

VACANCY NOTICE

FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF NR. 1 EARLY STAGE RESEARCHER

ORGANISATION

Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori, Milan, Italy
Palliative Care, Pain Therapy and Rehabilitation Unit

RESEARCH FIELD

Neuropathic pain; cancer pain; palliative care in oncology; complications due to cancer and cancer treatments;

RESEARCHER PROFILE

- Eligibility criteria are a degree in Medicine and a strong interest in pain and palliative care. Considered criteria will include scientific excellence, but also criteria like mobility experience, capacity to work in a team and communication skills.
- Previous records in the domain;
- Other soft skills: international experience, ability to read/write/speak English, communication skills, attitude toward teamwork, and interest in group work.

Researchers shall, at the time of recruitment by the host organisation, be in the first four years* (full-time equivalent research experience) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree.

The researcher must not have resided or carried out his/her main activity (work, studies, etc) in Italy for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to his/her recruitment.

** measured from the date when a researcher obtained the degree which would formally entitle him or her to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited or seconded, irrespective of whether or not a doctorate is or was ever envisaged*

NR. OF POSITION OFFERED: One (1)

The application is open to candidates of all nationalities.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Mon, 15 May 2017 at 23:59 Brussels time (CET)

LOCATION: Milan, Italy

TYPE OF CONTRACT: Temporary

JOB STATUS: Full-time

HOURS PER WEEK: 37,5 h/week

OFFER STARTING DATE: Wed, 01 November 2017

DURATION: 36 months

REMUNERATION:

Approx. 119.461,32 euro gross over 36 months (the net amount will depend on the contract type agreed according to the Italian law). In addition will be granted a mobility allowance of 21.600 euro over 36 months (for household, relocation and travel expenses) and a family allowance of 9.000 euro over 36 months (applicable for the researcher who has a family at the time of recruitment).

EU RESEARCH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

H2020 / Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions : MARIE CURIE GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER 721841

Location: Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori
Via G. Venezian, 1 – 20133 Milan - Italy

Team: Palliative Care, Pain Therapy and Rehabilitation Unit

Project: ITN PAIN-net

Neuropathic pain affects 5% of the general population and 40% of patients with neurological diseases, and has a key role in the pathophysiology of cancer pain that affects up to 50% of patients in the early disease stage and 30% of survivors, causing an enormous social burden. Treatments are inadequate with less than 50% of patients achieving 50% of pain relief at best, while up to 30% of cancer pain patients experience insufficient analgesia. Signatures of individual susceptibility to pain and analgesic responsiveness are urgently needed to improve patients' management. Such advances are expected to originate from integrated clinical, basic science and entrepreneurial research readily translating scientific findings into benefits for patients. To consolidate these aims, a new generation of scientists with wide knowledge in neuropathic pain, focused research skills and experience in the interaction with biotechnology companies is needed. The PAIN-Net programme, based on a highly innovative platform of training-through-research and strongly committed to such objectives, will support such talented and inspired early stage researchers. Their research projects, embedded in an advanced molecule-to-man pain network, will contribute to better understanding individual susceptibility to pain and analgesics responsiveness based on next generation sequencing, whole exome sequencing, epigenetics and pharmacogenomics studies, nociceptor and sodium channel functioning based on biophysics and proteomics studies, targeted analgesics based on high-throughput screening, targeted analgesic delivery based on encapsulated cell bioreactor implants, and to the development and extensive characterisation of the first knock-in mouse models of sodium channel-related neuropathic pain based on the CRISP-Cas technology. Most of all, the PAIN-Net programme will offer the unique opportunity to enhance scientific capabilities and prepare to high level academic or private applied research career.

Specific Research Project

Project Title and Work Package(s) to which it is related: Clinical assessment and screening of cancer pain patients and genetic assay of opioid responsiveness.

Research Objectives: **1)** To phenotype cancer pain patients; **2)** To validate a new classification system for neuropathic cancer pain; **3)** To participate in genome wide association studies.

Training objectives: The early stage researcher (ESR) will perform a thorough assessment of pain cancer patients in order to determine the impact of neuropathic pain in patients with cancer including clinical and genetic factors associated with the degree of responsiveness to opioid analgesia.

Secondment to University of Maastricht (UM) will strengthen the integration of competence in neuropathic pain based on the acquisition of clinical and electrophysiological skills on patients with painful neuropathies. Moreover, secondment to Neuroscience Technologies SLP (NP) will provide further integration in the field of advanced neurophysiological characterisation of neuropathic pain.

The ESR will become familiar with structured pain phenotyping using a validated set of tools for neuropathic pain (Edmonton Classification System for Cancer Pain, Douleur Neuropathique 4 questionnaire, EORTC QLQ-C30, 11-point Lickert Numerical Rating Score, Brief Pain Inventory, Therapy Impact Questionnaire). Moreover, the ESR will learn to use tools and machineries for pain diagnosis and quantitative assessment of sensory function .

The ESR will also actively work on the validation of a new clinical algorithm for neuropathic cancer pain, assessing 100 consecutive cancer pain patients and comparing findings with the current golden standard based on the evaluation of a neurologist expert in cancer pain syndromes diagnosing.

The ESR will participate in collecting samples for cancer pain phenotype and genotypes, and in the establishment of a new database that will integrate data from a previous prospective RCT on the comparison of 4 strong opioids (516 patients accrued, blood samples available for DNA extraction for 60% of cases) and data from another multicentre prospective longitudinal observational study (MOLO) of 800 patients with pain due to cancer.

Expected Results: Characterisation of 100 cancer pain patients and validation of the new diagnostic algorithm; definition of the genotypephenotype correlation and identification of haplotypes associated with opioid responsiveness.

Supervisor: Dr. Augusto Caraceni and Dr. Fabio Formaglio

Planned secondments: UM, months 16-18, 3 months, to familiarise with painful neuropathy patients and learn advanced genetic techniques; NT (co-supervisor), month 24-25, 2 months, to learn microneurography assessment in pain patients; CF consulting srl, month 45, 1 month, to receive practical training on grant writing and project management.

Transferable skills: Ethics/ Scientific conduct/ Project management/ Grant Writing/ Communication/ Exploitation of results/ Research development career

Other tasks:

- Writing of deliverable, reporting and scientific articles
- Participation to monthly remote meeting, participation to on-site management and technical meetings.
- Organization of local and remote events
- Improvement of the visibility: Social networking, web sites, communication, etc.
- Development of the valorization opportunities for the research results.

-Other administrative tasks

Context

You will stay in Milan, in Northern Italy. You will belong to the clinical and research team. Our team is multidisciplinary and includes medical, nursing, psychosocial science and statistical expertise with access to experts in genetics. Medical specialities in oncology, neurology, pain and palliative care are available and work in an international atmosphere. The working language will be mostly English and Italian. If necessary, in order help you overcoming the linguistic barrier and to facilitate your relations with patients you will be offered an intensive course of Italian language during the first months of your stay. The position is offered for 36 months starting from 01 November 2017. You will be helped to settle down in excellent conditions.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be sent via email to Dr. Augusto Caraceni at augusto.caraceni@istitutotumori.mi.it

Application should contain a detailed CV (with passport number, date/place of birth), a motivation letter, two letters of recommendation, and English writing samples (e.g., prior publication /thesis excerpt).

The Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori is an equal opportunities employer.

Deadline: Monday, 15 May 2017 at 23:59 Brussels time (CET)

For any information or query related to this position please contact the administrative assistant Ms. Matilde Zubani at: matilde.zubani@istitutotumori.mi.it