



2023 Annual Report

Introduction

The **CARE** Program (Translational Program in Cancer Research) represents a collaborative network of multidisciplinary researchers united by shared interests and resources in cancer research. Situated at the Can Ruti Campus, the program constitutes an integral component of the core scientific framework of the IGTP, a biomedical research center accredited by the Spanish National Health Research Council (ISCIII).

With the focus on various cancer forms, the program is meant to foster the translation of leading-edge knowledge and technological breakthroughs into practical applications for cancer diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. Through such efforts, the program aims to reach cancer research excellence while maximizing its impact on clinical practice.

The year 2023 marked a period of settlement and consolidation for the program, heralding the commencement of its activities and the refinement of its organizational structure and composition. To accomplish these objectives, it was imperative to collect the interests, needs, and aspirations of the researchers and research groups constituting CARE. To this end, an inaugural Workshop was performed, facilitating the identification of key interests and requirements among the diverse members of CARE. During this inaugural event, participants engaged in collaborative discussions and shared their experiences.

Based on the shared interests and necessities highlighted during the workshop, the program promoted the creation of three **Research Nodes** focused on emergent research areas. These nodes serve as dedicated platforms for fostering collaboration, stimulating innovation, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge among researchers.

By leveraging the collective expertise and enthusiasm of its members, the CARE Program is poised to advance its mission of catalyzing breakthroughs in cancer research and translating them into tangible benefits for patients and practitioners alike.

Featured Executive activities:

To achieve these goals, a coordination group lead by Program directors met every other week to analyze, prepare and schedule different types of activities like seminars, workshops and mini symposiums. We also conducted two surveys that helped us in the organization of the inaugural Workshop and to better understand the interests, needs and future expectations of CARE members. This information will enable the establishment of structures to reach the program's goals while making it dynamic, by facilitating the interaction among the different groups.

Educational and Training

In the past year, our cancer program's Educational and Training commission has been actively engaged in conducting a series of activities to foster translational research and professional development within our institution.

Translational Seminars

Throughout the year, we organized a series of translational seminars that served as platforms for researchers, clinicians, and students to discuss cutting-edge advancements in cancer research. In total, 17 seminars were held during 2023. Topics ranged from molecular mechanisms of oncogenesis to novel therapeutic strategies and clinical trial updates. The seminars facilitated interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange, enhancing our understanding of cancer biology and treatment modalities.

Workshops

In addition to seminars, in 2023 we started the organization of practical workshops. The first focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its applications in research, in which participants were immersed in hands-on training sessions covering a spectrum of research methodologies.

Future directions

We plan to expand our educational initiatives to reach a broader audience and address emerging trends in cancer research and therapy in collaboration with external institutions and organizations to leverage resources and expertise, further enriching the educational experience for our community. Also, we aim to incorporate innovative teaching methodologies and technology-enhanced learning platforms to enhance accessibility and engagement.

Networking

Inaugural Workshop

On the 27th of April of 2023 we conducted a half-day Inaugural Workshop gathering about 60 researchers focused on both clinical and basic research, with the aim of facilitating the interaction among CARE members and groups. This event served as a platform for various groups to introduce themselves while briefly presenting their research interests, projects and expertise. There were interactive sessions and the formation of working groups that allowed to identify common research priorities, collaboration opportunities and identified needed common scientific structures. The workshop fostered unity and the formation of transversal

and multidisciplinary groups that we call "nodes". Insights gained will inform strategic planning and guide program initiatives moving forward.

Nodes and scientific structures

Through the interactions among CARE members facilitated by the Inaugural Workshop, three transversal **nodes** were created, starting their activity at the end of 2023: 1) **Tumor heterogeneity and liquid biopsy**; 2) **Immunology and Immunotherapy**; 3) **Pre-clinical models**.

Two **scientific structural needs** were identified: 1) better support in the area of **genomics/bioinformatics** and 2) the creation of robust **circuits** for collecting samples and associated clinical data.

Impact of Program and Looking Forward

During 2023, the CARE Program has been able to generate a picture of what CARE is today and what it wants to become in the near future. We started by boosting the interaction between researchers, both basic and clinical, allowing them to express their research interests and expertise, and identifying research priorities, collaboration opportunities, and shared necessities. Different transversal nodes were created and initiated their activity. Educational and training activities keep developing nicely.

In the coming years, our Program needs to: endorse the different **nodes** consolidating their activity that will be central and structural to CARE; bring solutions to the identified **scientific structural needs**; built transversal and multidisciplinary **CARE research projects**; draw a **strategic plan** for the next 5 years; keep **educational and training** activities as a central core activity of CARE; promote, disseminate and **position CARE** as an innovative cancer research initiative, in our immediate environment, as well as at local and international level.