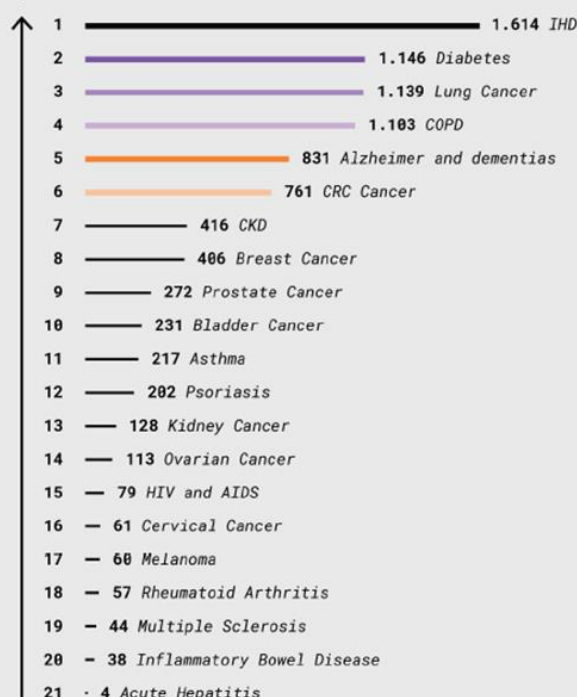
IHD = ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASE
COPD = CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE
CRC CANCER = COLORECTAL CANCER
CKD = CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE



Portugal



Spain



UE27

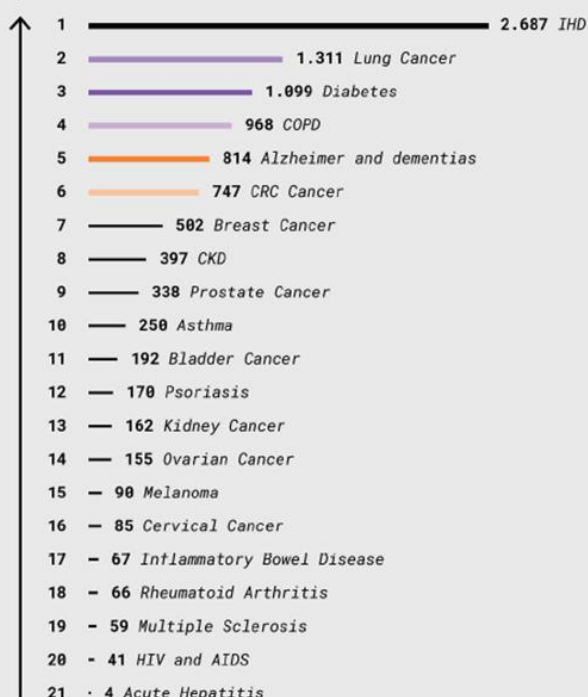


Figure 1. Disease Incidence Ranking in Portugal and in the EU-27. IHD = Ischemic Heart Disease; COPD = Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease; CRC = Cancer; CKD = Chronic Kidney Disease. Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2019 Global Burden of Disease.

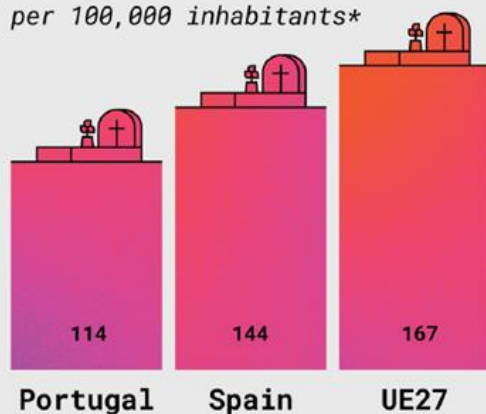


RISK FACTORS

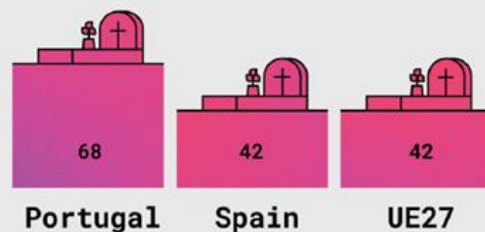
SMOKING



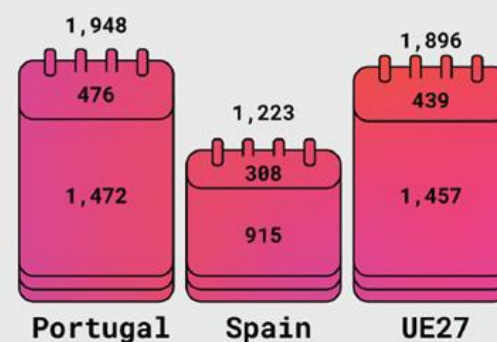
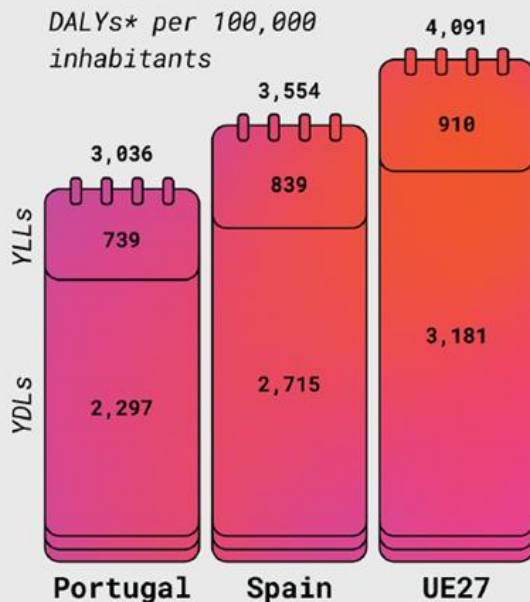
Number of related deaths
per 100,000 inhabitants*



ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION



DALYs* per 100,000
inhabitants



*THE NUMBER OF DEATHS SHOWN CORRESPONDS TO THE NUMBER OF DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO EACH RISK FACTOR. THERE MAY BE A NUMBER OF RISK FACTORS THAT, WHEN TAKEN TOGETHER, INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SICKNESS OR INJURY OCCURRING.

SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH METRICS AND EVALUATION, 2019 GLOBAL BURDEN OF DISEASE

Figure 2A. Disease risk factors in Portugal, Spain and the EU-27. Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2019 Global Burden of Disease; Health at Glance 2022.



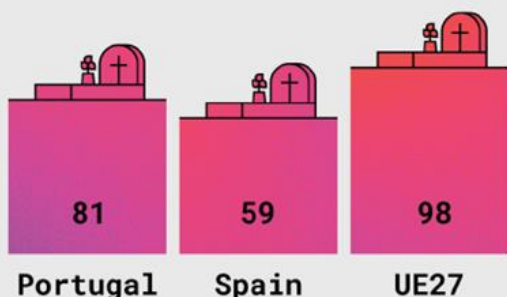
RISK FACTORS

Physical activity and high cholesterol

HIGH CHOLESTEROL

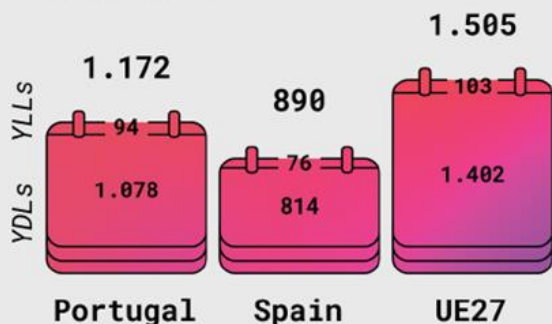


Number of related deaths per 100.000 inhabitants*



*THE NUMBER OF DEATHS SHOWN CORRESPONDS TO THE NUMBER OF DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO EACH RISK FACTOR. THERE MAY BE A NUMBER OF RISK FACTORS THAT, WHEN TAKEN TOGETHER, INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SICKNESS OR INJURY OCCURRING.

DALYs* per 100.000 inhabitants



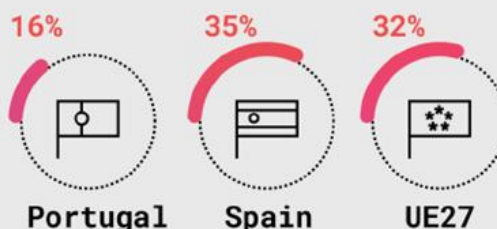
*DALYs, OR DISABILITY-ADJUSTED LIFE YEARS, ARE USED TO MEASURE THE BURDEN OF DISEASE, INJURY, AND RISK FACTORS ON POPULATIONS. ONE DALY REPRESENTS A YEAR OF HEALTHY LIFE LOST DUE TO PREMATURE DEATH OR DISABILITY.

LACK OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE

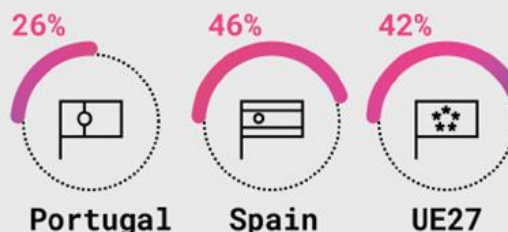


% of population spending at least 150 minutes per week on physical activity

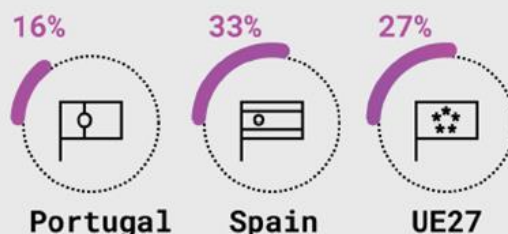
% from total population



% with tertiary education



% without tertiary education



SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH METRICS AND EVALUATION, 2019 GLOBAL BURDEN OF DISEASE, HEALTH AT A GLANCE 2022

Figure 2B. Disease risk factors in Portugal, Spain and the EU-27. Source: Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2019 Global Burden of Disease; Health at a Glance 2022.



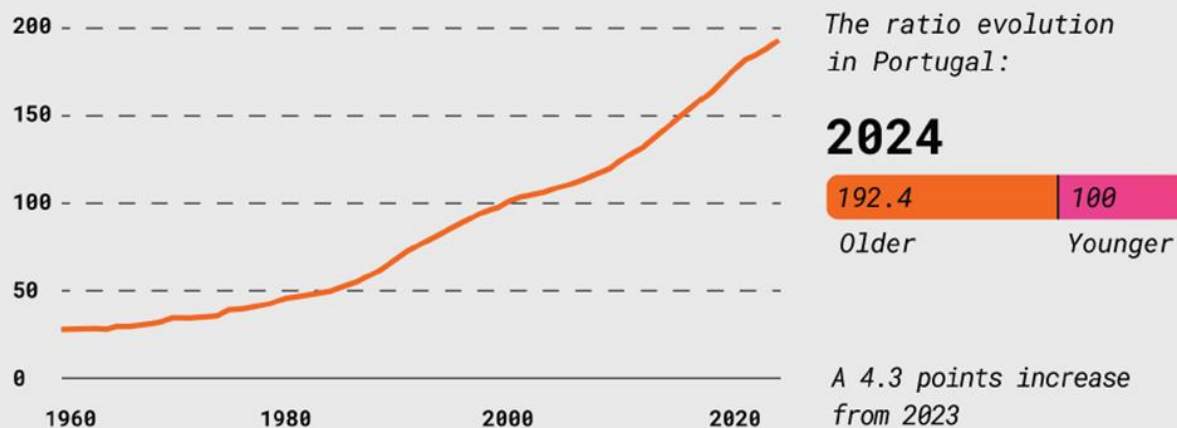
PORTUGAL HAS THE SECOND HIGHEST RATIO OF OLDER PEOPLE VS YOUNGER PEOPLE IN THE EU

Over 65s per 100 young people

Aging index



Aging index



SOURCE: PORDATA

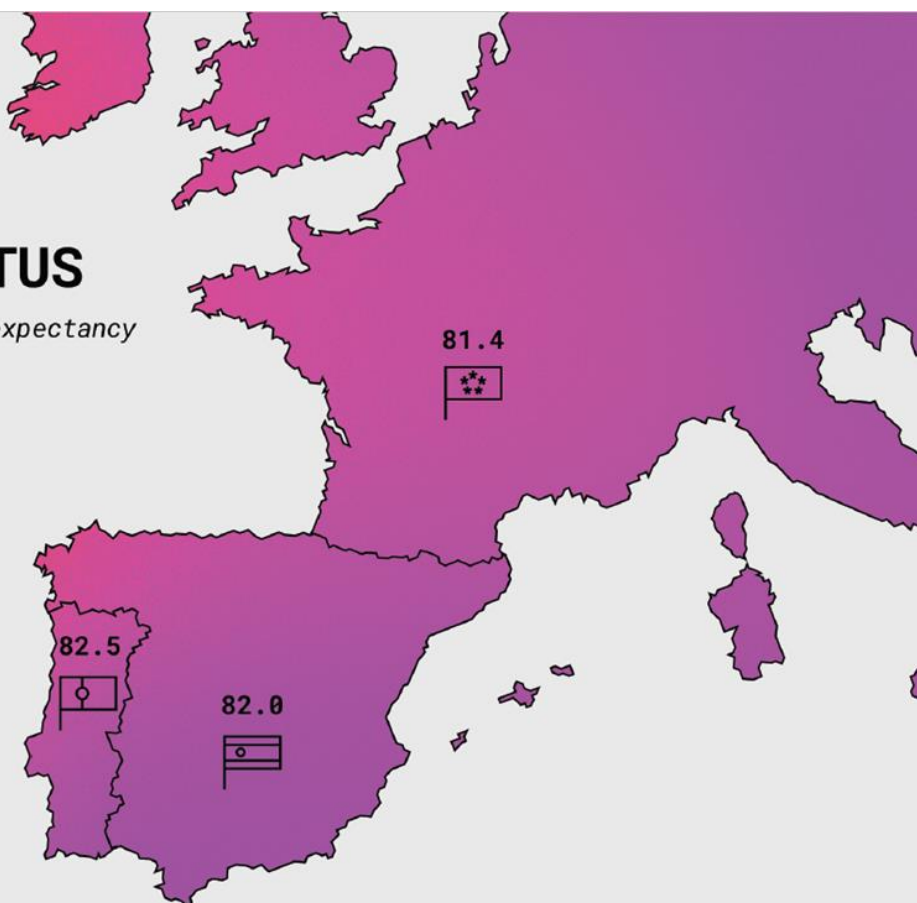
Figure 3. Aging indices across the EU-27 in 2024. Portugal has the second-highest ratio of older people vs younger people in the EU. Source: Pordata.



HEALTH STATUS

Life and healthy life expectancy

LIFE EXPECTANCY



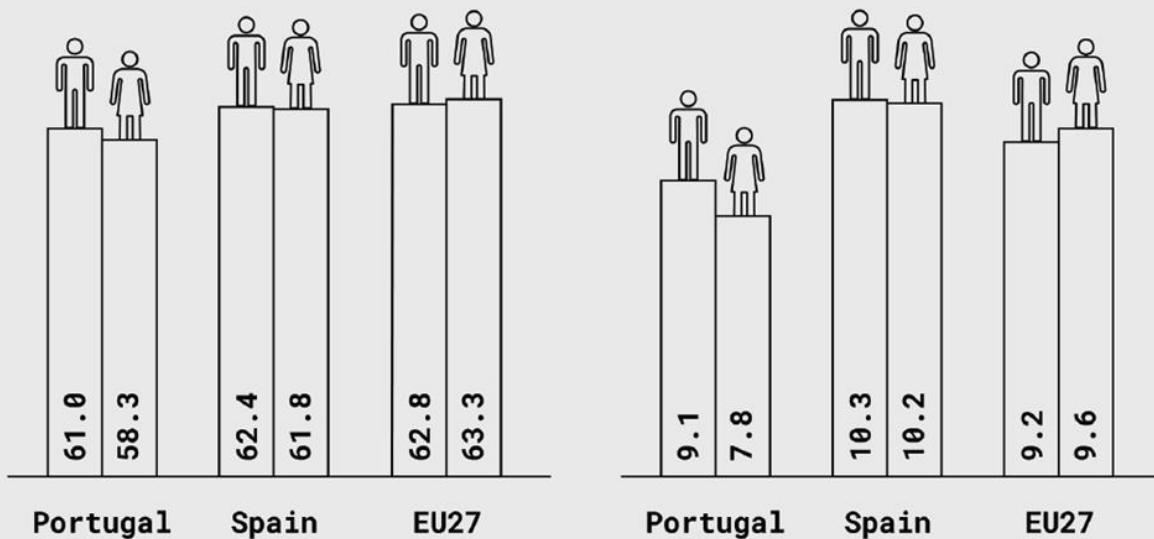
HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY

At Birth

Number of healthy years

At 65

Number of healthy years after 65



SOURCES: 'EUROSTAT, 20 23'

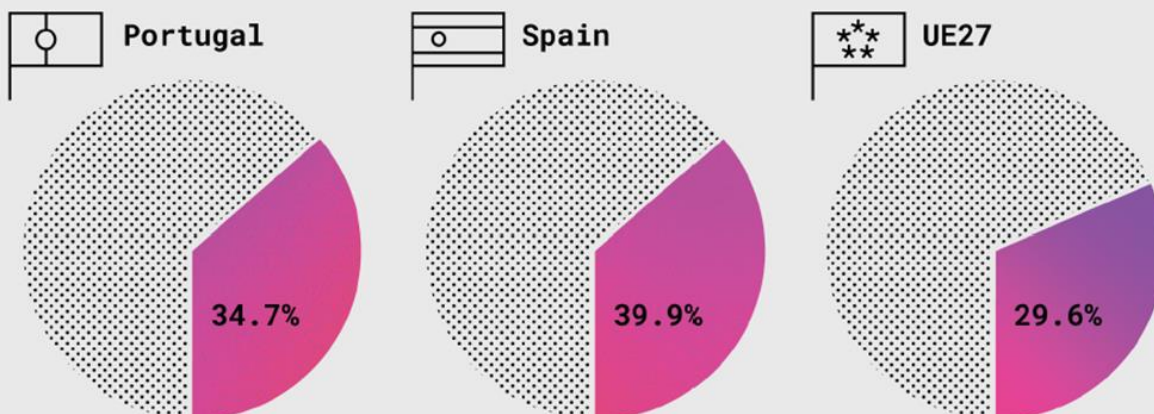
Figure 4. Healthy life expectancy in Portugal, Spain and the EU-27. Source: Eurostat 2023.



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

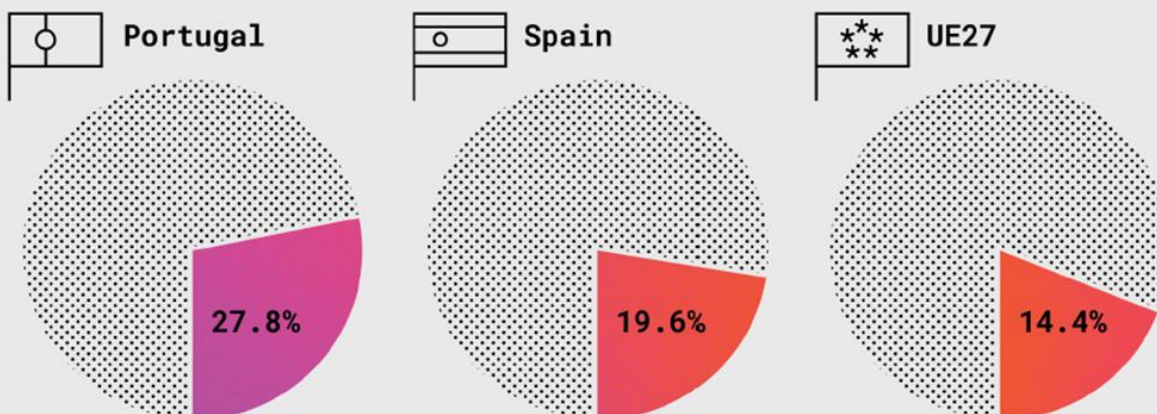
INEQUALITY (GINI INDEX)

Gini value (%)



ACCESS TO HEALTH (OOP = Out-of-Pocket expenses*)

OOPs as % of current national health expenditure



*OOP ARE DIRECT PAYMENTS MADE BY INDIVIDUALS FOR HEALTHCARE SERVICES NOT COVERED BY THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE, INSURANCE OR OTHER FINANCIAL PROTECTION. HIGH OOP COSTS CAN CREATE FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTHCARE. THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR AGING POPULATIONS AS THEY OFTEN FACE INCREASED AND LONG-TERM HEALTHCARE NEEDS, POTENTIALLY IMPACTING TIMELY ACCESS TO CARE AND OVERALL WELL-BEING.

SOURCE: DATA WORLD BANK, 2020, FOR UE GINI VALUE, EUROSTAT, 2022, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Figure 5. Social determinants of health in Portugal, Spain and EU-27. OOP=Direct payments made by individuals for healthcare services, insurance or other financial protection. Sources: Data Worldbank 2020; Eurostat 2022; World Health Organization (WHO).

Clinical Research Landscape

In addition to identifying population-level needs, GIMM CARE reviewed the status of clinical research in Portugal.

Portugal's healthcare and scientific ecosystem is poised to strengthen its position as a regional leader in clinical and translational research. As described in the 2025 working policy paper "*The Health Ecosystem, Value Creation, and the Impact on the Economy*" presented by Fórum Saúde XXI³ and involving GIMM CARE inputs, healthcare in Portugal transcends a traditional role of providing clinical care, positioned as a strategic system for sustainable development, social cohesion, and economic value. The contribution of clinical research to this system is evident, translating scientific innovation into practice, filling evidence gaps and enabling timely prioritization of resources. Nationally, clinical research – both commercial and academic – remains a key **underexploited economic and scientific opportunity**, providing the national health service with access to innovation. Despite possessing world-class hospitals, academic capacity and willing champions⁴, the country is lacking in **mechanisms** to promote clinical research and underperforms relative to peers in the number and volume of clinical trials⁵⁶. Closing this gap could yield substantial socioeconomic returns, combining revenue, cost-savings, clinical skills, and staff satisfaction⁷.

Global Context and Opportunities for Portugal

Clinical trials operations globally are facing a paradigm shift characterized by increased trial complexity, longer enrollment times, and a concentration of recruitment sites in limited geographies. Europe's comparative lag in agility and trial registration growth compared to regions such as East Asia⁸ and the Americas underscores the need for new operating models that combine simplified regulatory processes, rapid ethics approvals efficiency, scale, and integrated digital infrastructures⁹¹⁰.

³ O Ecossistema da Saúde, a Criação de Valor e o Impacto na Economia. (2025) Fórum Saúde XXI https://forumsaudexxi.pt/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/MKTV_FSXXI_Working-Policy-Paper_16-09-2025.pdf

⁴ V. Carvalho, A. S., Cardoso Borges, F., Cardoso, M.-J., Oliveira, J., Pais Silva, J., Carvalho, S., Costa, L., Fernandes, I., Gomes, D., Gomes, M., Milagre, T., Rego, S., Soares, M., Sottomayor, C., Joaquim, A., Sousa, N., & Passos Coelho, J. L. (2026). An Implementation Roadmap to Accelerate Academic Clinical Cancer Research in Portugal: A Multistakeholder Perspective. *Acta Médica Portuguesa*, 39(1), 8–13. <https://doi.org/10.20344/amp.23479>

⁵ Borges-Carneiro, F., Torre Souto, M., Silva, I., Leão Moreira, P., Ferraz de Oliveira, P., Lopes, D. J., Figueira, L., Reina-Couto, M., Cunha-Miranda, L., Ponces Bento, D., & Magro, F. (2024). Clinical Trials in Portugal: Past and Future. Position Paper from the Colleges of Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Medicine. *Acta Médica Portuguesa*, 37(9), 585–588. <https://doi.org/10.20344/amp.21371>

⁶ Brandão, I., Oliveiros, B., Pimentel, L., & Silva, S. (2024). *Fatores diferenciadores de centros de ensaios clínicos em Portugal*. *Acta Farmacêutica Portuguesa*, 13(1), 97–110. URL: <https://actafarmacêuticaportuguesa.com/index.php/afp/article/view/441/324>

⁷ European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations, & IQVIA. (2024). Assessing the clinical trial ecosystem in Europe: Final report (October 2024). EFPIA. URL: <https://www.efpia.eu/media/oipkatpg/efpia-ct-report-embargoed-221024-final.pdf>

⁸ World Health Organization: Number of clinical trials by year, country, WHO region and income group (1999–2024). <https://www.who.int/observatories/global-observatory-on-health-research-and-development/monitoring/number-of-clinical-trials-by-year-country-who-region-and-income-group>

⁹ European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations, & IQVIA. (2024). Assessing the clinical trial ecosystem in Europe: Final report (October 2024). EFPIA. URL: <https://www.efpia.eu/media/oipkatpg/efpia-ct-report-embargoed-221024-final.pdf>

¹⁰ Citeline Trialtrove: <https://www.citeline.com/en/products-services/clinical/trialtrove>

Portugal's opportunity lies in aligning policy, infrastructure, and human resources to attract and retain global trials while advancing its own public health priorities. With a heterogeneous population and the appropriate scale, Portugal holds unique potential as a “lab for the world”, creating solutions that can be tested in Portugal and applied globally. Our own investigations, plus key insights from recent projects led by the Portuguese Association for the Pharmaceutical Industry (Apifarma)¹¹, the Agency for Clinical Research and Biomedical Innovation (AICIB)¹², and the Policy Group of the National Cancer Hub¹³ indicate that strategic improvements are required across three key dimensions: **(1) Quality** — ensuring GCP-compliant facilities and standard operating procedures; **(2) Agility** — accelerating approval and contracting mechanisms via increased autonomy; including, but not limited to, integrated information systems (digital transformation); **(3) Investment** — securing sustainable funding and human resource management. These pillars are essential to develop a competitive, innovation-driven research ecosystem.

The GIMM CARE initiative therefore proposes a scalable, multi-centric operating model that connects hospitals, universities, and industry partners to foster innovation, accelerate clinical trials, and improve patient access to cutting-edge therapies. This policy brief outlines the strategic context, operational framework and implementation roadmap necessary to establish **GIMM CARE Clinical Research Hub** as a national and international reference model for clinical research management (Pillar 3).

*Portugal is emerging as a “lab for the world” – small, diverse and relatively well organized. With an interdisciplinary approach bringing the knowledge generated by **creative scientists** and the experience of **innovators, investors and policymakers**, we have all the ingredients to specialize in a smart way and to act as an **effective test bed for health solutions before international scale-up**.*

¹¹ Associação Portuguesa da Indústria Farmacêutica (APIFARMA). (2025). *Ensaio clínicos em Portugal 2024* (Relatório). APIFARMA.

¹² Bogas, M., Antas, J., Magalhães, C., Revige, M., Guerra, L., Ribeiro, C., Eça, R. C., Nunes, F., Lopes, A., Costa, L., Gonçalves, M., Pedrosa, J., Capela, A., Gregório, T., Dias, P., Alfaro, T., Pais, A., Soares, R., Queirós, A., ... & Sousa, N. (2025). *Assessment of competencies of clinical research professionals and proposals to improve clinical research in Portugal*. *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, 16, Article 1578955. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2025.1578955>

¹³ A Investigação Clínica e a Inovação Biomédica em cancro em Portugal Posição conjunta dos elementos do Policy Group do National Cancer Hub; URL: https://aicib.pt/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Posicao-conjunta_Cancro.pdf

Pillar 1: Mission-driven Research

Pillar 1: Mission-driven Research

GIMM CARE's **overall scientific goal is to conduct clinical and translational research with purpose**, for the benefit of the patient. A complementary capacity-building goal is to **promote a scientific culture in healthcare**. Our strategy **capitalizes on GIMM's intrinsic strengths** and is **adaptable to national and international priorities**.

Hyperconnected Research

strong networks across:

- GIMM internal research groups: CARE & Discovery
- Hospitals & healthcare professionals
- Patient Associations
- Pharma & biotech industry
- Venture capital & funding agencies

to foster collaborative, cross-disciplinary approaches

Transformative Research

Aim for tangible improvements in target populations
Measure real-world outcomes, not just publications
Align success metrics with patient benefit

Efficient Translational Research

Prioritize innovation with applicability

Define clear Go/No-Go criteria and prioritize “killer experiments” across projects

Focus on measurable short- to mid-term impact

Optimize use of resources and capabilities

Figure 7. GIMM CARE overall research goals.

Research Activity Formats

The impact and sustainability of GIMM CARE depends on an informed selection of research foci, appropriate resource allocation and effective implementation. CARE research activity combines two complementary formats: i) **Translational laboratories** and ii) **Project-based research**.

First, solution-focused **Translational laboratories** concentrate expertise, infrastructure and clinical collaboration around **specific priority domains, enabling continuity and depth in development**. Here, the priority is **scientific excellence**.

Second, shorter term **project-based research streams allow flexibility to support emerging scientific opportunities**, competitive funding initiatives and cross-cutting innovation. Here, the focus is in reacting to unmet needs coming directly from clinical practice.

These **two complementary approaches** ensure adaptability without diluting strategic focus. Across both formats, research is developed with **defined pathways to impact** and explicit progression criteria.

Project-based Research



Translational Labs

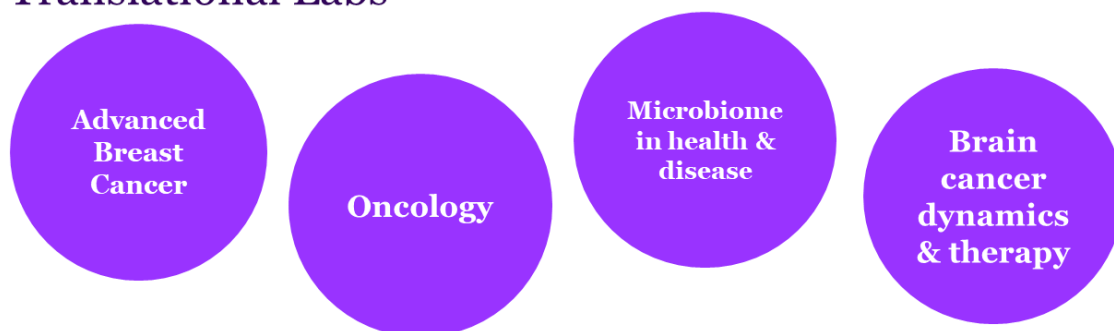


Figure 8. GIMM CARE research activity formats.

Missions Framework

All research conducted within GIMM CARE falls within the following core **Missions framework**:

Mission 1. Address critical healthcare gaps for **pediatric and rare diseases**.

Mission 2. Transform **cancer** into a manageable or curable condition for all.

Mission 3. Develop transformative solutions that prevent and combat infectious diseases and immune-related conditions (**inflammation and infection**).

Mission 4. Promote healthier, longer lives and preservation of brain function (**aging and brain diseases**).

Mission 5. Reduce the global burden of **cardiovascular disease**.

This overall framework is **intentionally broad** - covering almost all possible combinations of clinical and translational research - to ensure that there are no limits on **emerging clinical research opportunities that may be accommodated**.

To further inform our research strategy and to support CARE’s goal of hyperconnected research - **leveraging existing expertise at GIMM to accelerate clinical and translational efforts** - we conducted an exercise mapping GIMM Discovery in-house expertise against the 5 Mission areas and further stratified by points of healthcare intervention.

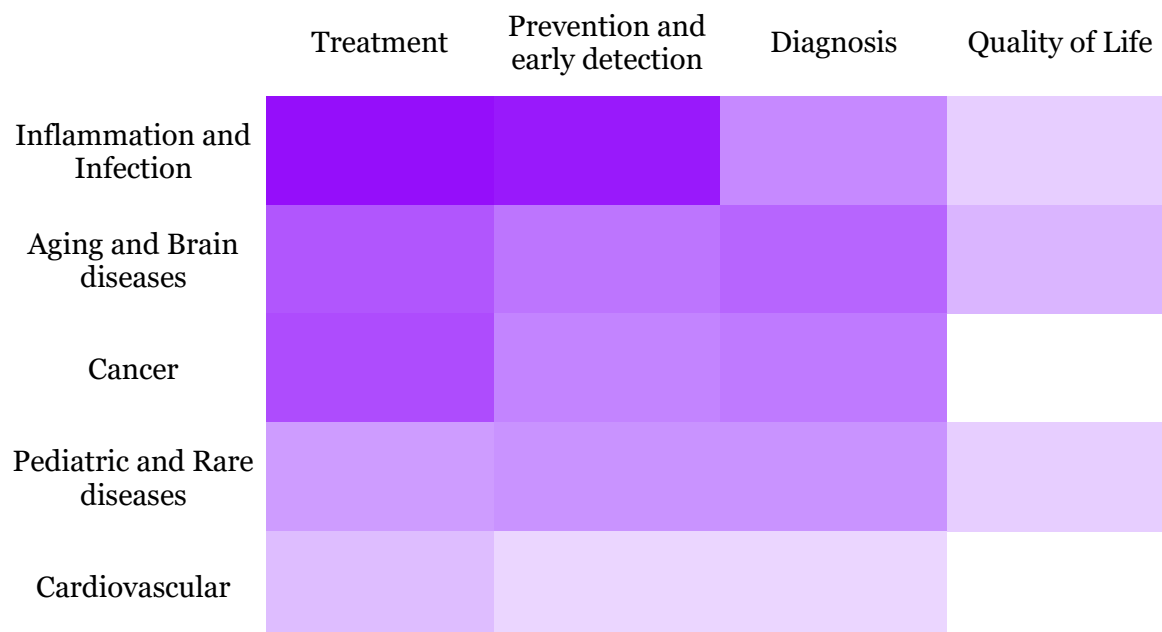


Figure 9. GIMM Discovery in-house expertise 2D heatmap – mission areas against healthcare intervention area. Dark purple =most GIMM Discovery lab; white=least GIMM Discovery labs.

To support future resource allocation decisions, we foresee that research activity may be **progressively more focused with increased investment** (see Figure 10).

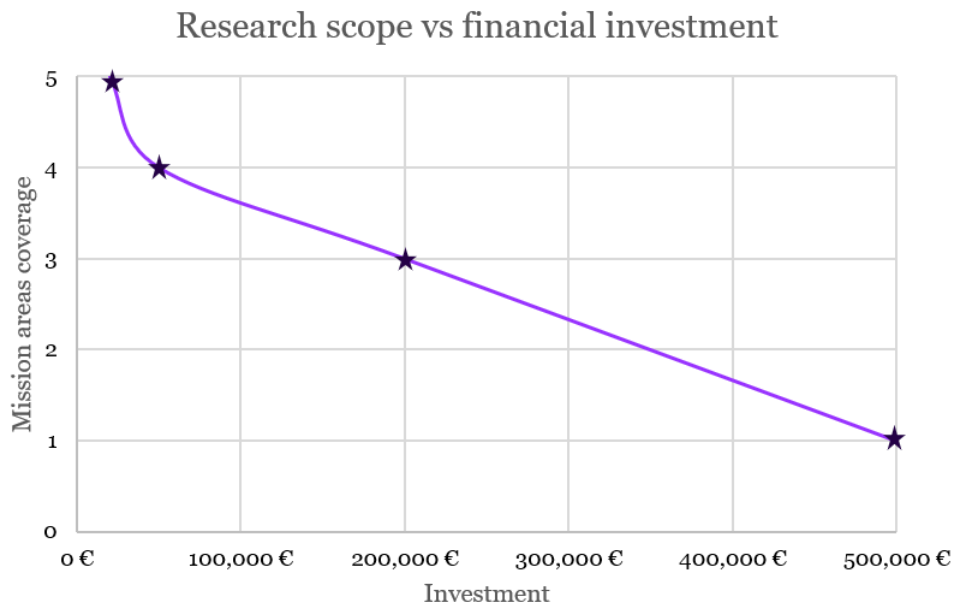


Figure 10. GIMM CARE research scope vs investment. Mission coverage (from focused research activity on one specific mission area to broad research activity open to any of the five initial mission areas) against potential financial investment. Points on the graph indicate examples of current GIMM CARE research funding mechanisms, including Junior Clinician grants @20K (broadest scope, any of the 5 missions possible), POC grants @50K, Flagship grants @200K and larger strategic research projects, programmes or Translational Labs (narrowest scope, focused on only one priority mission area).

Translational Labs

The Translational Labs – areas of GIMM CARE research activity with significant investment – are focused on priority Mission areas. Specificity comes from **identified synergies with GIMM’s in-house areas of expertise, areas with the potential to create a sustainable clinical niche, unmet clinical needs and alignment with funder priorities.** This means that long-term research at GIMM CARE will be expected to focus in the following three major Mission areas:

- **Inflammation and Infection**
- **Cancer**
- **Pediatric and Rare Diseases**

The initial cohort of **four Translational Labs - set up in 2023** - are primarily focused on **Cancer**. The reasoning behind this initial focus is historical, coming from in-house researchers identified as conducting work with **high translational potential and awarded with pilot Flagship projects.** Translational Research Labs are periodically evaluated, in line with international standards.

Microbiome in Health and Disease

Develop innovative tools and therapeutics to intercept, prevent, and treat disease leveraging on the potential of the microbiome.

<https://care.gimm.pt/lab/microbiome-in-health-disease-translational-laboratory/>

Led by Ana Margarida Santos Almeida PhD.



Advanced Breast Cancer

Predict the incidence and reduce the mortality of metastatic breast cancer.

<https://care.gimm.pt/lab/advanced-breast-cancer-translational-laboratory/>

Led by Karine Serre PhD and Sérgio Dias PhD.



Brain Cancer Dynamics and Therapy

Understand the dynamics of brain cancer and to develop new and effective therapies.

<https://care.gimm.pt/lab/brain-cancer-dynamics-therapy-translational-laboratory/>

Led by Cláudia Faria MD PhD.



Oncology

Answer pressing questions directly from Oncology clinical practice, delivering tools that improve cancer outcomes.

<https://care.gimm.pt/lab/oncology-translational-laboratory/>

Led by Luís Costa MD PhD.



Please refer to the above-linked Translational Lab web pages for the most up-to-date research project information.

Project-based Research

Open Calls

GIMM CARE makes available **regular open funding calls** inviting robust **partnerships between healthcare professionals and GIMM researchers**, tailored to fit a range of profiles and levels of experience.

Flagship Project Calls

- **Flagship projects** are expected to develop and implement a **specific solution with measurable outcomes**, demonstrated critical mass, and within a tangible timeframe.
- **Who:** Project co-led by an MD and a PhD Researcher from GIMM or led by an MD PhD.
**For the upcoming 2026 call, this eligibility criterion will be updated to include only projects co-led by an MD (with or without PhD) together with a PhD researcher from GIMM.*
- **Funding:** Up to 200K*
- **Given the high investment, projects must align with GIMM Platforms and GIMM Discovery expertise, as well as with clinical unmet need.*
- **Implementation Period:** Up to 3-year projects (clinical or translational).
- **Call frequency:** Annual.

Proof of Concept Project Calls

- **Proof-of-concept (POC) projects** are expected to support the development of an **initial research idea** designed to demonstrate novelty, relevance and potential for further development. For example, this could be preliminary data collection or analysis, aimed at testing whether a concept or theory can be translated into a practical application.
- **Who:** Clinician-researcher teams with any level of research experience.
- **Funding:** Up to 50K
- **Implementation Period:** Up to 18 months.
- **Call Frequency:** Bi-annual (January + June).

Junior Clinician Calls

- **Junior Clinician grants** are aimed at residents and junior specialists within 10 years of obtaining their medical degree (integrated Master's degree). Successful candidates will benefit from i) funding to kick-start a clinical research project and ii) mentoring with a senior clinician and a researcher.
- **Who:** Junior clinicians (residents, junior specialists, up to 10 years from obtaining medical degree)*
- **For the 2025 call this was limited to ULS Santa Maria*
- **Funding:** Up to 20K
- **Implementation Period:** 12-18 months
- **Call Frequency:** Annual (September)

All calls consider research topics within the disease-specific missions framework of GIMM CARE and/or digital transformation within healthcare.

Evaluation Panel 2025-2026

- Vall D’Hebron Research Institute Internal Assessment Committee (Various) – [here](#)
- Albino Oliveira-Maia, MD PhD (Neuropsychiatry)
- Carla Oliveira, PhD (Oncology)
- Joana Paredes, PhD (Oncology)
- Luísa Salter-Cid, PhD (Immunology)
- Tiago Oliveira, MD PhD (Neuroscience)
- Susana Vacas MD PhD (Pain)
- Helena Deus PhD (Translational Medicine Data)
- Moisés Mallo, MD PhD (Development)
- Cristóvão Sousa, PhD (Functional genomics, Chair)

Since GIMM CARE inception in 2023 – across the three different types of open call, GIMM CARE has:

- Received **33 project submissions**;
- Awarded **11 new research projects**.

For the latest open call information, please visit the Open Calls area of GIMM CARE website¹⁴.

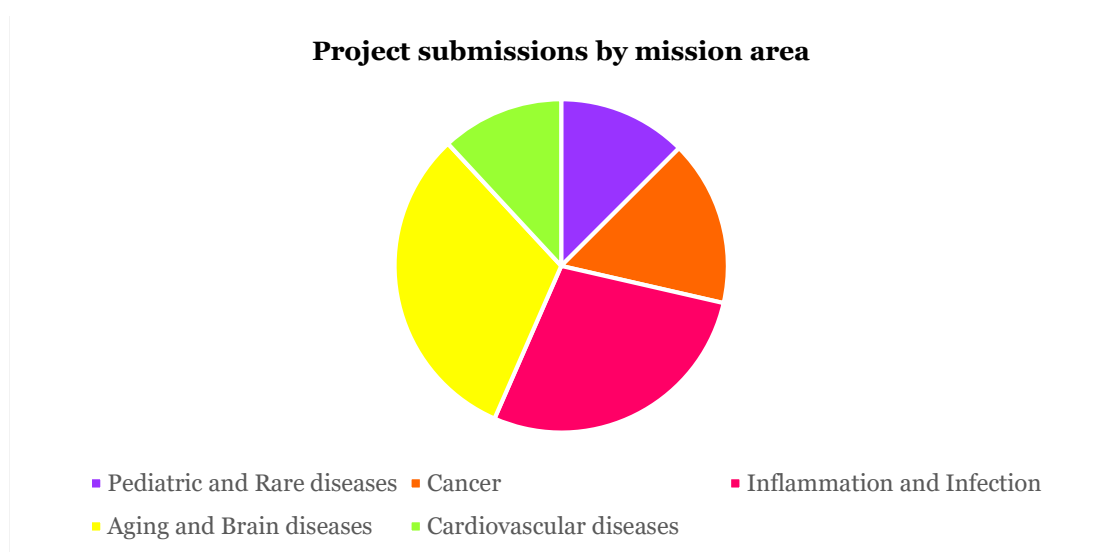


Figure 11. All project applications to open calls to date (Q4 2024-Q1 2026) by mission area. Total of 33 applications to Flagship, POC and JC calls.

¹⁴ <https://care.gimm.pt/gimm-open-calls/>

Ongoing Projects

Flagship Projects

Flagship 1: CRC

Highly sensitive and cost-effective test for Colorectal Cancer (CRC) screening

PI: Ana Margarida Santos Almeida (GIMM CARE MicrobiomeHD Translational Lab).

Flagship 2: MBC

Novel diagnostic test to prevent and improve the treatment of Metastatic Breast Cancer (MBC)

Co-PI: Sérgio Dias (GIMM CARE ADBCancer Translational Lab)

Co-PI: Karine Serre (GIMM CARE ADBCancer Translational Lab)

Flagship 3: BMD

Liquid biopsies for early detection of Brain Metastatic (BM) disease in children

PI: Cláudia Faria (GIMM CARE BrainCDT Translational Lab, ULSSM, FMUL)

Flagship 4: ENHANCE SEPSIS CARE

Sepsis enhanced diagnosis and recovery to decrease mortality and hospital readmissions: a mixed methods study

PI: Susana Fernandes MD PhD (ULS Santa Maria, GIMM, FMUL).



Flagship 5: GEN-IEI

Genetics workup for Inborn Errors of Immunity

PI: Susana Lopes da Silva, MD, PhD (ULS Santa Maria, GIMM, FMUL)



Flagship 6: HERO

From genomic innovation to the clinic: integrating long-read sequencing and patient engagement for hereditary cancer prevention

Co-PI: Ana Berta Sousa MD PhD (ULS Santa Maria)

Co-PI: Maria Carmo-Fonseca MD PhD (GIMM, FMUL)



Flagship 7: SEPSIS-ATLAS

Comparative Adipose Single-Nucleus Transcriptomics and Lipidomics of Human and Mouse Sepsis: Mapping Sepsis Bioenergetics

Co-PI: Daniel Costa Gomes, MD MSc (Internal Medicine, ULS Santa Maria)

Co-PI: Miguel Soares PhD (GIMM)



Proof-of-Concept Projects

POC 1: LUMIPD

Parkinson's disease, alternative deep brain stimulation

Co-PI: Pedro Duarte Batista (Neurosurgery, ULS Santa Maria)

Co-PI: Luísa Lopes (GIMM, FMUL)



POC 2: AMNOVO

Malaria therapeutic approach, NovoBodies tech

Co-PI: Sara Mahomed (Infectious diseases, ULS Santa Maria)

Co-PI: Maria Rebelo, Ana Margarida Vigário (GIMM)



POC 3: PROTEO-TMJ

Proteomic-based diagnostic tool for Temporomandibular Joint disorders

Co-PI: Francesco Maffia (Stomatology, Instituto Português da Face)

Co-PI: David Serrano Faustino Ângelo (Stomatology, Instituto Português da Face)



POC 4: SPLICEADAPT

Discovery of Alternative Splicing Targets to Reverse Cardiac Hypertrophy

Co-PI: Tiago Rodrigues Velho (Cardiothoracic Surgir, ULS Santa Maria)



Junior Clinician Projects

JC 1: ANA ARAÚJO

Immune aging and muscle regeneration in hip fractures

Research Mentors: Joana Neves PhD/Pedro Sousa-Vitor PhD (GIMM, FMUL)

Clinician Mentor: Mariana Alves MD (Orthogeriatrics, ULS Santa Maria)



JC2: JOÃO MELÃO

Modulation of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) blood biomarkers with mandibular advancement devices (MAD)

Research Mentor: João Lacerda (GIMM)

Clinician Mentor: Francisco Azevedo Coutinho (Stomatology, ULS Santa Maria)



JC 3: DIANA ALVES

Hormonal and inflammaging blood biomarkers of menopause symptoms within the Gut–Brain–Hormone axis

Research Mentor: Ana Almeida (GIMM-CARE)

Clinician Mentor: Catarina Reis-de-Carvalho (Obstetrics-Gynecology, ULS Santa Maria)



Strategic Projects

In addition to the project-based research designed by teams applying to the above open calls described above, GIMM CARE periodically supports strategic preclinical research projects with high application potential that align with GIMM's in-house expertise.

Strategic Project 1: Mapa da Idade

<https://care.gimm.pt/lab/mapa-da-idade/>

A direct outcome of collaborations built through GIMM Festival 2025: Aging and Longevity¹⁵, Mapa da Idade (Aging Map) is a **pilot scientific study aiming to validate a disease prevention model**. The study is based on an advanced scientific model called LinAge2, also known as a **biological clock**, developed by researcher Brian Kennedy and his team (Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore, National University Health System). The LinAge2 clock combines multiple health indicators - including clinical and laboratory data - to estimate an individual's biological age more accurately than traditional methods and markers, making it possible to compare:

- Chronological Age: the number of years since a person was born.
- Biological Age: how the person's body is ageing based on current health status.

Measuring the difference between biological age and chronological age can provide insights into a person's ageing process and functional reserve, organ by organ. We will also evaluate additional indicators linked directly to GIMM research, including telomere length.

The ageing process is not the same for everyone, so the adaptation of this model to the Portuguese population is an important step. The initial validation phase will pave the way for the future expansion of the use of this biological ageing clock in a larger cohort, facilitating personalized health interventions (diet, lifestyle, supplements, treatment) with a view to improving healthy longevity and reducing the incidence of disease and hospitalizations in the Portuguese population.

PI: Pedro Sousa Vitor (GIMM, FMUL)

Co-PI: Joana Neves (GIMM, FMUL)

Co-PI: Claus Azzalin (GIMM, FMUL)

R&D lead: Cristovão Sousa (GIMM)



¹⁵ <https://gimm.pt/gimm-festival-2025/>

Do you know what this is?

Then your health still has stories to tell

Participate in Mapa da Idade, *a scientific study that values your experience.*

If you are between the ages of 40 and 80, GIMM needs you. Participate in Mapa da Idade, a scientific study that uses advanced methods to validate the concept of the biological clock in the Portuguese population and compare biological age with chronological age. Help us identify health risks in the Portuguese population. Participation is free, and breakfast is included.

Your morning with us:

1. Reception & Ethics

A personalized welcome and clear explanation of each step. We guarantee the full protection of your data.

2. Express physical check-up

Quick and precise measurements of blood pressure, hand strength, and body composition to assess your vitality.

3. Lab Sample Collection

Quick, safe, and minimally invasive blood and urine sample collection.

4. Moment of Pause

After sample collection, we offer a nutritious breakfast and assist you in completing a questionnaire about your lifestyle and clinical history.

Learn more:

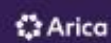
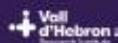


This study is for people aged between 40 and 80.

Questions: mapadaidade@gimm.pt
Website: gimm.pt



Partner: **OEIRAS VALLEY** | INSTITUTO DE INOVAÇÃO E DESENVOLVIMENTO



Pillar 2: Training ad Mentoring

Pillar 2: Training and Mentoring

GIMM CARE training programmes are developed in collaboration with expert trainers from **Vall D’Hebron Research Institute in Barcelona (VHIR)**, across three programmes – **Clinical Scientist Training Modules, Biobanking and Clinical Trials** - towards capacitation of the full spectrum of professionals involved in clinical and translational research. In the 9 months from Q4 2025-Q2 2026 189 participants were trained.

Clinical Scientist Training Modules

Target public: Healthcare professionals and researchers

Format: Modular training ranging from 2 to 8 hours; free to attend; in-person sessions (2025/2026) + via digital platform from Q3 2026.

Basic Modules:

- Translational Research
- Clinical Trials
- Research Tools (incl. AI)
- Project Development and Grant Applications
- Biobanking
- Responsible Research and Innovation (Patient Engagement)
- Responsible Research and Innovation (Data Protection)
- Biostatistics and Epidemiology
- Drug Development, Innovation and Technology Transfer

Past Activities:

- Fundamentals of Clinical Trials | November 2025 – More information [here](#)
- Responsible Research and Innovation (Patient Involvement) | December 2025 – More information [here](#)
- Fundamentals of Clinical Trials 2 – More information [here](#)



Figure 13. GIMM CARE Clinical Scientist Training Modules live sessions to date – Fundamentals of Clinical Trials and RRI (Patient Engagement).

CARE has also developed two additional training programmes targeting specific operational professionals working in or with Biobanks and Clinical Trials, as follows.

Biobanking for Clinical Research Training Programme

Target public: Biobank staff and users.

Formats:

- Winter School
- Biobank Exchange
- Train the trainers

Past Activities:

- Biobank Week 2026 | February 2026 – More information [here](#)



Figure 14. Biobank Week 2026.

Clinical Trials Training Programme

Target public: Clinical trials managers, study coordinators (operational focus).

Format: Strategic Thinking in Clinical Research for Managers staff exchanges.



Figure 15. Clinical Trials operational training sessions to date, 2024-2026.

Pillar 3: Clinical Research Support

Pillar 3: Clinical Research Support

Clinical and Translational Lab

Functional since 2025, the Clinical and Translational Lab supports project-based research throughout the project's lifecycle, from regulatory support to budget and data management. It also offers an equipped lab and office space for clinical researchers who do not have their own assigned space to conduct experiments.

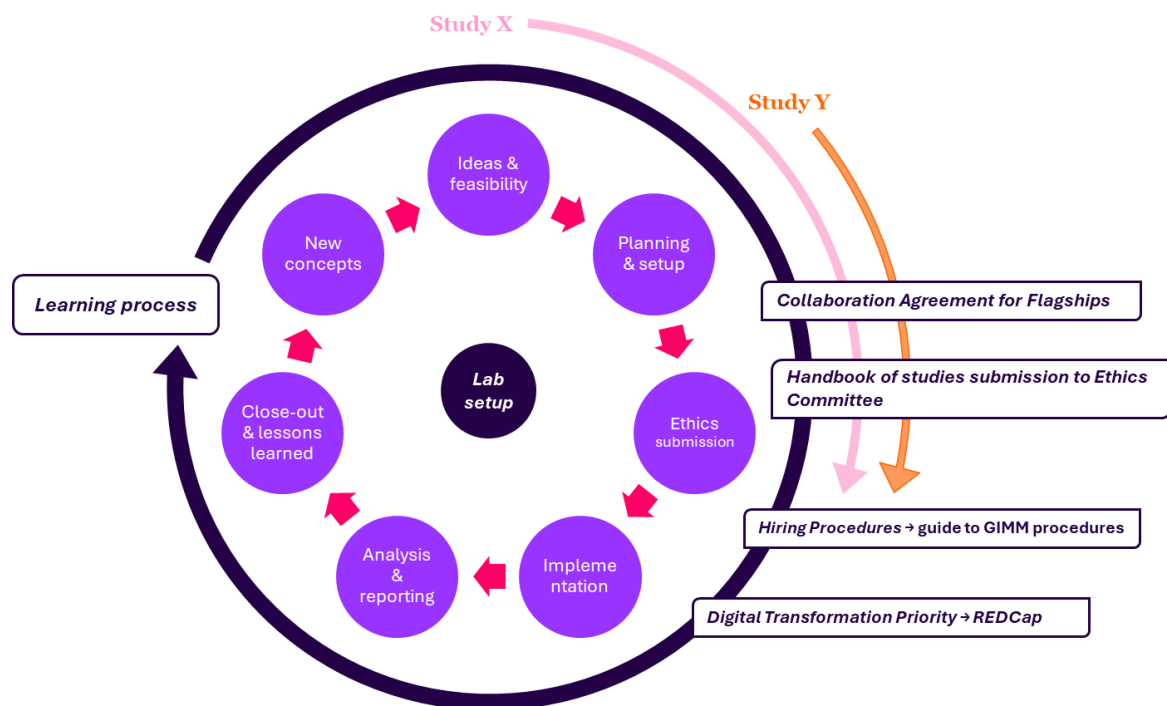


Figure 16. The Clinical and Translational Lab (CTLab) provides support throughout the research project life cycle. Head of CTLab = Patrícia Napoleão.

Accelerator Lab

GIMM CARE research is reinforced by the **Accelerator Lab**, a practical, efficient, and sustainable engine for translation of early-stage research projects to the clinic, helping them move toward preclinical validation and beyond. The lab combines strong internal GIMM capabilities (functional genomics, multi-omics, computational chemistry, cell biology, imaging, and rodent pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics), with selective use of external CROs, where additional capacity or specialized assays are needed. This approach avoids bottlenecks and ensures flexibility and agility deploying resources.



Figure 17. The Accelerator Lab takes preliminary data through to an exit strategy.

Clinical Research Hub

Towards the construction of GIMM CARE Clinical Research Hub - capacitating clinical research management in Portugal - GIMM CARE is **establishing clinical partnerships and investing in supporting infrastructures**. The general model by which GIMM CARE aims to manage clinical research is described in a recent policy brief¹⁶. The overall goal is to work towards an **integrated national GIMM CARE Clinical Research Hub** (Figure 18). With an initial focus on key clinical partnerships, the long-term vision is to build a unified national network of clinical research centers, connecting sites across mainland Portugal, Madeira, and the Azores. By gaining scale and simplifying processes, the network would aim to streamline clinical trials while benefiting from the heterogeneity of populations, a key factor in generating robust and relevant clinical evidence. This initiative aims to attract and support pharma-sponsored trials whilst also supporting investigator-initiated studies, **strengthening Portugal's capacity to deliver impactful research across the spectrum**.

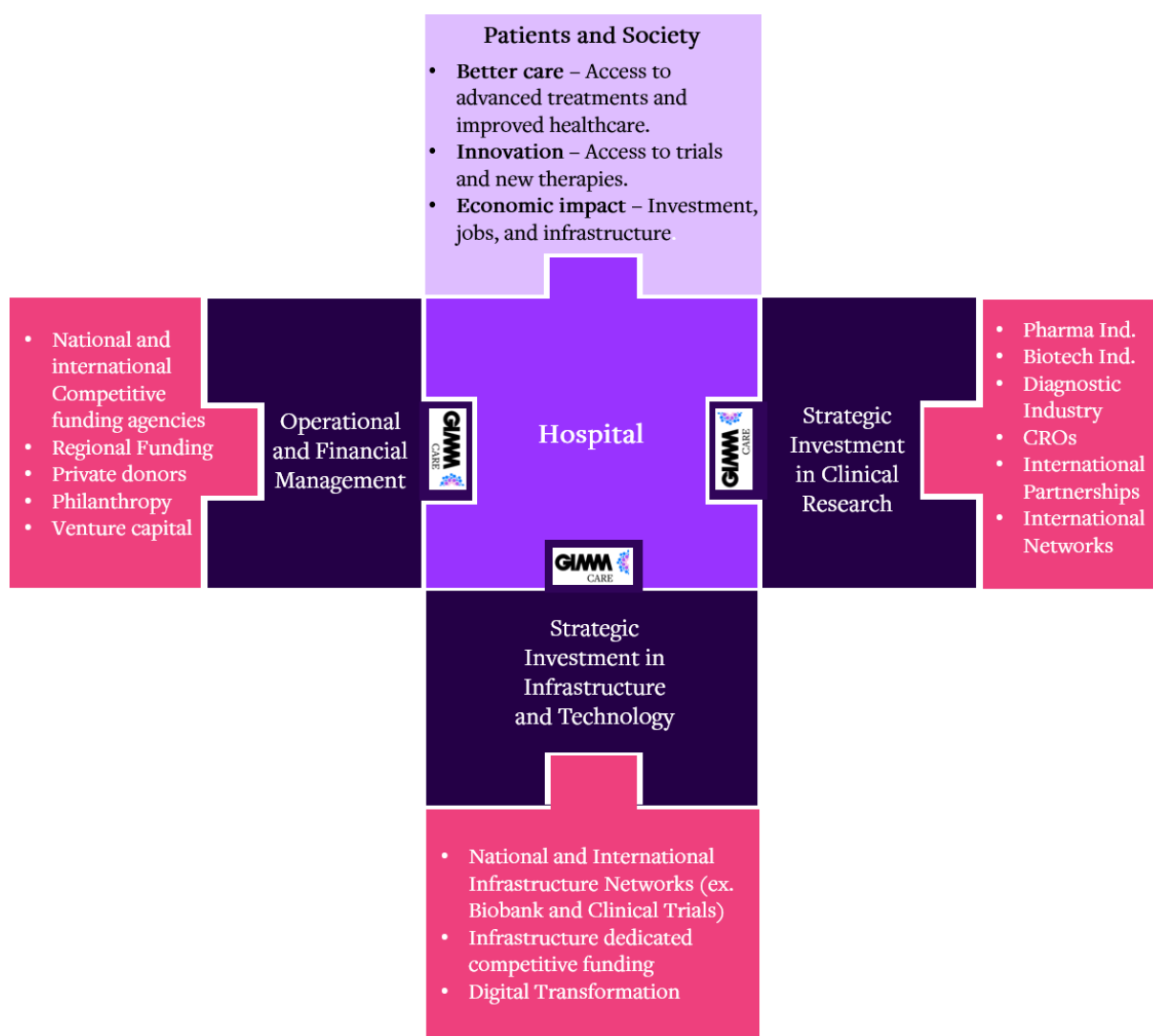


Figure 18. GIMM CARE Clinical Research Hub – scalable Lego® model.

¹⁶ <https://zenodo.org/records/18352446>

Pillar 4: Next- generation Biobank

Pillar 4: Next Generation Biobank

Operations

The **GIMM Biobank** collects and distributes samples and data from internal and external research projects, for use in current and future research projects. With 25k+ donors, 273,000 samples across 67 disease-specific collections plus a valuable collection of healthy controls, GIMM Biobank is the most comprehensive at the national level and leads the national research infrastructure network, Biobanco.pt.

Samples and data may be requested by any national or international researcher from academia or industry, following a simple access approval process with scientific and ethics experts. In 2025 alone 7250 samples were requested, contributing to a turnover of almost 30%. Regarding future strategy outlook, the Biobank takes a concerted approach to data integration, across data types and sources, aligned with the concept of One Health, encompassing human, animals and ecosystems research.

Regarding operational quality guarantees, the GIMM Biobank currently works with 15 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), managed by GIMM Quality and Compliance platform.

For the latest information on our collections please check the Biobank page: <https://care.gimm.pt/lab/biobank/>

Networks

Donation drives

GIMM Biobank works with a variety of partners to expand its healthy donors collection through holding in-house open donation drives, facilitating donor access and increasing data diversity. Recent examples include events held at Nestlé; Jerónimo Martins, Advanceworks and EMEL. In complement, in October each year, GIMM promotes an annual awareness campaign to inform the public about breast cancer and highlight the importance of scientific research (Semana da Mama). In the last three editions of Semana da Mama (2023, 2024, 2025) a Biobank healthy donor sample collection point was a key highlight with 100% of those donors surveyed, “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the process.

ESA Exploration Biobank

In July 2025, GIMM Biobank was selected as the official Biobank of the European Space Agency (ESA) - the ESA Exploration Biobank - the first infrastructure of its kind in Europe dedicated to the preservation of biological samples associated with space research. This successful partnership was the result of an open call for proposals and GIMM Biobank was successful due to decades of experience and the demonstrated quality assurance and compliance framework, including the existing SOPs.

“The Exploration Biobank will support future missions to the Moon and Mars and provide a foundation for the next generation of scientists exploring how humans adapt to extreme environments.

- Angelique Van Ombergen, ESA’s Chief exploration scientist.

A coordinated and open biobank community is key to accelerating translation to healthcare. Future strategic priorities for GIMM Biobank – including digital transformation and European-level community-building - will be aligned with recommendations collated as part of the *Green Paper* - “O papel estratégico dos biobancos em Portugal”¹⁷, coordinated by AICIB, DGS, the National Cancer Hub and the National Hub for Brain Health.



Figure 19. GIMM Biobank activities. European Space Agency hosting; Healthy donor blood sample collection drives as part of *Semana da mama* outreach campaign.

¹⁷ <https://aicib.pt/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Green-Paper-Biobancos-1.pdf>

Transversal Actions

Outreach and Partnerships

GIMM CARE's open innovation approach combines **physical events and curated digital tools** to bring together individuals and organisations from different specialities, communities and geographies in **knowledge exchange and cross-sectoral collaboration**. Our goal is to drive engagement across strategic research areas and to facilitate the generation of ideas to solve the challenges of our Missions.

Current partners



Outreach Events

Science Rounds

Like medical rounds, CARE Science Rounds aim to act as a platform for information exchange and collaboration, in this case between healthcare professionals and researchers. Events take place monthly (second Tuesday of each month) at GIMM, inviting healthcare professionals and GIMM researchers to give an informal 15 min talk about their work or ideas for a collaborative research project. A light lunch is provided. Event topics rotate through CARE's five Mission areas: Pediatric and Rare diseases, Cancer, Inflammation and Infection, Aging and Brain diseases, and Cardiovascular diseases, ensuring that each topic is covered twice a year. To date, since Q4 2025 **345 healthcare professionals and researchers** participated, with 60 participants on average per session.



Figure 20. Science Rounds clinician-researcher seminar series to date. Sessions cover all Mission areas.

GIMM CARE Annual Research Symposium

A showcase of Clinical and Translational Research, at GIMM CARE and beyond, the GIMM CARE Annual Research Symposium provides an overview of the work developed within GIMM CARE and future directions for clinical and translational research. It features

- Short open presentations from CARE mission-driven researchers
- Invited external speakers as part of an international *Science Round*
- Posters showcasing GIMM CARE infrastructures and strategic projects.
- A social moment, aimed at encouraging informal connections and fostering new collaborations within and beyond GIMM CARE.

Primary target audience: national clinical and translational researchers, healthcare professionals, agencies and policymakers, patient associations and industry partners.

Find out more [here](#).

GIMM Festival

The GIMM Festival is a separate annual event that **bridges science and society**, intended as a space for collective reflection on a scientific area with deep societal implications (see our recent Nature Aging article for an overview¹⁸). The central goal is to **identify the most critical unanswered questions** – those that can guide discovery, collaboration, and real-world impact in the years to come. For this, we bring together the most influential minds in fundamental and applied biomedical sciences, as well as thought leaders from diverse complementary fields such as the social sciences, the arts, engineering and public health. Over the course of three days, we explore the critical questions of the future – two days targeting scientists, leading to one final day for the general public. In parallel, we have developed a tool to collate and visualize all of these questions of the future – **BeyondGIMM**. By shifting its focus annually, the GIMM Festival ensures a continued connection to the evolving frontiers of knowledge, fostering public awareness and inspiring action. From immersive experiences to thought-provoking discussions, it is a celebration of curiosity and a catalyst for change.

Primary target audiences: Day 1: researchers; Day 2: researchers + general public.

Find out more [here](#).

Digital Transformation

To implement clinical and translational research at the highest level, steps towards digital transformation are transversal. From basic clinical and multi-‘omics data management and access models to clinical trials management systems, through to data open science practices, this is a key transversal action for GIMM CARE in the upcoming period (2026-2029).



Figure 21. Digital Technologies support infrastructure.

¹⁸ Ward, L., Faria, C.C., Mota, M.M. et al. Questions of the future in aging and longevity research at the GIMM Festival. Nat Aging (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43587-026-01133-y>

Governance

Direction

Since 2025, GIMM CARE benefits from a three-member Direction team coordinating strategy and operations and interacting directly with GIMM Executive Committee as follows:

GIMM CARE Executive Director

Cláudia Faria, MD, PhD (since May 2025)



Cláudia Faria is a Neurosurgeon at Hospital de Santa Maria, Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery and Neurology at the Lisbon School of Medicine and Head of the GIMM CARE Brain Cancer Dynamics and Therapy Translational Lab. She obtained her PhD in Medicine in 2014 (University of Toronto and University of Lisbon) with work developed at the Labatt Brain Tumour Research Centre, focused on using genomics for drug discovery in medulloblastoma, which led to seminal discoveries and publications in the field. She was co-director of the GIMM/CAML Biobank from 2018 to 2025 and founded the Brain Tumor Bank, which harbors biological samples from over 2,800 children and adults with brain tumors. Since 2023, she has led the Brain Cancer Dynamics and Therapy Translational Lab at GIMM CARE, where she has developed unique in vitro and in vivo patient-derived models of brain metastases from multiple cancer types. She is the local coordinator of EATRIS ERIC Portugal.

ORCID: [0000-0003-1259-9922](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1259-9922)

GIMM CARE Head of R&D

Cristovão Sousa, PhD (since September 2025)



Before joining GIMM CARE, Cristovão was Associate Director at Servier Pharmaceuticals in Boston. He has 15 years of experience in oncology and immunology research and demonstrated expertise in R&D leadership, managing multidisciplinary teams in drug discovery and clinical research. He holds a PhD in Cancer Biology, completed at Institut Curie in 2013, which complements a strong track record of industry accomplishments, including advancing multiple oncology targets into clinical evaluation. His leadership in both academia and the pharmaceutical industry highlights his commitment to innovation and translating discoveries into actionable solutions for patient care.

ORCID: [0009-0005-2195-3307](https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2195-3307)

GIMM CARE Head of Operations

Madalena Reis (since January 2025)



Madalena Reis is a pharmacist with management experience in the healthcare and life sciences sectors. She holds a degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences and an MBA from Nova School of Business and Economics. She began her career at IQVIA and later joined the Institute of Molecular Medicine in 2018, where she led the project management team.

The CARE Direction team is supported by a dedicated Project Manager (Laura Ward) and an Operations Assistant (Eduardo Nunes), with additional management support from the relevant platforms.

Advisory Board

GIMM CARE Advisory Board members provide strategic insight towards definition of missions, scientific and organizational benchmarking and facilitation of CARE clinical axis. They are also involved in the periodic evaluation of Translational labs, *ad-hoc* evaluation of project-based research open calls and support the dissemination and amplification of CARE results. The current composition is as follows:



Luisa Salter-Cid, PhD (US/Portugal) is an immunologist and biotechnology leader who has held senior executive roles in the pharmaceutical and biotech sectors, including serving as Chief Scientific Officer of Pioneering Medicines at Flagship Pioneering. She has led multiple drug discovery and development programs, particularly in immunology and immunotherapy, advancing candidates from early research into clinical stages. More recently, she became a partner at Lattice, a new venture capital firm emerging from the OUP Venture ecosystem, where she focuses on building and scaling innovative biotech companies. Her unique combination of scientific depth, strategic leadership, and venture creation experience positions her as an expert evaluator of innovation potential, translational feasibility, and real-world impact in biomedical research.



Laura Bermejo, PhD (Spain) is Scientific Director of the Instituto Ramón y Cajal de Investigación Sanitaria (IRYCIS) and Professor of Physiology at the University of Alcalá, where she also leads a research group focused on biomarkers and therapeutic targets in cancer. With a strong background in molecular and translational oncology, she has extensive experience integrating basic research with clinical application in a hospital-centered research environment. As Scientific Director, she is responsible for shaping institutional research strategy, evaluating programs, and fostering multidisciplinary collaboration and an experienced leader in areas related to biomarker development, translational pipelines, and clinical integration.



Pedro Pita Barros, PhD (Portugal), is BPI | Fundação la Caixa Professor of Health Economics at Nova School of Business of Economics, Universidade Nova de Lisboa. He holds a PhD in Economics and his research career in health economics has a focus on healthcare systems, competition and economic regulation. His research has been widely disseminated in high-impact peer-reviewed journals and has contributed to advancements in health economics and policy analysis. In addition to his academic contributions, Pedro Barros has held roles in policy advisory and governance. He served as a member of the European Commission's Expert Panel on Effective Ways of Investing in Health (2012–2022), of the Portuguese National Council of Ethics for the Life Sciences (2015–2021), and as a member of National Health Council (2017–2021). His work often bridges academia and policy, addressing complex challenges in healthcare financing, regulation, and sustainability.



Begoña Benito, MD PhD (Spain) is a prominent cardiologist, researcher, and the Managing Director of the Vall d'Hebron Research Institute (VHIR) in Barcelona, a position she has held since December 2022. She earned her MD and PhD from the University of Barcelona and completed her clinical specialization at Hospital Clínic de Barcelona. As a leading scientist, her research focuses primarily on cardiac arrhythmias, cardiac remodeling, and inherited heart diseases associated with sudden death. In addition to securing competitive funding from major national organizations like the Spanish Society of Cardiology and the FIS, she serves as an Associate Professor of Medicine at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), effectively bridging the gap between clinical practice, academic teaching, and high-level scientific management.

Clinical and Patient Strategy Group

In addition to the Advisory Board, GIMM CARE also receives critical inputs from the **Clinical and Patient Strategy Group**, which includes patient associations and clinicians at specific moments throughout the research process. Proactive researcher and management engagement with this group is crucial to **identify research priorities and real patient needs; refine study design (endpoints, recruitment strategies); develop outcome and impact measures; review informed consent forms; collate and provide feedback on project/study implementation**. This group also acts to **promote clinical research**, ensure effective dissemination and trust-building activities and to share projects and results with end-user communities. In 2026, GIMM CARE Clinical and Patient Strategy Group formally includes **Acreditar**¹⁹ (with ongoing activities including EVITA²⁰, Amigas do Peito²¹, APCCEREBRO²², Europacolón²³ and Liga Portuguesa contra o cancro²⁴).

¹⁹ <https://acreditat.org.pt/>

²⁰ <https://evitacancro.org/>

²¹ <https://amigasdopeito.pt/>

²² <https://apccerebro.pt/>

²³ <https://www.europacoln.pt/home>

²⁴ <https://www.ligacontracancro.pt/>



Figure 22. Patient Association participation in GIMM CARE activities.

Authors and Affiliations

Claudia C. Faria¹²³, Cristovão M. Sousa¹, Madalena Reis¹, Laura C. Ward¹, Patricia A. Napoleão¹², Eduardo Nunes¹, Maria Mota¹², Moises Mallo¹², Fausto Lopo de Carvalho¹, Xavier Cañas⁴, Francisco Gonzalez-Romero⁴, Mireia Pares Oliva⁴, Joaquim Calbó Angrill⁴, Begoña Benito⁴.

¹GIMM - Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine, 1649-035 Lisbon, Portugal

²Faculdade de Medicina, Universidade de Lisboa, 1649-028 Lisbon, Portugal

³Neurosurgery Department, Hospital de Santa Maria (ULSSM), 1649-035 Lisbon, Portugal

⁴Vall d'Hebron Institut de Recerca, VHIR Edifici Central, University Hospital Vall d'Hebron, Pg Vall d'Hebron, 129, Horta-Guinardó, 08035 Barcelona, Spain

Correspondence to: care@gimm.pt

Contact us

care@gimm.pt

GIMM CARE is open to collaboration requests from any interested parties, particularly healthcare professionals, patient associations or other national and international healthcare stakeholders.

The best way to connect with GIMM CARE collaborators is via the **CARE mailbox care@gimm.pt**. Let us know i) which research topics you are interested in, ii) what you are looking for (advice, tools, facilities, samples) and/or iii) your expertise and what you would like to offer, and GIMM CARE team will facilitate the connections. Please also mention your affiliation(s) (e.g. which hospital and service, which institute etc).