

Wednesday, May 20

14:00 - 16:10
Auditorium

>>>

RaccontART Contest Awards: incontro con le scuole finaliste e premiazione

Giunto alla dodicesima edizione e destinato agli studenti degli Istituti Scolastici Superiori, il Contest artistico RaccontART rappresenta un'occasione unica e preziosa di formazione e informazione in tema di HIV ed Infezioni Sessualmente Trasmesse. Questa sessione è dedicata alla presentazione delle Opere finaliste in concorso, selezionate dalle Giurie Artistica e Tecnico-Scientifica. Al termine della Sessione, verranno premiati i primi tre classificati.

Chairs: Francesca Ceccherini Silberstein (Roma), Adriano Lazzarin (Milano), Paolo Meli (Bergamo)
14.00 - 14.10 Benvenuto dei Presidenti ICAR 2026
*Paolo Maggi, Enna
 Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania
 Ilenia Pennini, Padova
 Carlo Federico Perno, Roma*
14.10 - 14.20 Introduzione e presentazione della Giuria Artistica e Tecnico-Scientifica
*Francesca Ceccherini
 Silberstein, Roma
 Paolo Meli, Bergamo*
14.20 - 15.45 Presentazione delle Opere finaliste al Concorso a cura degli Istituti Scolastici
15.45 - 16.00 Premiazione primi 3 classificati
*Francesca Ceccherini
 Silberstein, Roma
 Adriano Lazzarin, Milano
 Paolo Meli, Bergamo*
16.00 - 16.10 Conclusioni
*Francesca Ceccherini
 Silberstein, Roma
 Adriano Lazzarin, Milano
 Paolo Meli, Bergamo*
16:30 - 17:30
Auditorium

>>> Satellite Symposium

With an unrestricted educational grant from ViiV Healthcare

Long-Acting beyond chronicity: present, challenges and prospects in HIV

This symposium aims to discuss how Long-Acting therapies are already tangibly transforming the experience of chronic disease management across very different clinical settings, and how this evidence can also guide the transition in HIV care toward treatment pathways less constrained by daily therapy. Long-Acting formulations have been shown to reduce treatment burden, improve adherence and quality of life, stabilize drug exposure, and enable new care delivery settings. These operational and cultural transformations provide a framework for understanding how HIV is now facing a pivotal shift: not the immediate eradication of the disease, but a profound reconfiguration of its day-to-day management, more patient-centered and potentially more sustainable for healthcare systems. The objective of the symposium is to highlight the value of Long-Acting formulations in mitigating the impact of chronicity and promoting new models of care, demonstrating how they can become central elements in redesigning care pathways and outlining the organizational and operational conditions necessary to effectively integrate treatment management and prevention strategies.

Chairs: Antonella Castagna (Milano), Andrea Gori (Milano)
16.30 - 16.50 Overcoming chronicity: the Long-Acting revolution
Fabrizio Condorelli, Novara

16.50 - 17.00 Innovations in HIV: shaping the future of Long-Acting treatments

Andrea Antinori, Roma

17.00 - 17.25 Round Table led by the chairs

Long-Acting therapies in HIV: current landscape, future perspectives and impact on treatment and prevention

Moderators:

Antonella Castagna, Milano

Andrea Gori, Milano

Discussants:

Andrea Antinori, Roma

Annamaria Cattelan, Padova

Antonio Di Biagio, Genova

Massimo Farinella, Roma

Cristina Mussini, Modena

Stefano Rusconi, Legnano MI

17.25 - 17.30 Take-home messages

Antonella Castagna, Milano

Andrea Gori, Milano

17:30 - 19:30

Auditorium

>>> ICAR 2026 Opening Session

Chairs: Paolo Maggi (Enna), Giuseppe Nunnari (Catania), Ilenia Pennini (Padova). Carlo Federico Perno (Roma)

17.30 - 17.45 Introducing ICAR 2026: Chairs' welcome addresses

17.45 - 18.00 Authorities' welcome addresses

18.00 - 19.00 Keynote Lectures

Chair: Cristina Mussini (Modena)

18.00 - 18.30 Mauro Moroni Memorial Lecture: "One step closer to a cure for HIV"

Ole Scheltz Sogaard, Aarhus

DK

Antiretroviral therapy (ART) has transformed HIV-1 infection into a manageable chronic condition, yet the viral reservoir decays so slowly that ART alone is unlikely to achieve cure within a lifetime, necessitating new safe and scalable therapeutic strategies. Current cure approaches broadly aim either to eradicate or inactivate the reservoir or to induce durable immune-mediated control. Although hematopoietic stem cell transplantation has cured HIV-1 in rare cases, its risks preclude widespread use, shifting focus toward immune-based strategies, particularly enhancing cytotoxic CD8+ T-cell responses associated with spontaneous control. While therapeutic vaccines have largely failed and many investigational agents—developed for HIV-1 or repurposed from oncology and hematology—have not significantly reduced the reservoir, recent trials show that some individuals can achieve partial or complete long-term viral control after ART interruption, supporting the possibility of cure. This talk will highlight the most promising approaches, including broadly neutralizing antibodies, identify populations most likely to benefit, address key remaining barriers, and examine biological mechanisms underlying sustained post-treatment control.

Chair: Daniela Rojas Castro (Madrid ES)
18.30 - 19.00 Giulio Maria Corbelli Memorial Lecture: "From Denver Declaration to Dissent: Reviving the Political Fire of HIV Activism"

*Salvatore Cecere, Bologna
 Filippo Schlöesser, Roma*

Since its emergence in 1981, the HIV/AIDS crisis has radically reshaped the boundaries of scientific knowledge and human relationships. The epidemic abruptly interrupted the momentum of (homo)sexual liberation and was weaponized as a tool of moral panic and renewed control over sexuality—framed as “gay plague” or divine punishment. Yet within this devastation, unprecedented forms of grassroots organization and mutual aid arose. In 1983, the Denver Principles proclaimed “Nothing about us without us,” inaugurating a generation of activists who fought not only for survival but for the dignity and future of those who might outlive them. While institutions struggled to respond, activists transformed HIV from a biomedical emergency into a powerful identity-shaping force for queer culture and the modern patients’ rights movement. Forty-five years later, in the era of U=U, PrEP, and TasP, life expectancy and sexual lives have been profoundly redefined. But has the grammar of risk truly changed? Sexual liberation was never merely the absence of risk; it was the capacity to act, to experiment, to politicize desire, and to claim healthcare as a human right. In a time when we are told that HIV is no longer a death sentence, have we lost the political urgency to demand more? This lecture revisits the radical imagination of early HIV activism to ask: is biomedical success enough—or is it time, once again, to dissent?

19.00 - 19.15 TRIS (Top Researchers ICAR-SIMIT) Awards

*Antonella Castagna, Milano
 Cristina Mussini, Modena*

The three best scientific publications of 2025 related to ICAR topics (HIV, STIs, and other Viral Infections), published by Italian authors in international indexed journals. The members of the Commission - composed of the ICAR Board and Congress Chairs - individually assessed the various scientific papers on the basis of the following criteria: Originality, Quality of the scientific journal, Methodological rigour, Innovativeness compared to the state of the art on the topic, Relevance to clinical practice.

19.15 - 19.30 Closing remarks

*Paolo Maggi, Enna
 Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania
 Ilenia Pennini, Padova
 Carlo Federico Perno, Roma*

Thursday, May 21

09:00 - 10:00
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Keynote Lectures

Chair: Annamaria Cattelan (Padova)
09.00 - 09.30 Scaling Up PrEP and Its Effects on the HIV Epidemic: From Modelling Evidence to Public Health Impact
*Valentina Cambiano, London
UK*

The efficacy of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP; whether oral or as injectable) is undeniable. Modelling studies have consistently demonstrated that the availability of PrEP can substantially accelerate the decline in new infections when combined with existing prevention tools such as testing and treatment and viral suppression in those living with HIV. They have suggested as well that the introduction of oral PrEP in populations at risk of HIV offers value for money, however for injectable PrEP to be cost-effective in most high-income countries the current cost of injectables needs to decline substantially. Now, real-world data have confirmed that scale up of PrEP leads to substantial reductions in HIV incidence, however implementation programmes indicated that real-world impact depends not only on PrEP efficacy and uptake but also on equitable access, sustained adherence, and integration with sexual health services. To achieve the full public health benefit predicted by models, high-income countries must address disparities in PrEP awareness and use, ensure service reliability and friendliness.

Chair: Raffaele Bruno (Pavia)
09.30 - 10.00 HBV and HDV cure: shaping the future
Pietro Lampertico, Milano

The field of novel antiviral therapies for HBV and HDV is evolving rapidly. In 2026, the first phase III study in HBV using functional cure (FC) as the primary endpoint will be presented and published. A finite 24-week course of antisense oligonucleotide (ASO) therapy has demonstrated significant functional cure rates 24 weeks after discontinuation of all treatments, including nucleos(t)ide analogues (NUCs). In parallel, several innovative anti-HDV strategies are under development. Currently, four to five phase III trials are ongoing, based on two distinct approaches: monoclonal antibody (mAb) monotherapy or mAb combined with small interfering RNA (siRNA). Preliminary data suggest that these regimens may offer greater efficacy than long-term bulevirtide (BLV) monotherapy, which remains the only approved treatment for HDV to date.

10:05 - 11:05
Sala Pegaso 1
>>> Satellite Symposium
With an unrestricted educational grant from Gilead Sciences

Shaping the future of HIV treatment and prevention: innovation that meets evolving individuals' needs

This symposium aims to provide a comprehensive overview of how innovation in HIV prevention and treatment can be meaningfully aligned with the evolving needs of individuals. Although remarkable progress has been made in reducing new infections and improving Long-Term outcomes for people living with HIV, significant challenges remain in ensuring that prevention tools and therapeutic strategies are truly accessible, acceptable, and sustainable for the diverse populations they are designed to serve. The session is structured around the natural continuum of HIV care. The symposium will examine unmet needs in prevention, focusing on how Long-Acting approaches may help overcome persistent barriers to uptake, adherence, and persistence, particularly among individuals not adequately reached by current daily oral options. Next, the program focuses on therapeutic optimization in routine clinical practice, highlighting how modern regimens can offer durable efficacy and forgiveness, excellent Long-Term safety, and low interaction potential—ultimately supporting Long Term wellbeing across heterogeneous populations. It then looks ahead to future therapeutic pathways, exploring how emerging oral and Long-Acting strategies may further enhance personalization of care by accommodating individual preferences, clinical complexities, and lifestyle considerations. A closing moderated discussion will integrate insights from all three lectures, with the aim of connecting these elements into a coherent vision: one in which innovation supports a genuinely individual-centered approach to HIV prevention and treatment, enhancing both clinical outcomes and quality of life across the continuum of care.

Chairs: Antonella Castagna (Milano), Giuseppe Nunnari (Catania)

10.05 - 10.20	Rethinking HIV prevention: Long-Acting protection to address individuals' needs	<i>Andrea Antinori, Roma</i>
10.20 - 10.35	Optimizing today's therapy: meeting diverse patient needs for Long-Term benefits	<i>Giulia Carla Marchetti, Milano</i>
10.35 - 10.55	Shaping the future: oral and Long-Acting options to address patient's needs	<i>Onyema Ogbuagu, New Haven USA</i>
10.55 - 11.05	Connecting the Dots: the individual at the center of HIV care	<i>Discussants: Andrea Antinori, Roma Antonella Castagna, Milano Giulia Carla Marchetti, Milano Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania Onyema Ogbuagu, New Haven USA</i>

11:10 - 12:10
Sala Pegaso 1
>>> Symposium

Optimizing antiretroviral therapy in Italy: innovation, implementation, and impact

Despite significant advances in antiretroviral therapy (ART), optimizing treatment strategies for people with HIV (PWH) remains a dynamic challenge. The evolving therapeutic landscape now includes not only highly effective daily oral regimens but also innovative Long-Acting formulations that have the potential to transform adherence, PWH satisfaction, and healthcare delivery. However, real-world data, national policy frameworks, and implementation barriers continue to influence the pace of adoption and the equity of access to these new therapeutic options. This symposium brings together national experts to provide a comprehensive overview of the current Italian scenario and global trends in ART. The session will address the present "snapshot" of antiretroviral use and trends in Italy, discuss opportunities and challenges in scaling up Long-Acting therapies, and present clinical experiences in managing complex and unconventional treatment cases. Through these discussions, the symposium aims to stimulate critical reflection on how to best integrate innovation into daily practice and optimize Long-Term outcomes for PWH.

Chairs: Sergio Lo Caputo (Foggia), Annalisa Perziano (Torino)

11.10 - 11.25 The Italian Landscape of Antiretroviral Therapy
Andrea De Vito, Sassari
11.15 - 11.40 Long-Acting ART: Barriers to Adoption and Paths to Scale
Silvia Nozza, Milano
11.40 - 11.55 Managing Complex Cases: Unconventional Use of Antiretrovirals Treatments
Andrea Giacomelli, Milano
11.55 - 12.10 Discussion
11:10 - 12:10
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Symposium

Liver Disease at the Viral–Metabolic Interface: What Matters Now

Viral and metabolic determinants of liver injury increasingly coexist and interact, reshaping the epidemiology, pathogenesis, and management of liver disease. Despite major advances in prevention, acute viral hepatitis continues to occur both sporadically and within outbreaks in Europe, while chronic infections and metabolic dysfunction sustain a growing burden of steatosis, fibrosis, and hepatocellular carcinoma. This session explores current priorities at the viral-metabolic interface, from the evolving epidemiology of acute hepatitis to breakthroughs in HBV cure research, the burden and emerging treatment options for MASLD in people with HIV, and the risk and clinical implications of HBV reactivation with evolving antiretroviral strategies. Through an integrated clinical and virological lens, the discussion will highlight mechanisms, therapeutic opportunities, and translational gaps that define what matters now in liver disease.

Chairs: Anna Maria Geretti (Roma), Giovanni Mazzola (Palermo)
11.10 - 11.25 Epidemiologic Trends in Acute Viral Hepatitis in Europe
Maria Elena Tosti, Roma
11.25 - 11.40 MASLD in People with HIV: Metabolic–Inflammatory Crosstalk and Clinical and Therapeutic Aspects
Giovanni Guaraldi, Modena
11.40 - 11.55 HBV Reactivation in the Context of HBV-inactive ART
Massimo Puoti, Milano
11.55 - 12.10 Discussion
11:10 - 12:10
Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

11:10 - 12:10
Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

12:15 - 13:15
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Satellite Symposium

With an unrestricted educational grant from ViiV Healthcare

Is viral suppression enough? New opportunities for People Living with HIV (PWH)

Given the high level of effectiveness of today's antiretroviral therapies, it is crucial to look beyond viral suppression and place broader dimensions of health for people living with HIV (PWH) at the centre. This Symposium aims to focus on three key areas: the value of adherence to ART and the potential consequences of non-adherence; the clinical and psychosocial benefits that Long-Acting therapies can provide; and organizational models that, through target restructuring, have already been shown to concretely improve the quality of life for many people. Exploring the role of adherence is essential not only for virologic control but also because non-adherence carries significant risks for individual health and public health alike. Long-Acting therapies can reduce the daily treatment burden, offer greater discretion, potentially improve the care experience and have positive impacts on psychosocial well-being. It is important to assess these benefits in light of the real needs of PWH and any barrier to access. Finally, there are organizational implementation models that – by redesigning care pathways, integrating hospital and community services and developing supportive tools – have extended the benefits of therapeutic innovations to a larger number of people, resulting in measurable improvements in quality of life. This Symposium seeks to share these experiences to promote the adoption of sustainable, person-centered solutions.

Chairs: Vincenzo Esposito (Napoli), Giuseppe Nunnari (Catania)
12.15 - 12.20 Introduction
*Vincenzo Esposito, Napoli
Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania*
12.20 - 12.35 Adherence matters: from daily doses to lifelong continuity
*Angelo Roberto Raccagni,
Milano*
12.35 - 12.50 Beyond the pills: Long-Acting clinical and quality of life outcomes?
Roberto Rossotti, Verona
12.50 - 13.05 People-first pathways: organizational models for integrated HIV care
*Simona Di Giambenedetto,
Roma*
13.05 - 13.15 Q&A led by the chairs and Take-home messages
*Vincenzo Esposito, Napoli
Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania*
12:15 - 13:15
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Expert Meeting

With an unrestricted educational grant from Gilead Sciences

Hepatitis/HIV screening strategies, early diagnosis, and HDV antiviral treatment

Hepatitis D Virus and Cancer risk: the race from early detection to early treatment Chronic hepatitis D remains the most aggressive form of viral hepatitis, with a rapid progression to cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma. Despite this burden, HDV is still underdiagnosed, particularly among migrants and underserved populations, where gaps in screening and linkage to care persist. This Meet the Expert session will address the urgent need for systematic testing, early diagnosis, and timely initiation of effective therapies. By integrating epidemiology, screening strategies, and advances in antiviral treatment, the session aims to provide practical guidance to reduce the clinical impact of HDV and improve patient outcomes.

Chairs: Franco Maggiolo (Fabro TR), Massimo Puoti (Milano)
12.15 - 12.35 Hepatitis and HIV testing: addressing care gaps for migrants and underserved. The "Test in the City" experience
Paolo Meli, Bergamo

12.35 - 12.55 **The silent threat of HDV: the critical need for early diagnosis**

Annamaria Cattelan, Padova

12.55 - 13.15 **BLV for early HDV treatment: turning the tide on the most aggressive viral hepatitis**

Pietro Lampertico, Milano

12:15 - 13:15

Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

12:15 - 13:15

Sala Antares

>>> Expert Meeting

12:15 - 13:15

Sala Mizar

>>> Oral Communications

14:00 - 15:00

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Symposium

Quenching or enhancing immune response in HIV care and cure

Since the beginning of HIV epidemic, immunopathogenesis has been considered a key factor for the understanding of the disease, but immunological therapeutical approaches are not been reliable until now. The early dysregulation of natural and specific immune response and inflammation are difficult to control, even in antiretroviral treated PWH. In the symposium, recent approaches will be discussed focussing on high specific, novel molecular target therapies combined or not with modern ART.

Chairs: Miriam Lichtner (Roma), Giulia Carla Marchetti (Milano)

14.00 - 14.15 **(HIV-1)-specific broadly neutralizing monoclonal antibodies (bNAbs) for HIV care and cure: perspectives and hopes**

Gabriella Scarlatti, Milano

14.15 - 14.30 **T-reg cells in the immunopathogenesis of HIV: Clinical implications**

Chiara Agrati, Roma

14.30 - 14.45 **Molecular targets to manage inflammation**

Andrea Cossarizza, Modena

14.45 - 15.00 **Discussion**

14:00 - 15:00
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Symposium

Intersectionality among cancer and ageism among PWH

As people with HIV (PWH) live longer due to effective antiretroviral therapy, ageing-related conditions such as cancer are becoming leading causes of morbidity and mortality. This symposium addresses the intersection between ageing, oncological burden, and social determinants such as ageism. Discussions will focus on priorities for cancer prevention and early detection, barriers to accessing standard treatments and clinical trials, and the impact of stigma and age-related bias on health outcomes in older PWH. Promoting an integrated, equitable approach to care is essential to improve longevity and quality of life in this growing population.

Chairs: Antonella Cingolani (Roma), Ada Moznich (Milano)
14.00 - 14.15 Cancer burden in PWH: priorities for prevention and care
Lene Ryom, Copenhagen DK
14.15 - 14.30 Treatment challenges, access to standard treatments, and trial inclusion: the paradigm of HIV-associated lymphoma
Alessandro Re, Brescia
14.30 - 14.45 Missed opportunities: the impact of ageism on people aging with HIV
Nicoletta Policek, Bruxelles BE
14.45 - 15.00 Discussion
14:00 - 15:00
Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

14:00 - 15:00
Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Satellite Symposium

With an unrestricted educational grant from MSD Italy

Therapeutic management of PWH: from current clinical practice to future perspectives

The purpose of this session is to explore how the therapeutic management of people living with HIV is evolving, from current clinical practice toward future treatment strategies. Particular attention will be given to the growing burden of comorbidities, especially cardiometabolic ones, and to the need for early, proactive intervention to prevent progression and Long-Term complications. Within this context, next-generation NNRTIs will be discussed as a key component of antiretroviral regimens, thanks to their favorable metabolic profile and their potential role in improving cardiometabolic health. In parallel, the session will address the emerging role of NNRTIs as a pillar of the new generation of ART, and how these innovations can support a more personalized, patient-centered approach to the care of people living with HIV.

Chairs: Annamaria Cattelan (Padova), Andrea Gori (Milano)
15.05 - 15.25 Comorbidities and HIV: why we need to act now
Paolo Maggi, Enna
15.25 - 15.45 Next-generation NNRTIs: a key ally in managing cardiometabolic comorbidities
Leonardo Calza, Bologna

15.45 - 16.05 **New frontiers in HIV management: NRTTIs as a pillar of next-generation ART**

Andrea Calcagno, Novara

15:05 - 16:05

Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05

Sala Antares

>>> Expert Meeting

With an unrestricted educational grant from Menarini

Antibiotic therapy: microbiological and clinical challenges for the treatment of in- and out- patients

Bacterial infections represent the major emergency in the field of infectious diseases. This is due to the increased incidence of nosocomial infections, which places a burden on care in terms of mortality and disability and on the economy in terms of healthcare costs. The availability of new antimicrobial therapies is changing the management of gram-negative infections by offering new therapeutic opportunities for the management of increasingly "difficult" strains. On the other hand, from the point of view of antibiotic sensitivity, and antibiotic PK the availability of Long-Acting drugs is changing the treatment strategies for gram-positive infections, reducing the duration of hospitalisations and changing the profile of outpatient antibiotic therapy.

Chairs: Antonio Cascio (Palermo), Giusy Tiseo (Pisa)

15.05 - 15.25 **How to manage nosocomial infections caused by Carbapenemases-Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)**

Marco Falcone, Pisa

15.25 - 15.45 **Long-Acting antibiotics in outpatient antibiotic therapy: clinical and real-life evidences**

Massimo Puoti, Milano

15.45 - 16.05 **Discussion led by the chairs**

*Antonio Cascio, Palermo
Giusy Tiseo, Pisa*

15:05 - 16:05

Sala Mizar

>>> Oral Communications

16:10 - 17:10

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Symposium

Cardiovascular Kidney Metabolic (CKM) syndrome: a new framework to manage metabolic health

Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic (CKM) syndrome provides a framework to understand the interconnected risks of cardiovascular disease, kidney dysfunction, and metabolic disorders in people living with HIV. HIV infection, antiretroviral therapy, and chronic inflammation can amplify these risks, making early identification and integrated management essential. This approach emphasizes holistic, multidisciplinary strategies to optimize Long-Term health and reduce the burden of cardiometabolic complications in this population.

Chairs: Paolo Bonfanti (Monza), Manuela Ceccarelli (Enna)

16.10 - 16.25 **Introduction: Frameworking CKM syndrome**

Giovanni Guaraldi, Modena

Talk show

16.25 - 16.40	Balancing the Scales: Can GLP-1RAs Redefine Weight Management in People Living with HIV? Focusing on obesity/weight gain (focusing on GLP-1RA)	<i>Nicola Squillace, Monza</i>
16.40 - 16.55	Breaking the Cycle: Addressing Bone Loss in People Living with HIV Focusing on Bone Health	<i>Maria Mazzitelli, Roma</i>
16.55 - 17.10	Healthy Hearts, Balanced Sugar: Navigating Cardiometabolic Risks in HIV Focusing on cardiovascular health and diabetes	<i>Vincenzo Spagnuolo, Milano</i>

16:10 - 17:10

Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

16:10 - 17:10

Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

16:10 - 17:10

Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

17:15 - 18:40

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Oral Communications

17:15 - 18:40

Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

17:15 - 18:40

Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

17:15 - 18:40

Sala Mizar

>>> Oral Communications

Friday, May 22

09:00 - 10:00

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Keynote Lectures

Chair: Carlo Torti (Roma)

09.00 - 09.30 Projected trajectories of life expectancy in HIV: role of new and old disparities

Enrico Girardi, Roma

The advent of combination antiretroviral therapy 30 years ago has dramatically changed the life trajectory patterns of HIV infection. In the pre-cART era the pattern was characterized by short survival, frequent opportunistic infections and AIDS-defining illnesses; high pill burden and toxicity even when ART is used; profound uncertainty and stigma. In the cART era the pattern was characterized by durable viral suppression becomes routine; survival extends toward normal life expectancy; the clinical burden shifts toward non-AIDS, age-related, and treatment-related comorbidities. The presentation will address this evolution and it will discuss the inequalities that lie behind the current heterogeneity of the current life trajectories of persons living with HIV.

Chair: Carlo Federico Perno (Roma)

09.30 - 10.00 Novel Vaccine Platforms: Lessons from HIV

*Dan Hung Barouch, Boston
USA*

In this talk, I will review the vaccine platforms that were developed and tested for candidate HIV vaccines and the unique challenges facing HIV vaccine development. I will then discuss how these platforms have been used successfully for other pathogens, including viral vector and mRNA platforms, with applications to ZIKV, SARS-CoV-2, and influenza. Finally, I will discuss current concepts in vaccine development, including the importance of mucosal immunity.

10:05 - 11:05

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Symposium

Breaking barriers to PrEP and STI management: from testing to access to monitoring

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continue to represent a significant public health burden, with increasing incidence observed across diverse populations. In parallel, the introduction of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) has substantially transformed the landscape of HIV prevention, offering highly effective biomedical strategies to mitigate transmission risk. Nevertheless, the success of these interventions depends not only on their efficacy, but also on equitable access and the rational allocation of healthcare resources. Accessible and timely STI screening plays a pivotal role in early diagnosis, treatment, and interruption of transmission chains. However, in the context of limited healthcare resources, screening practices must be optimized according to epidemiological evidence and tailored to populations at greatest risk. Such rationalization is essential to ensure clinical effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and sustainability, while preserving the fundamental principle of equitable access. Similarly, the broad implementation of PrEP remains a cornerstone of HIV prevention. Despite robust evidence of its efficacy, uptake continues to be hindered by structural, economic, and social barriers. The advent of novel PrEP modalities—including Long-Acting injectable formulations and alternative dosing strategies—represents a crucial advancement, with the potential to overcome existing barriers, improve adherence, and expand prevention to underserved populations. This conference will provide a forum for critical discussion of the dual challenges of expanding access while ensuring the rational use of STI screening and PrEP. By integrating clinical, epidemiological, and public health perspectives, the meeting seeks to promote evidence-based strategies that advance the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of STI and HIV prevention.

Chairs: Salvatore Cecere (Bologna), Barbara Suligoj (Roma)

Discussants: Andrea Antinori (Roma), Cristina Mussini (Modena)

10.05 - 10.20 **Scaling Up HIV Cascade Testing Across Clinical and Extra-Hospital Contexts**

Manuel Maffeo, Milano

10.20 - 10.35 **Unequal Access to HIV Prevention: Structural and Social Challenges in PrEP Implementation**

Angelo Roberto Raccagni, Milano

10.35 - 10.50 **Consensus statement of the Italian Society for Infectious and Tropical Diseases (SIMIT) on clinical guidance for screening of bacterial STIs**

Pietro Leone Giovanni Vinti, Milano

10.50 - 11.05 **Discussion**

10:05 - 11:05

Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Symposium

Immunization Strategies in Vulnerable Hosts: From Immunodeficiency to Emerging Infections

One of the most complex and multifaceted legacies of the COVID-19 pandemic concerns the expansion of vaccine platforms. New technologies, particularly those related to mRNA vaccine platforms, have burst onto the scene of basic and translational research, offering new possibilities for the development of targeted vaccines against old unresolved infections and new emerging infections. Vaccine protection, in chronic conditions such as HIV and in immunocompromised individuals, provides clinical protection against agents and factors associated with clinical progression, with benefits for clinical status, quality of life, and survival. However, a complex and contradictory legacy of COVID-19 concerns the emergence of vaccine hesitancy in the population, the causes and consequences of which are being studied at the cultural and social levels. This is particularly true among high-risk individuals, such as those with immunodepression, for whom the benefits of vaccine protection are unparalleled. The emergence of vaccine hesitancy even in a population historically loyal to science and treatment, such as people living with HIV, must be carefully analysed and countered through alliances involving the scientific and social communities.

Chairs: Massimo Andreoni (Roma), Nicoletta Frattini (Milano)

Discussants: Pietro Colletti (Marsala TP), Pasquale Giuseppe Macrì (Arezzo)

10.05 - 10.25 **Vaccine response and clinical protection to Varicella Zoster Virus in immunocompromised individuals:**

Experience in people with HIV (PWH)

Giulia Carla Marchetti, Milano

Experience in other immunodepressed patients

Marco Iannetta, Roma

10.25 - 10.40 **Developing new vaccine platforms for emerging infections: the arbovirosis model (dengue and chikungunya)**

Emanuele Nicastrì, Roma

10.40 - 10.55 **Is there also vaccine hesitancy among persons living with HIV?**

Massimo Giuseppe Luigi Cernuschi, Milano

10.55 - 11.05 **Discussion**



Italian Conference
on AIDS and Antiviral
Research

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10:05 - 11:05

Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

10:05 - 11:05

Sala Mizar

>>> Oral Communications

11:10 - 12:10

Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

11:10 - 12:10
Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

11:10 - 12:10
Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

12:15 - 13:15
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Symposium

Understanding HIV's evolutionary past and future: implications in the control of HIV infection

Despite more than 40 years of research since the discovery of HIV, key aspects of the virus are still not fully understood. Further studies are needed to elucidate how HIV has adapted to humans and, crucially, how our immune system has evolved in response. A critical part of this defense involves restriction factors—intracellular human proteins that inhibit HIV replication. Understanding how these factors influence infection is vital for predicting outcomes and for exploring strategies that may enhance their protective effects. Furthermore, studying the evolution of HIV within a host provides a complete picture of its pathogenesis, guiding the development of new treatments to control or eradicate the virus from tissue reservoirs. To support these efforts, improving current diagnostic assays is essential for accurately assessing the HIV reservoir in both clinical and research settings.

Chairs: Maria Santoro (Roma), Maurizio Zazzi (Siena)
12.15 - 12.30 Host restriction factors in HIV: insights and therapeutic implications
Guido Poli, Milano
12.30 - 12.45 HIV compartmentalization: insights and implications for treatment outcomes
Carlo Federico Perno, Roma
12.45 - 13.00 Diagnostics challenges in the evaluation of HIV reservoir
Ilaria Vicenti, Roma
13.00 - 13.15 Discussion
12:15 - 13:15
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Expert Meeting

COVID-19 in 2026

More than 5 years since the start of the pandemic, most of the severe COVID-19 burden falls upon immunocompromised patients who cannot mount an endogenous immune response after both vaccination and/or natural infection. And COVID-19 continues to threaten public health and health-care systems worldwide. Older individuals and people with comorbidities remain at greatest risk of progression to severe disease. COVID-19 poses a particular threat to people who are immunocompromised, who have impaired immune responses to promote viral clearance, leading to prolonged infection and an increased potential for both viral resistance and severe disease. Although COVID-19 vaccines have drastically reduced the risk of severe disease, hospitalisation, and death for most individuals, patients who are moderately to severely immunocompromised often have suboptimal immune response after vaccination. For these reasons, antiviral treatment is still necessary today for those at risk: current treatment guidelines from the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) recommend that individuals with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 at high risk for progression to severe disease, which includes people with immunocompromising conditions, receive prompt treatment with the antivirals or with anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies if circulating variants are susceptible. This session will review more recent data from scientific research and the evidences in the real-world setting.

Chairs: Giovanni Cenderello (Sanremo IM), Antonina Franco (Siracusa)

12.15 - 12.35 Antiviral therapy against SARS CoV-2 infection today: advantages and opportunities

Giovanni Di Perri, Torino

12.35 - 12.45 Discussion

12.45 - 13.05 Managing COVID in immunocompromised patients

Ivan Gentile, Napoli

13.05 - 13.15 Discussion

12:15 - 13:15

Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

12:15 - 13:15

Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

14:00 - 15:00

Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Symposium

STI Prevention and Vaccinations: Emerging Evidence and Evolving Opportunities

A symposium hosted by the journal Sexually Transmitted Infections (BMJ Group)

Vaccination plays an increasingly relevant role in STI prevention, complementing behavioural and biomedical interventions. Hepatitis A and B vaccines remain established pillars of prevention for at-risk groups, while the population-level impact of HPV vaccination continues to expand. Emerging ecological and immunological data indicating a potential protective effect of MenB vaccination against *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* have renewed interest in vaccine-based strategies amid rising incidence and antimicrobial resistance. The Mpox vaccination campaign, particularly among people living with HIV, has further highlighted both the opportunities and the operational challenges of implementing targeted programmes in response to evolving threats. As evidence develops, greater clarity is needed on how these vaccines can be integrated into routine and targeted STI prevention frameworks. This symposium will present current data, biological plausibility, and key research gaps, drawing on clinical, epidemiological, and public health perspectives to support rational and evidence-based vaccination strategies for STI prevention.

Chairs: Anna Maria Geretti (Roma), Stefano Rusconi (Legnano MI)

14.00 - 14.15 The resurgence of hepatitis A in Europe

*Benedetto Maurizio Celesia,
Catania*

14.15 - 14.30 Evidence for MenB protection against *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*

Roberto Rossotti, Verona

14.30 - 14.45 Optimising Mpox vaccination for people living with HIV

Valentina Mazzotta, Roma

14.45 - 15.00 HPV vaccination in people living with HIV: are two doses sufficient?

*Deborah Konopnicki, Bruxelles
BE*

14:00 - 15:00
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

14:00 - 15:00
Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

14:00 - 15:00
Sala Mizar

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Pegaso 2

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Antares

>>> Oral Communications

15:05 - 16:05
Sala Mizar

>>> Short Communications

16:10 - 16:35
Sala Pegaso 1

>>> Special Session

ICAR 2026 Awards and closing remarks

ICAR support and reward the young excellences of Italian research with special prizes announced and awarded during this Session.

Chairs: Paolo Maggi (Enna), Giuseppe Nunnari (Catania), Ilenia Pennini (Padova). Carlo Federico Perno (Roma)
16.10 - 16.20 ICAR 2026 Scientific Committee Awards

Three prizes for the best Clinical, Basic and Social Science Abstracts

*Paolo Maggi, Enna
 Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania
 Ilenia Pennini, Padova
 Carlo Federico Perno, Roma*
16.20 - 16.30 ICAR Call for Research 2025-2026

Updates on the progress of the ICAR-SIMIT call for research

Antonella Castagna, Milano



Italian Conference
on AIDS and Antiviral
Research

Presidenza del Congresso
Paolo Maggi, Enna
Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania
Ilenia Pennini, Padova
Carlo Federico Perno, Roma

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16.30 - 16.35 Closing remarks and ICAR 2027 announcement

Antonella Castagna, Milano
Paolo Maggi, Enna
Giuseppe Nunnari, Catania
Ilenia Pennini, Padova
Carlo Federico Perno, Roma