

SIRIC MONTPELLIER CANCER

Newsletter

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When Scientific Excellence Shapes the Future of Care

Dear Teams and Partners,

2026 begins with strong momentum for SIRIC Montpellier Cancer.

Three years after obtaining the SIRIC label, we have reached a key milestone: our mid-term evaluation.

Conducted at the end of 2025 by the French National Cancer Institute (INCa) before an international panel, this review highlighted what defines our collective strength: the excellence of our research, the commitment of our clinical and scientific teams, and the unique dynamic we have built in health democracy alongside our patient partners.

This momentum will continue to grow in 2026. Each research programme will host a dedicated workshop to showcase its advances, laying the groundwork for a major inter-programme event planned for 2027.

We will also pursue the ambitious collaborative project launched at the end of 2025 between ICM and TAE Life Sciences. The goal is to establish Montpellier Cancer Institute as the first BNCT (Boron Neutron Capture Therapy) center in France. With its exceptional scientific expertise, SIRIC has all the assets required to turn this partnership into a flagship research programme.

2026 will be shaped by bold projects and strategic partnerships, all driven by a shared ambition: transforming *care* into *cure*.

The entire SIRIC Montpellier Cancer team wishes you a very happy, healthy, and successful new year.

Prof. David Azria

Director of SIRIC Montpellier Cancer



Our Integrated Research Programs

PRIORITY

PRIORITY aims to optimise internal and external radiotherapy treatments using a multimodal approach integrating tumour biology, radiobiology, dosimetry and AI-driven next-generation imaging



DATA CHALLENGE



PINKCC Challenge 2026: AI for Pancreatic Cancer Research

Led by Professor Stéphanie Nougaret's PINKcc Lab and SIRIC Montpellier Cancer, the PINKCC Challenge returns in 2026 for a brand-new edition!

This year, the data challenge will focus on developing algorithms for the detection and segmentation of pancreatic cancers.

More than a hundred participants have already registered, and registrations remain open throughout February ahead of the challenge's kick-off in March.

[Read more](#)

M&M’s Project: Developing Imaging Biomarkers to Predict Pancreatic Cancer Progression



SIRIC Montpellier Cancer x SIRIC InsiTu (AP-HP Nord)

What is the M&M's Project?

The “*Multiscale MRI in Murine Models of Pancreatic Cancer*” project brings together SIRIC Montpellier Cancer and SIRIC InsiTu (AP-HP Nord) in a collaborative effort to conduct multiscale MRI studies in murine models of pancreatic cancer.

What does it involve?

The project aims to develop predictive biomarkers of tumor progression using quantitative MRI. This approach combines multiple parameters (including elastography to assess mechanical properties and diffusion imaging) in preclinical pancreatic cancer models.

[Read more](#)

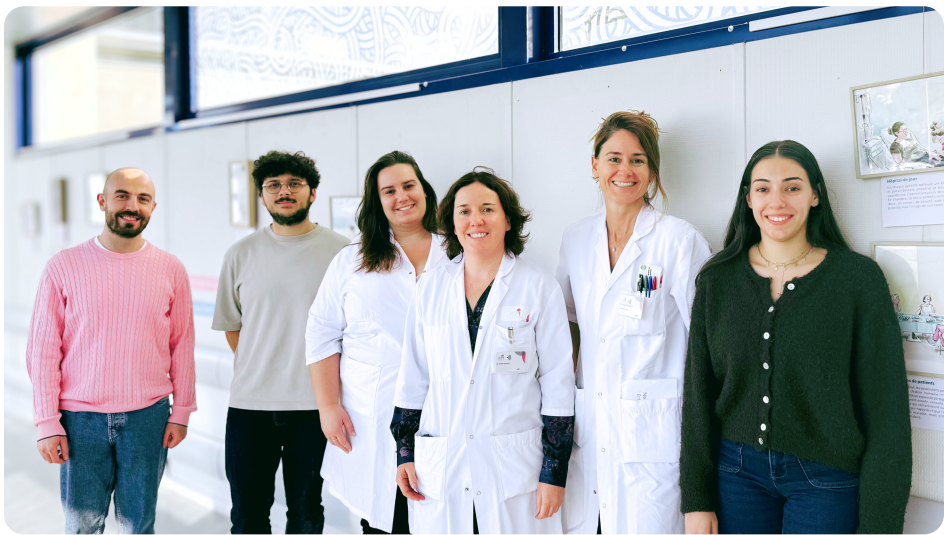


PANACEA

PANACEA aims to improve prevention and supportive care strategies to reduce high-risk behaviors and cancer-related complications

RESEARCH PAPER

Improving Patients' Quality of Life Through Neuropsychological Rehabilitation



Frontiers in Psychology - September 2025

“Effectiveness of a Mixed Remote Neuropsychological Rehabilitation Programme for Patients with Grade 2 or 3 Diffuse Glioma”

The IRP-2 PANACEA programme of SIRIC Montpellier Cancer supports the FREEDOME study, coordinated by Drs. Amélie Darlix and Estelle Guerdoux at the Montpellier Cancer Institute. This study aims to improve the quality of life of patients with low-grade gliomas.

This multicentre trial involves 187 patients across 8 French centres. It evaluates a structured neuropsychological rehabilitation programme combining cognitive-behavioural therapy and digital tools to alleviate cognitive complaints and emotional difficulties.

The FREEDOME protocol, published this autumn in Frontiers in Psychology, is supported by the French Ministry of Health through the PHRCi-2022 programme and by SIRIC Montpellier Cancer.

[Read the article](#)

MEET THE SIRIC COMMUNITY

3 questions for... Alexandre Djiane and Aurélien Brun

Exploring cancer-associated cachexia

As part of his postdoctoral fellowship, Aurélien Brun recently joined Alexandre Djiane’s “*Epithelial Growth and Cancer*” research team at the Institute of Cancer Research of Montpellier.

Together, they share how their collaborative work is unraveling the mechanisms of cancer-associated cachexia.

Their goal is to identify predictive biomarkers and pave the way for new therapeutic strategies.

Discover their research and 2026 roadmap at SIRIC Montpellier Cancer!



[Read more](#)

Super Challenge 2026 starts this March!

Epidaure, the Cancer Prevention Department at the Montpellier Cancer Institute, returns in March 2026 with a new edition of the Super Challenge.

What is the Super Challenge? It's a workplace health programme that encourages physical activity in a fun and simple way.

The goal? Accumulate as many "energy cubes" as possible. 1 cube = 15 minutes of non-stop physical activity.

When? From 23 March to 19 April 2026.

Every move counts! Track your daily progress while taking on the Super Challenge either alone or as part of a team.

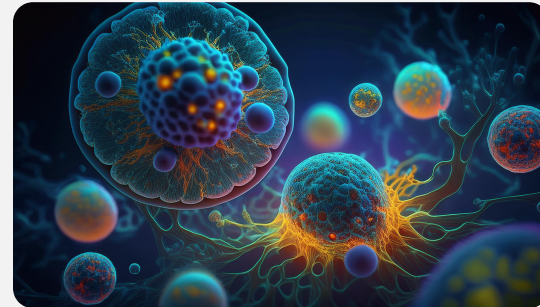
SIRIC Montpellier Cancer & Epidaure research teams are conducting a feasibility study to explore how the challenge can be rolled out across participating organisations and employees' experiences with this workplace health initiative.

[Read more](#)



ENERGY

ENERGY aims to develop innovative therapeutic strategies based on a better understanding of the metabolic alterations in cancer cells



HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

Metabolism & Cancer 2025



The **6th edition of the Metabolism & Cancer Congress** took place from 8 to 10 October 2025 in La Grande-Motte.

A must-attend event for exploring the latest breakthroughs in the study of cellular metabolism and cancer.

Laurent Le Cam's team (IRCM)

Workshop Organoids and Cancer 2025



The **Organoids and Cancer Workshop** was held for the first time in Montpellier on 20 June 2025.

This inaugural event brought together researchers, clinicians, European experts, and patient representatives to explore tumor organoid models and their applications in cancer research.

Laetitia Linares, Céline Gongora, Nadia Vié, and Benjamin Ginter (IRCM)

TECHNOLOGY OFFER

Celebrating a successful year for the ATAC-seq platform

Supported by **SIRIC Montpellier Cancer** and hosted in **Eric Soler's laboratory at the IGMM**, the ATAC-seq platform has **become a key experimental facility** for epigenome analysis, **open to all SIRIC teams**.

In 2025, **330 libraries were generated**, demonstrating the platform's growing activity and impact.

[Discover our ATAC-seq platform](#)

SIRIC Ecosystem

EDUCATION



From September to December 2025, the module “*Tackling Challenges through International Linked Research Hub*”, implemented as part of the European alliance CHARM-EU, brought together the Universities of Montpellier, Utrecht, and Barcelona around a shared ambition: training students in integrated, international, and translational health research.

September 24, 2025 – IRCM

The opening conference, “*From Immune Activation to Toxicity: Challenges in Cancer Immunotherapies*,” gathered clinicians, researchers, patient partners from SIRIC Montpellier Cancer, and international students for a cross-disciplinary dialogue on the current challenges in cancer immunotherapies.

After an introduction by Prof. David Azria and the module coordinators (Profs. Niels Bovenschen, Sonia Cantel, Sandra Crnko, and Gilles Subra), Prof. Guillaume Cartron outlined the current landscape and main challenges in the field. Discussions then focused on three key aspects: clinical needs, patient experience, and the scientific questions driving research.

December 3, 2025

The module concluded with a public presentation of research projects co-developed by students from the University of Montpellier and the University of Utrecht.

[Read more](#)

BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION

AMBER Project: Pioneering the Next Era of Radiation Oncology at Montpellier Cancer Institute



In the presence of Michaël Delafosse, Mayor and President of Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, and François-Xavier Lauch, Prefect of the Hérault Department, the Montpellier Cancer Institute (ICM) and TAE Life Sciences officially announced the AMBER Project.

The “*Alliance in the Montpellier-Mediterranean Region for BNCT and Excellence in Radiotherapy*” is a major initiative to establish Boron Neutron Capture Therapy (BNCT) in France.

This partnership formalises the plan to deploy TAE Life Sciences' Alphabeam™ BNCT system in Montpellier, a disruptive radiotherapy technology with transformative potential.

BNCT offers promising new options for cancers with poor prognosis, including high-grade brain tumours and pancreatic cancer, where therapeutic alternatives remain limited.

Leveraging its expertise in radiobiology, antibody modelling, and clinical radiotherapy, SIRIC Montpellier Cancer, through the AMBER project, is driving a high-level scientific programme at the forefront of BNCT research.

[Read the full article](#)

Health Democracy

PATIENT EMPOWERMENT

Structuring peer support: patient partners driving innovation in cancer care

Structuring peer support is a decisive step toward more humane and innovative cancer care. At SIRIC Montpellier Cancer, this ambition has been taking shape since 2023 through the development of genuine health democracy in research and the active involvement of patient partners at the heart of patient support at the Montpellier Cancer Institute.

Rigorous and carefully structured, this approach is tangibly strengthening the role of patients in decisions that affect them and in transforming oncology practices.



In 2025, patient partners expanded their involvement to clinical research.

Driven by SIRIC Montpellier Cancer, the ICM Clinical Research Centre has structured peer support within clinical trials.

To address the ethical and methodological challenges of clinical research, patient partners completed dedicated training and participated in a one-day immersion alongside Clinical Research Associates at ICM.

In parallel, a “Volunteer Patient Working at ICM” training course was launched to harmonise practices and enhance the skills of patient partners and volunteers, reinforcing their role as trained, recognised peer supporters driving innovation in cancer care.

Many thanks to the clinical research teams and to our patient partners Maguy DELRIO, Cyril SARRAUSTE DE MENTHIERE, Yassamine AL-HASHIMI and Laurence SOLAL.

2026 Agenda

From March to May

PINKCC Challenge 2026

Online

[Register](#)

From 20 to 22 May

EPICLIN / CLCC's staticians days

ICM

[Register](#)

Inter-SIRIC “Liquid Biopsies” symposium
Nantes

Chromatin Meets South
IGMM

ABOUT US

Integrating medical, scientific and societal medical research excellence in oncology



SIRIC Montpellier Cancer is one of the eight **French National Cancer Institute-designated integrated cancer research sites (SIRIC)** and the only certified site in the South of France.

We bring together **20 research groups** and **25 clinical teams**, in collaboration with **two University Hospitals** and **leading academic research institutions** (CNRS, INSERM, and the Universities of Montpellier). **Our sole mission is to transform world-class cancer research into comprehensive care, with the goal of tackling cancer.**



With the financial support of [INCa](#), [DGOS](#) and [INSERM](#)



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