Brain & Tumors

Brain Breaking Bad *1st Edition*

June 2nd 2026

9:30 - 14:35

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Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas Sols-Morreale

Organized by IIBM Scientific Programs:

Neurological Diseases

Cancer

Funding:

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C/Arturo Duperier 4, 28029, Madrid. Salón de Actos Gabriela Morreale

Programme

Brain Breaking Bad 1st Edition

WELCOME

9:30 **Pilar López Larrubia**
Director of Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas Sols-Morreale (CSIC-UAM)

SESSION 1: Brain Metastases: Mechanisms and Therapeutic Opportunities

9:40 **Manuel Valiente,** *"The Evolving Landscape of Brain Metastasis"*
Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Oncológicas (CNIO), Madrid

10:00 **Berta López Sánchez-Laorden,** *"Microenviromental Regulation of Melanoma Brain Metastasis"*
Instituto de Neurociencias (CSIC-UMH), Alicante

10:20 **Eva Pérez Guijarro,** *"Dissecting the response of brain metastasis to immunotherapy using immunocompetent mouse models"*
Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas Sols-Morreale (CSIC-UAM), Madrid

10:40 **María Jesús Vicent,** *"Polypeptide-based Therapeutics bypassing Challenging Barriers for CNS delivery"*
Centro de Investigación Príncipe Felipe (CIPF), Valencia

SESSION 2: Associations, Foundations, and Patients

11:00 **Silvia Vega Rubio,** *"Metástasis Cerebral. La experiencia del Paciente"*
Alianza frente a la Metástasis: Innovación y Apoyo (ALMIA), Madrid

11:10 **Miguel Ángel Morrell,** *"Retos en la lucha contra el cáncer"*
Fundación Blanca Morrell, Pozuelo de Alarcón, Madrid

11:20 **Isabel Muelas,** *"El reto del DIPG, Investigación, Conciencia y Compromiso social"*
Fundación Martín Álvarez Muelas, Molina de Segura, Murcia

11:30 **Óscar Prieto Martínez,** *¿Qué esperan los pacientes de los investigadores?*
Asociación de Afectados por Tumores Cerebrales en España (ASATE), Madrid

11:40 **COFFE BREAK**

SESSION 3: Primary Brain Tumors: From Molecular Biology to Clinical Challenges

12:20 **Joan Seoane,** *"Enabling immunotherapies in brain cancer"*
Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO) / Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Barcelona

12:40 **María Ángeles Vaz Salgado,** *TO BE ANNOUNCED*
Instituto Ramón y Cajal de Investigación Sanitaria (IRyCIS), Madrid

13:00 **Bibiana Ferreira,** *"Dissecting the role of the pseudokinase TRIB2 in Glioblastoma"*
Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, University of Algarve (UAlg) / Algarve Biomedical Center Research Institute (ABCRi), Portugal

13:20 **Guillermo Velasco Díez,** *"Towards the use of cannabinoids and inhibitors of the Midkine/ALK axis in Glioblastoma*
Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM), Madrid

13:40 **María Alieva,** *"Live imaging reveals TME-driven pediatric glioma dynamics during invasion and immunotherapy"*
Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas Sols-Morreale (CSIC-UAM), Madrid

14:00 **Round table: Patients, Science, and Society—A Shared Journey**

14:30 **Teresa Iglesias Vacas and Gema Moreno-Bueno,** Closing
Directors of the Neurological Diseases and Cancer IIBM Scientific Programs

IIBM organizing comitee: Raquel González, Teresa Iglesias (CIBERNED), Jesús Pacheco, Ana Simón (CIBERNED); Carlos Amenábar, Diego M. Fernández, Wolfgang Link, Gema Moreno-Bueno (MD Andreson/IRYCIS/CIBERONC)

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Poster design and art work: Raquel González

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List of speakers

Patients associations and Foundations

Miguel Ángel Morrell. La fundación Blanca Morell Ariza surge a raíz del tumor detectado en la médula espinal a nuestra hija Blanca con solo 22 años y que, a pesar de todas las cirugías en España y tratamientos con protones en EEUU, fue creciendo hasta llegar al cerebro ocasionando su muerte por un glioma difuso de línea media.
Es una iniciativa familiar creada en julio 2020 y reconocida como fundación con carácter estatal en junio del 2021. La motivación para su creación fue la impotencia ante la falta de investigación en los tumores del encéfalo, en la médula espinal y de su curación, y como una forma de recordar a nuestra hija. Y nuestra visión es un mundo sin cáncer en el año 2100.
Podéis saber más acerca de nuestra fundación, los proyectos que tenemos en marcha y las actividades que hacemos en nuestra página web www.fundacionblancamorell.org o en nuestras redes sociales

Isabel Muelas Garrido is the President of the Fundación Martín Álvarez Muelas, an organization dedicated to promoting research, awareness, and social advocacy in relation to Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) and other pediatric brain tumors.
Driven by a strong personal and institutional commitment, she has led the foundation's efforts to accelerate scientific research, foster collaboration between healthcare professionals, research centers, and public institutions, and increase societal awareness of the urgent need for therapeutic advances in pediatric neuro-oncology.
Under her leadership, the foundation actively supports initiatives aimed at improving access to innovative treatments, encouraging research funding, and providing support to families affected by DIPG. In addition, the foundation promotes political advocacy actions, engaging with public administrations and decision-makers to drive legislative initiatives, raise institutional awareness, and push for increased public investment in rare pediatric cancers. This includes participation in parliamentary processes, proposals for non-legislative motions, and meetings with health authorities to influence healthcare policy and research priorities.
Isabel Muelas Garrido regularly participates in national and international forums, scientific meetings, and awareness campaigns, advocating for a coordinated response to DIPG that integrates scientific advancement, public policy, and social engagement. Web: https://www.fundacionmartin.org/

Óscar Prieto Martínez es presidente de ASATE – Asociación de Afectados por Tumores Cerebrales en España, entidad creada en 2010 como la primera asociación española dedicada específicamente a personas afectadas por tumores cerebrales. ASATE nació con el objetivo de ofrecer información rigurosa, apoyo y orientación a pacientes y familias, así como de favorecer la relación entre afectados, profesionales sanitarios, sociedades científicas e instituciones vinculadas a la neurooncología.
Su implicación en ASATE surge también de su experiencia personal como paciente. Óscar fue diagnosticado de dos tumores cerebrales en la edad adulta y ha compartido públicamente el impacto del diagnóstico, los tratamientos y las secuelas en su vida personal, familiar y profesional. Desde esta perspectiva, su labor se centra en visibilizar las necesidades reales de los pacientes con tumores cerebrales, mejorar el acceso a información fiable y promover una mayor conexión entre investigación, práctica clínica y sociedad.
En esta jornada, su participación aportará la perspectiva de los pacientes dentro del bloque de asociaciones, fundaciones y sociedad, complementando las ponencias científicas con una reflexión sobre cómo orientar la investigación hacia las preguntas, prioridades y expectativas de quienes conviven con la enfermedad.
Web: https://www.asate.es/

List of speakers

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Silvia Vega Rubio. Socia fundadora y miembro de la Junta Directiva de la Alianza frente a la Metástasis: Innovación y Apoyo (ALMIA). Paciente con cáncer de mama con metástasis en el cerebro. Web: https://cancermetastasico.es/

Scientific Speakers

María Alieva is an interdisciplinary scientist with a strong background in translational oncology, computational science, and imaging. Her research focuses on sing imaging data for exploring the cellular and molecular mechanisms that govern cell behavior in tumor progression and therapeutic response.
Early in her career, Dr. Alieva trained as an imaging specialist (Dr Blanco group at CSIC and Prof van Rheenen group at Hubrecht Institute), developing and applying non-invasive, single-cell resolution technologies to monitor tumor and immune cell dynamics in living organisms. Recognizing that imaging research was often constrained by limited analytical tools, she shifted her focus toward computational methods for studying cell behavior and large-scale tissue phenotyping, with the goal of improving the design and evaluation of cancer cell therapies.
In 2023, Dr. Alieva was awarded a Junior Principal Investigator Fellowship through the Programa de Atracción de Talento of the Comunidad de Madrid, enabling her to establish imAIgene-lab, a research group dedicated to developing computational approaches to uncover biological patterns in tumor progression and treatment. Among other recognitions, Dr. Alieva received the Jon van Rood Award in Cellular Therapy (2022), the Beca Leonardo a Investigadores y Creadores Culturales from Fundación BBVA (2023), and the ASEICA-FERO V Fellowship (2024). She also serves as Ambassador for the Computational Biology and Bioinformatics (BCB) Connection of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC).

Bibiana Ferreira has a PhD in Molecular Biology and Biomedicine from Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She did pre-doctoral training at IPATIMUP (University of Porto) and the Spanish National Cancer Center (CNIO), and postdoctoral training at the Salk Institute with Dr. Reuben Shaw. Her work has looked at how cell energy status affects cancer-related pathways. More recently, she has studied drug resistance and ways to overcome it. She has 46 peer-reviewed publications. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of Algarve, directs the Oncobiology master's program, and directs the International PhD Cancer program with the Champalimaud Foundation. She previously led a COVID-19 diagnostic lab and a genetic diagnostics lab.

Berta López Sánchez-Laorden es científica titular en el Instituto de Neurociencias (CSIC-Universidad Miguel Hernández). Doctora en Bioquímica y Biología Molecular por la Universidad de Murcia, antes de incorporarse al Instituto de Neurociencias desarrolló su carrera investigadora en TheInstituteofCancerResearch en Londres y en el CancerResearch UK Manchester Centre donde se centró en caracterizar la contribución de la radiación ultravioleta a la aparición de melanoma y mecanismos que regulan su diseminación y resistencia a terapias dirigidas. El grupo de investigación que lidera actualmente trata de comprender los mecanismos que regulan la plasticidad del melanoma y que lo hacen tan agresivo. Su trabajo ha dado lugar a una treintena de publicaciones en cabeceras como Nature, Nature Medicine, Cancer Discovery o ScienceSignaling.

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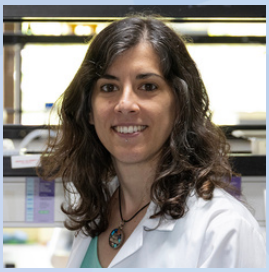
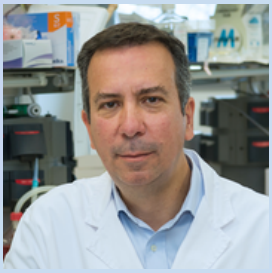


Eva Pérez Guijarro is Principal Investigator under Ramón y Cajal program at Institute for Biomedical Research Sols-Morreale and Assistant Professor at the Department of Biochemistry the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (IIBM, CSIC-UAM).
Eva obtained her degrees in Biology and Biochemistry and Master in Molecular Biosciences from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM). She did her doctoral training under the supervision of Dr. Marisol Soengas at the Spanish National Cancer Research Center (CNIO), where she studied RNA regulators as lineage-specific vulnerabilities for melanoma, obtaining her PhD in 2015. In 2016, she joined Dr. Glenn Merlino Lab at the Center of Cancer Research of the National Institutes of Health (Maryland, US) under Visiting Fellow postdoctoral program. During her postdoc, she generated and characterized a unique panel of melanoma mouse models representing human etiology, genetic and phenotypic diversity to investigate immunotherapy resistance. Since early 2023, Eva leads the Melanoma Immunotherapy Modeling group at IIBM, focusing her research on the mechanisms of immune evasion and metastasis to discover additional therapeutic targets for brain metastasis.



Joan Seoane is an ICREA Research Professor and Director of Research Program at the Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology. He was trained at the University of Barcelona and completed his postdoctoral work at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. His research focuses on the molecular mechanisms of cancer, especially brain tumors. He has received major international recognition, including European Research Council grants and leadership roles in the European Association for Cancer Research. He also founded Mosaic Biomedicals, developing innovative cancer therapies that have advanced to clinical trials.

Manuel Valiente is the Head of the Brain Metastasis Group at CNIO (2015-present). He investigates the biology of brain metastasis in order to challenge this unmet clinical need using his background in Neuroscience (PhD, Instituto de Neurociencias, 2005-2009) and Cancer Biology (Postdoc, MSKCC, 2010-2014).
Specifically, his laboratory studies novel brain metastasis mediators, characterizes the metastasis-associated microenvironment, designs better experimental models and explores novel methods to prevent and to target brain metastasis, including the frequent impact on brain activity. All these aims consider the brain environment as a critical component to understand the biology of this progression of cancer.
Dr. Valiente has co-founded the first National Network of Brain Metastasis (RENACER) in Spain, which is allowing his team to speed up the translation of laboratory findings to the clinic in collaboration with the 21 associated hospitals. His contributions to brain metastasis research have been recognized with the Constantes y Vitales Award, Banco Sabadell Award, ASPIRE Award, ERC CoG, EMBO YIP, CLIP Award, Beug Foundation's Prize for Metastasis Research, Bristol-Myers Squibb-MRA Young Investigator Award among others.
He is Board Member and Treasurer of EANO (2024-), Board Member of the Metastasis Research Society (MRS). Other past responsibilities include Chair of the Scientific Committee EANO (2022-2024), ESMO faculty member (CNS Tumours faculty group, 2020-2024), EACR Panel of Reviewers (2022-2024).

María Ángeles Vaz Salgado es una destacada especialista en Oncología Médica, licenciada por la Universidad Complutense de Madrid (2000) y con formación MIR en el Hospital Ramón y Cajal, donde ejerce como facultativa adjunta desde 2005. Es Doctora Cum Laude por la Universidad de Alcalá y posee una sólida formación destacando másteres en Oncología Molecular (CNIO) e Inmuno-Oncología, además de una Diplomatura en Estadística Aplicada (UAB).
Su labor investigadora, vinculada al IRYCIS, se centra en tumores del sistema nervioso central y sarcomas. Ha participado en numerosos ensayos clínicos (Fases I-III) con impacto en la práctica clínica y cuenta con más de 60 artículos publicados en revistas de alto impacto (Q1). Su proyección internacional se avala con estancias en centros de prestigio como el Memorial Sloan-Kettering de Nueva York y el Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori de Milán.

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En el ámbito institucional, destaca como Presidenta del Grupo Español de Investigación en Neurooncología (GEINO) y su participación en grupos de la Organización Europea para la Investigación y el Tratamiento del Cáncer (EORTC) y Sociedad Europea de Oncología Médica (ESMO). Mantiene un firme compromiso docente como coordinadora de másteres en la Universidad Europea, habiendo ejercido como tutora de residentes durante una década se ha consolidado como referente en la formación oncológica actual.

Guillermo Velasco Díez studied Biology and carried out his doctoral thesis at Complutense University (UCM) and a postdoctoral stage in Dr. Philip Cohen laboratory at the University of Dundee, Scotland. He is currently full professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and leader of the “Cannabinoid signaling in cancer cells group” at the Instituto de Investigaciones Sanitarias San Carlos (IDISSC). Since 2019, he has also become the research coordinator for the Translational Oncology laboratory at the Hospital Clínico San Carlos.
His group has made fundamental contributions to molecular oncology, focusing on the study of gliomas. Their research has identified the mechanisms behind the anticancer activity of cannabinoids and the factors contributing to drug resistance, leading to the development of combination strategies currently being tested in clinical trials. Beyond cannabinoid research, his team has clarified key processes in autophagy-mediated cancer cell death and the role of Tribbles proteins in cancer. This extensive body of work is reflected in numerous publications in high-impact journals and a consistent track record of securing funding from public, private, and charitable sources.He also has established international collaborations and serves as the president of the Spanish Society of Research on Autophagy (SEFAGIA). His work has resulted in four patents and laid the groundwork for three clinical trials for glioblastoma patients.

María Jesús Vicent is the head of the Polymer Therapeutics Lab. at Príncipe Felipe Research Center (CIPF) since 2006 and coordinator of the Cancer Program. She is also responsible for the Screening Platform, a Specialist Site in the European infrastructure EU-OPENSCREEN. She is member of CIBERONC, serves as president for the Controlled Release Society (CRS),and is editor in chief of Advanced Drug Delivery Reviews.
Her group (http://www.VicentResearchLab.com), specializes in developing novel nanopharmaceuticals for therapeutic and diagnostic applications, particularly in addressing unmet clinical needs through Polymer Therapeutics. Her work has been supported by national and European grants, including prestigious awards like the ERC Consolidator grant-MyNano, ERCPoC-POLYMMUNE, ERCPoC-Polybraint, and Fund Health La Caixa-NanoPanTher, PINT, NanoGBA or NanoERT; received from both academia and industry.
Dra VIncent has been honored with several awards, such as the very recent award Jaume I in New technologies 2025, Samyang award and several Women in Science recognitions. She is a member of the National Academy of Inventors (FNAI) and a fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE) College of Fellows since 2019. She was also inducted into the Controlled Release Society (CRS) College of Fellows in 2021. María has co-authored >160 peer-reviewed papers and holds 15 patents. Six of these patents have been licensed to the pharmaceutical industry, with one contributing to the founding of the spin-off company 'Polypeptide Therapeutic Solutions S.L.' in Valencia, established in 2012 and rebranded as Curapath after its acquisition by Arcline in 2021 now a well-known CDMO with 100 employees.

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