

# NEWSLETTER

CONNECT COST ACTION CA19127: COGNITIVE DECLINE IN NEPHRO-NEUROLOGY: EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE TARGET



## IN THIS ISSUE

### FIRST FACE-TO-FACE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING **19-20 SEPTEMBER 2022, ITALY**

Our first face-to-face management committee meeting was held between 19-20 September 2022 in Ariano Irpino, Naples in Italy. We shared and discussed what it was done in the first two years of the CONNECT COST action, the working group leaders summarized the achievements and challenges faced, and together we explored possible ideas and plans for the next two years of the consortium. This meeting was not only a planning meeting, but also took its place among action activities as an important symposium with very interesting lectures.

### 1ST F2F MC MEETING SHOTS

### A DEDICATED SYMPOSIUM IN 59TH ERA CONGRESS 2022

### STSMS AND ITC GRANTS

### ONGOING AND UPCOMING EVENTS

## MC MEETING SHOTS

ARIANO IRPINO-NAPLES-ITALY

We have left two years behind in the CONNECT COST action that started in 2020. We met in Ariano Irpino Italy to list what we've done during this time and to discuss what we can do in the next two years.



The two-day program started with the opening speech of the chair of the action, Prof. Giovambattista Capasso (IT). Together with our vice-chair Prof. Robert Unwin (UK), they organized a session expressing the purpose and vision of the CONNECT action.



This meeting was hosted by the BIOGEM Research Center, and BIOGEM director Prof. Ortensio Zecchino made a speech and welcomed the participants.

During the group discussions, which constituted an important part of the meeting, five working group members gathered among themselves and discussed their decisions regarding their future plans. And group leaders presented these discussions as a summary to all participants. Decisions regarding future plans were recorded in the meeting minutes with the contribution of all participants.



The program included many topics from preclinical to clinical studies, you can find these speech topics from the [meeting program](#).

The intense symposium continued on the second day, and after two busy days, we socialized by eating great food in a wonderful winery.

## HIGHLIGHTED PARTS FROM THE MEETING MINUTES FOR FUTURE PLANS

How to identify valid models: CKD, behavioural testing, imaging, molecular markers in the brain? A cooperation between kidney physiologists and neuroscientists is needed (WG1); We had pilot cohort studies and we need larger ones: e.g. non-pharmacological studies, physical activity effects on cognition (WG2); European survey about cognitive impairment and clinical management in CKD? What should be done? Translational projects with other WGs (WG3); ·There is a gap in knowledge in bioinformatics, and how to train people (programming) (WG4); What about stakeholder engagement? We can arrange meetings with patient organisations (WG5).

## About BIOGEM Research Center

BIOGEM (Molecular Biology and Genetics Research Institute) is a consortium between universities and research centers. To learn more about BIOGEM, please [click](#).

# **RECENT PUBLICATIONS and ITC GRANT AWARDED ABSTRACTS**

## **Publications**

In the first year of this action, we published a special issue of 6 reviews and 1 editorial on NDT (Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation) by Oxford Academic Press. You can access it [here](#). And our new publication is also [available](#):

- Rroji, M., Figurek, A., Viggiano, D., Capasso, G., & Spasovski, G. (2022). Phosphate in the Context of Cognitive Impairment and Other Neurological Disorders Occurrence in Chronic Kidney Disease. International journal of molecular sciences, 23(13), 7362. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms23137362>

## **ITC grant awarded abstracts**

Two abstracts were awarded an ITC grant and presented at different conferences in 2021 and 2022. These abstract are as follows:

- 2021: Dr Martin Michna, from the Czech Republic, attended the National Nephrology Congress in Slovakia with an abstract entitled "Relation between structural changes of the brain, cerebral oximetry and cognitive functions in chronic kidney disease patients, treated with hemodialysis – a pilot study"
- 2022: Dr Catarina Bras, from Portugal, participated in the National Nephrology Congress in Italy with an abstract entitled "Cognitive dysfunction associates with risk of peritonitis in peritoneal dialysis patients"

## **Conference participations**

Our member Dr Marion Pépin (WG3 leader) has participated to EuGMS (European Geriatric Medicine Society) Congress London 2022 (28-30 September 2022) in an oral communication session entitled "Cognitive performance is associated with kidney function in patients with chronic kidney disease: results from the CKD-REIN cohort study" and with a poster entitled "Longitudinal cognitive pattern in patients with chronic kidney disease: the CKD REIN study". The scientific program is available [here](#).

Our members Prof. Inga Arune Bumblyte and Dr. Justina Kurganaite have participated in Baltic Nephrology Conference with a dedicated session entitled "Brain Kidney Interaction" between 6-8 October 2022 in Riga. The link of this conference is [here](#).

## **CONNECT products**

Promotional materials play an important role in communication, and are also used to increase the commitment of the participants to the project. Therefore, as part of communication activities, we produced pens, notebooks and cloth bags with the CONNECT logo and name printed, and distributed them to MC members and meeting participants. We plan to use these products in the congresses and meetings we will organize in the coming years.

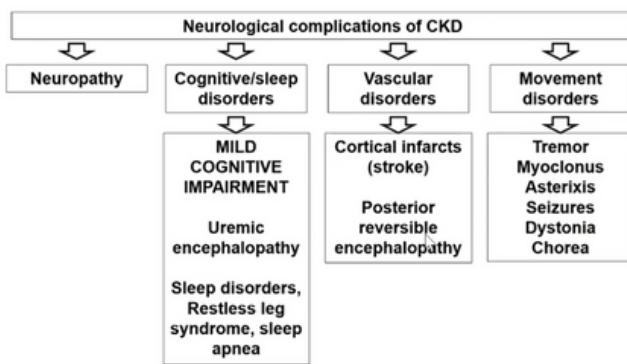


## A DEDICATED SYMPOSIUM IN 59TH ERA CONGRESS PARIS 2022

### THE CONNECT PROJECT: COGNITIVE DECLINE IN NEPHRO-NEUROLOGY: EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE TARGET SYMPOSIUM 5.7



The first speaker at this symposium was our Chair, Prof Giovambattista Capasso (IT). While explaining the relationship between the brain and kidney with his speech titled "How the kidney may affect brain cognitive function", he also explained how the CONNECT project emerged. The details of this speech were also published in the bulletin of ERA, a stakeholder of us. You can read it [here](#).



The other titles in the symposium were: "Evidence on albuminuria as a risk factor for dementia" by Dr. Gaye Hafez (TR) and "Cognitive function in dialytic and transplanted patients" by Dr. Casper Franssen (NL).

The other related talks from CONNECT members were: "Brain changes in nephroCovid19 patients" by Davide Viggiano (IT) and "Clinical testing for cognitive function in CKD patients" by Marion Pépin (FR).

The program is available [here](#).

### E-SEMINAR: ELECTROLYTES AND BRAIN FUNCTION



We organized a webinar before the congress. In this webinar, we talked about the possible effects of electrolytes on the brain. You can reach this webinar, which we organized jointly with ERA, on YouTube and [here](#).



## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

### SURVEY FOR ETHICAL POINT OF VIEW

Cognitive decline related to chronic kidney disease as an exclusion factor from kidney transplantation

Dr. Michele Farisco (ethicist, IT) and Dr. Irene Zecchino (lawyer, IT) are leading this study in working group 5 (WG5, dissemination and inclusiveness).

We had preliminary results that were presented by Dr. Farisco and Dr. Zecchino in the MC meeting. The highlighted points were the following:

There is currently a lack of consensus on the necessity and the modality of psychological assessment of kidney transplant candidates, with international guidelines not consistent on this point.

The majority of respondents (154 from 41 countries so far) think that all patients with chronic kidney diseases should have a face-to-face psychological assessment performed by a professional in

collaboration with patient's family before being admitted to kidney transplantation.

Importantly, the majority of respondents think that cognitive decline can become a contraindication to kidney transplantation.

The survey deadline has been extended until the end of January 2023 to reach different fields of physicians.

### SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSMs)

Eight researchers have already started STSMs in different host institutions across Europe.

The final reports and the outcomes will be shared on website and with next newsletter.

*Photo from training school in Italy*

### TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NEPHRO-NEUROLOGY

Organized by: Prof. Davide Viggiano (IT), Prof. Giovambattista Capasso (IT)

Training Schools aim to facilitate capacity building through the delivery of intensive training on a new or emerging topic. For this reason we organized our first training school entitled "Methods in Neuro-Nephrology Training School 2022". It was held face-to-face between 21-23 October 2022 in Naples Italy.

The content has been prepared by experts comprehensively, you can find the program titles [here](#).

Good news for those who missed this training school: talks will be available on our website.

VISIT OUR [WEBSITE](#) FOR INFO ON OUR NEXT EVENTS!



[SUBSCRIBE NEWSLETTER](#)



## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### WORKING GROUP 3 MEETING 23 November 2022

Organized by the working group 3 (WG3, clinical practice) leader, Dr Marion Pepin (FR), the meeting will be held online on Wednesday, 23 November 2022 at 10:00 CET.

The agenda is as follows:

- Welcoming new members
- Feedback from Ariano Irpino meeting
- Update about WG activities: submission of the review about CI management, ongoing projects, conferences
- Skills and resources table
- Perspectives for the next months and years

### NEXT MC MEETING 2023

The next MC meeting is scheduled for May 2023, this meeting will be held in an ITC country, proposals included Greece, Serbia, Lithuania and Portugal. Details about the date and place of the meeting will be announced later on our website.



Explaining science through art is both easier and more effective. That's why we prepared 5 different animations for each WG. You can find them on our website or Youtube channel. This is our new animation explaining what the CONNECT action is. We hope you like it. You can click [here](#).

**Chair**  
Giovambattista Capasso

**Vice-Chair**  
Robert Unwin

**Scientific Communication Manager**  
Jolanta Malyzko

**Grant Holder**  
Universita della Campania  
Luigi Vanvitelli  
Naples/Italy

**Grant Holder Representative**  
Giovambattista Capasso

## CONTACT

[www.connectcost.eu](http://www.connectcost.eu)  
[info@connectcost.eu](mailto:info@connectcost.eu)

