

Workshop 2022

# MediEuro NETWORK

**Biobanking  
& Biomedical Research**

May 16th & 17th, 2022  
University of Cyprus  
Nicosia, CYPRUS

*Dear Colleagues of the  
MediEuro Network,*

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all at the University of Cyprus, either physically or virtually, after a long delay due to COVID-19.

The MediEuro Network is an initiative we took several years ago during the preparation for submission of the CY-Biobank project in the framework of the Horizon 2020 widening participation programme. The principal aim of the Network is to bring together genetics and biobanking groups of the countries around the Mediterranean basin, and beyond.

Presently, groups from Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Oman, and Qatar are participating, thus covering a diverse spectrum of populations and cultures.

Our objective is to promote sharing of experiences, different approaches and different challenges which emanate from the disparate sensitivities in our respective countries towards the handling of biobanking and genetics issues.

We would like to present the findings of our respective genetic studies, especially with regards to the rare inherited disorders, although not exclusively.



With this initiative, we feel proud and content that we contribute to bridging a gap between the southern Europe and countries with non-European populations, up to the Gulf region, thereby merging different genetic specificities.

During the meeting, I hope we will reach a point of maturation that will enable us to put together ideas for common research proposals and proceed on publishing a book with chapters covering genetic disorders and related experiences in our respective countries.

I would like to thank you all for accepting our invitation and assure that my colleagues and I are doing our best to offer a comfortable and enjoyable stay in Cyprus.

With my best welcoming wishes,  
Constantinos

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Constantinos'.

# Conference Agenda

## Day 1



**09:00 - 09:30** Arrival of participants & Coffee

**09:30 - 10:00** Conference Start - Welcoming notes

- Rector of the University of Cyprus - Prof. Tasos Christofides
- Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy - Mr. Kyriacos Kokkinos
- Director of biobank.cy CoE, UCY - Prof. Constantinos Deltas

**10:00 - 10:30** Presentation 1 – Prof. Constantinos Deltas (Cyprus)  
*"Biobanking and genetics in Cyprus and the MediEuro Network – The way forward"*

**10:30 - 11:00** Presentation 2 – Prof. Pierre Zalloua (UAE)  
*"Managing Diabetes in the Omics Era"*

**11:00 - 11:15** Coffee Break

**11:15 - 11:45** Presentation 3 – Dr Eleni Fthenou (Qatar)  
*"The Impact of Qatar Biobank on Precision Medicine Initiative"*

**11:45 - 12:15** Presentation 4 – Dr Gregory Papagregoriou (Cyprus)  
*"From registries to clinical trials: How biobanking of rare diseases can unlock drug development paths"*

**12:15 - 12:45** Presentation 5 (ONLINE) – Prof. Sameera Ezzat (Egypt)  
*"Setting up a state-of-the-art biobank in Upper Egypt"*

**12:45 - 14:30** Lunch Break

**14:30 - 15:00** Presentation 6 (ONLINE) – Prof. Alex Felice (Malta)  
*"Thirty years of Biobanking in Malta"*

**15:00 - 15:30** Presentation 7 – Prof. Kyproula Christodoulou (Cyprus)  
*"Rare neurogenetic diseases in the Cypriot population: Thirty-three years of translational research"*

**15:30 - 16:00** Presentation 8 – Dr Apostolos Malatras (Cyprus)  
*"Digitalization of biobank.cy"*

**16:00 - 16:45** Coffee Break

**16:45 - 17:15** Presentation 9 (ONLINE) – Dr Lina Souan (Jordan)  
*"Establishing the first COVID-19-Convalescent / Vaccinated plasma biobank in Jordan"*

**17:15 - 17:45** Presentation 10 – Dr Natasa Giallourou (Cyprus)  
*"Introduction to metabolomics and applications in health and disease"*

**17:45 - 18:00** Closing Remarks - Prof. Constantinos Deltas

# Conference Agenda

## Day 2

**08:30 - 09:00** Arrival of participants & Coffee

**09:00 - 09:30** Presentation 11 - Prof. Marina Kleanthous (Cyprus)

*"Thalassemia in Cyprus"*

**09:30 - 10:00** Presentation 12 – Dr Pavlos Costeas (Cyprus)

*"The Diversity of the Cyprus Genome reflected in the Cyprus Bone Marrow Donor Registry"*

**10:00 - 10:30** Presentation 13 – Mrs. Shadia Said Al Sinawi (Oman)

*"Towards biobanking in Oman: Obstacles and Chances"*

**10:30 - 10:45** Coffee Break

**10:45 - 11:15** Presentation 14 – Dr Christos Yapijakis (Greece)

*"Collection of saliva samples for exosomes and RNA studies"*

**11:15 - 11:45** Presentation 15 - Prof. Michalis Panagiotidis (Cyprus)

*"The Epigenetics of Cancer Therapeutics: The Case of Malignant Melanoma"*

**11:45 - 12:15** Presentation 16 – Dr Esther Ghanem (Lebanon)

*"Perspectives and Publications related to Biobanking in Lebanon"*

**12:15 - 12:45** Presentation 19 – Dr Yosr Hamdi (Tunisia)

*"Biobanking and cohort building in Tunisia: Challenges and opportunities"*

**12:45 - 14:30** Lunch Break

**14:30 - 15:00** Presentation 17 - Dr George D. Vavougiou (Greece)

*"Trained immunity against viral infections as an epigenetic substrate for neurodegeneration"*

**15:00 - 15:30** Presentation 18 (ONLINE) – Dr Özkan Özdemir (Turkey)

*"Rare disease research biobank in Istanbul"*

**15:30-16:00** Coffee Break

**16:00 - 18:00** Round Table

- Open discussion on collaborations and research grant proposals
- Book chapter discussion

**18:00** End of Workshop - Closing Remarks - Prof. Constantinos Deltas



**Scan this code  
and read the Presenters' bios**



## Prof. Constantinos Deltas

**Director of biobank.cy CoE,  
University of Cyprus, Medical School  
(Cyprus)**

Prof. Constantinos Deltas studied Pharmacy at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens. He received his PhD in Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences at Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, USA.

In 1991, while at the Duke University Medical Center, NC, USA, he was invited by Dr Lefkos Middleton to return to Cyprus and be amongst the first nucleus of scientists who developed the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics.

He is Professor of Genetics at the University of Cyprus since 2002, first at the Department of Biological Sciences where he was the first faculty and Chairman and then at the Medical School, 2020.

With EU and national funding, he is founder and Director of biobank.cy, a Research and Innovation Center of Excellence, focusing on Biobanking and Biomedical Research, at the University of Cyprus.

Amongst others he is leading the Cyprus Human Genome project, aimed to 1000 Cypriot genomes, at first phase. He published more than 150 papers and presented his work in multiple international conferences as invited speaker.

In 2014 he was honored with the Cyprus Research Award-Distinguished Researcher 2014, which is awarded to researchers with long standing experience in Cyprus and who have demonstrated outstanding research achievements with local and international impact, honoring Cyprus.



## **Prof. Pierre Zalloua**

**Chair of the Department of  
Molecular Biology and Genetics  
Kalifa University (UAE)**

Professor Pierre Zalloua obtained his Biology degree from the American University of Beirut in 1987 and a Genetics master's degree from the San Jose State University in California in 1990. He worked on his Doctorate degree in genetics from the UC Davis between 1990 and 1996 and graduated in 1996.

He was appointed Dean of Graduate Studies and Research as of October 1, 2013. His past engagements with LAU include Dean of the School of Pharmacy from October 2012 to September 2013 and Professor of Genetics at the School of Medicine. He joined LAU in 2007. He also holds the position of Adjunct Professor of Environmental Health at the Harvard School of Public Health. An accomplished geneticist, writer and lecturer, Dr. Zalloua is a leading authority on the genetics of complex diseases in and among Middle Eastern populations. Much of his recent investigative studies have addressed molecular anomalies observed in people with Type 1 diabetes and coronary artery disease (CAD).

His research interest is to identify complex disease (Type 1 Diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer) susceptibility genes, to study their interaction with the environment, and to correlate these interactions with disease onset and manifestation. In the last few years, he has made considerable progress in identifying diabetes and CAD disease susceptibility gene variants. Dr. Zalloua has also conducted extensive research on the genetic links between various Middle Eastern and Mediterranean populations. Recently, he has started to work in the field of population patterns of human migrations using DNA. He is currently leading an investigative team that will obtain DNA samples from indigenous populations in the Middle East and North Africa to study their genetic commonalities.

He is currently a Professor at Khalifa University, which is an internationally top-ranked research-intensive university located in Abu Dhabi, UAE.



## Dr Eleni Fthenou

**Research Scientist at  
Qatar National Research Foundation  
(Qatar)**

Dr Eleni Fthenou received her PhD from the Medical School of the University of Crete, Greece in 2007 and her BSc in Genetics (Immunology) from the University of Aberdeen in UK in 2003.

She has worked as a researcher at the Ministry of Public Health in Qatar, at the Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal) and Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology (CREAL), Barcelona, Spain; she was a Manager of the Clinical Nutrition and Epidemiology of Diseases Laboratory, at the Department of Social Medicine and Epidemiology, School of Medicine, University of Crete, Greece.

Currently she holds the position of Scientist at Qatar Biobank for Medical Research, Qatar. She has participated in European and US projects such as, NewGeneris, EnvironGenomarkers, HiWate, FAMRI and others.

She is the Lead PI of the Qatari Birth Cohort (QBiC) study in Qatar and her main research interest is in gene-environment interactions and molecular epidemiology.



## Dr Gregory Papagregoriou

**Senior Scientist and Group Leader  
at biobank.cy CoE, University of Cyprus  
(Cyprus)**

Dr Gregory Papagregoriou has a long interest in studying rare kidney diseases. His research is focused on ADTKD-*MUC1* a rare disease with high frequency in Cyprus, which he aspires to describe, identify robust biomarkers and therapeutic interventions.

Dr Papagregoriou is an expert biobanker and geneticist, while he oversees the Next-Generation Sequencing facility of the biobank.cy CoE. He holds a PhD in Molecular Biology from the University of Cyprus, an MRes in Medical and Molecular Biosciences from the University of Newcastle and a BSc in Biology from the Aristotele's University in Thessaloniki.

The years following his PhD, Dr Papagregoriou was a PostDoctoral fellow at the Molecular Medicine Research Center at the University of Cyprus working on the modulation of podocyte gene expression during differentiation through miRNA involvement at the transcriptional level, while he had the opportunity to set up and run the first NGS system in Cyprus.

He developed a series of diagnostic NGS panels, including bioinformatic analyses and variant annotation pipelines. Then he joined the Kidney Disease Initiative at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard to coordinate the biomarker discovery efforts and assay development for ADTKD-*MUC1*. Currently, he is a group leader and the lead scientist at biobank.cy CoE, under the direction of Prof. Constantinos Deltas.





## **Prof. Sameera Ezzat**

**Head of Clinical Research,  
Shefaa el Orman  
Oncology Hospital (Egypt)**

Dr Sameera Ezzat is a Professor of Public Health, Head of clinical research, MARC, Evapharma. She served as Vice Dean of the National Liver Institute from end of 2017 for three years.

She also served as a Director of Research at Children's Cancer Hospital in Egypt, from 2008-2014.

Dr Sameera has a lot of research studies in the areas of Epidemiology of HCV and Epidemiology of cancer as well as gene-environment interactions and their relationship with cancer incidence.

She is a PI of many relevant grants. She worked in many grants funded by National and International agencies, such as US-NIH. She has more than 50 international publications and invited speaker in many conferences.

She was awarded the National Motivation Award in Medical Sciences in 2011. She was also awarded the British Council Award for PhD students.



## **Prof. Alex Felice**

**School of Medicine  
University of Malta  
(Malta)**

Professor Felice M.D., Ph.D., F.M.C.Path (spec. Genetics) is an academic member of the School of Medicine, at the University of Malta, and Malta representative on the 1+Million Genome / European Genome Project.

He also sits on the board of the “Rare Disease Alliance, Malta” Chairman of EUROBIOBANK, and a Knight of Malta.

Formerly, he was Visiting Thalassaemia Consultant in the Ministry of Health, Malta representative on the management committee and the assembly of member states of the BioBanking and BioMolecular Resource Research Infrastructure of the EU (BBMRI-ERIC) and Associate Professor, School of Medicine, Medical College of Georgia, Augusta GA, USA.

His main research interest is in the developmental genetics of globin gene control and the genomics of rare blood disease.



## **Prof. Kyproula Christodoulou**

**Head of Neurogenetics Department,  
Cyprus Institute of Neurology and  
Genetics, (Cyprus)**

Professor Kyproula Christodoulou, PhD, ErCLG (ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0622-7594), obtained her BSc degree in Genetics from Queen Mary College – University of London (1987), her MSc degree in Applied Molecular Biology and Biotechnology from University College London – University of London (1988) and her PhD degree in Medical Genetics from Imperial College - University of London (1995).

She has been employed at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics (CING) from January 1989 until today. She is the Head of the Neurogenetics Department, directing/administrating the Department and its diagnostic services, research and educational programs. She has set up ISO accredited molecular diagnostic services for a wide range of neurogenetic diseases, a service also used by the neighboring populations.

Through her research activities, she mapped many rare disease genes and contributed to identifying several neurogenetic disease genes. She participated as a principal or co-investigator in 43 research projects with total funding of over 6.0 million euros allocated to CING. She is the author of 99 peer-reviewed scientific publications.

Her current research interests include the identification of disease-associated genes and risk factors, understanding the molecular mechanisms that lead to pathogenesis and disease, and contributing toward the development of more effective therapies for the benefit of the patient, their family and society. She mentored and supervised several MSc and PhD students. She is the Dean and Professor of the Postgraduate School of the CING.



## Dr Apostolos Malatras

**IT Team Leader at biobank.cy CoE,  
University of Cyprus (Cyprus)**

Dr Apostolos Malatras' interests are in the fields of bioinformatics, systems biology, health and biobank informatics. He holds a degree in Computer Science and Biomedical Informatics, a MSc in Bioinformatics and a joint PhD in Systems Biology and Bioinformatics.

He has more than 10 years of experience in the proper accumulation, integration, curation, and analysis of omics data (transcript- and prote- omics). He developed several online tools and databases, including: HGCA, CellWhere, and MyoMiner.

He is currently working at the biobank as IT manager and bioinformatician to manage, secure, analyze, and standardize clinical and genomics (sequencing) data.

He has developed, designed, and is the database administrator of several genomics and biobank applications and databases, gaining in-depth knowledge of Biobanking software and skills that are utilized in biobank.cy, including federated dataset management and analysis from multiple pathologies, homogenization of clinical and experimental data, expertise in various statistical and data analysis methods relating to stratified medicine, optimizing knowledge on hosting platforms for biobank software solutions, identification and planning of appropriate data storage and High-Performance Computing resources necessary to support dataset storage and analysis.



## Dr Lina Souan

**Deputy Director and  
Chief Quality Officer,  
Cancer Biobank (Jordan)**

Lina Souan, B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D., HCEL, HCOSP, D(ABMLI), received her M.Sc. in Microbiology from Pittsburgh University School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, PA (1996). Her Ph.D. was in Immunology (2001), and she completed her first post-doctoral fellowship in stem cell therapy for cancer at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota (2001-2003).

Her second fellowship was at Sopherion Therapeutics in New Haven, Connecticut, where she worked on the patent Anti-Angiogenic Peptides and Methods of Use (2003-2004). She has been the Section Head of the Immunology Laboratory at King Hussein Cancer Center's Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine since 2005.

She served as the Deputy Director and Chief Quality Officer of the KHCCBIO Cancer Biobank since 2011. She is a diplomat of the American Board of Medical Laboratory Immunology (ABMLI), a Healthcare Certified Executive Leader (HCEL), and a Jordanian Health Care Accreditation Council-certified Healthcare Certified Occupational Safety Professional (HCOSP). She serves as a reviewer for the International Union for Cancer Control (UICC).

She is a member of the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), the Association of Medical Laboratory Immunologists (AMLI), the Jordanian Society for Medical Laboratory Sciences, the Jordanian Society of Allergy and Immunology, and a member of the American Association of Bioanalysts (AAB).



## Dr Natasa Giallourou

**Post.doc Fellow of Metabolomics,  
Bioinformatics, Epidemiology,  
University of Cyprus (Cyprus)**

Dr Giallourou is currently an MSCA Postdoctoral Fellow at biobank.cy. Her main area of expertise lies in the field of metabolomics and bioinformatics. Her ongoing projects involve the integration of metabolomic with other 'omics' data in population-based studies for the identification of biomarkers of complex diseases and improved patient stratification.

She earned her PhD in Nutritional Metabolomics from the University of Reading in 2017 and subsequently joined the Department of Metabolism Digestion and Reproduction at Imperial College London.

Dr Giallourou's research focuses on the use of metabolic phenotyping to tackle global health challenges with a special interest in public health nutrition. Metabolomics and bioinformatics tools are used to investigate the biochemical impact of undernutrition and infections, in children living in developing countries to better understand their adverse consequences on growth, cognition and metabolism later in life. She has also obtained an MSc in Nutrition and Health from Wageningen University and a BSc in Biology from the University of Leeds.

Dr Giallourou sits on the Board of Directors of the International Metabolomics Society, where she leads the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Group. She has previously served as the Chair of the Society's Early-career Members Network committee which she now is an advisor to.



## **Prof. Marina Kleanthous**

**Head of Molecular Genetics  
Thalassaemia Department,  
Cyprus Institute of Neurology and  
Genetics (Cyprus)**

Professor Marina Kleanthous is the Head of the Molecular Genetics Thalassaemia Department at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics and Professor of Molecular Medicine at the CING School.

She is actively involved in the diagnosis, prenatal diagnosis and Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis of haemoglobinopathies and other rare diseases.

Her research interests include studies on genetic modifiers for thalassaemia and sickle cell disease, gene therapy for thalassaemia using gene addition and gene editing approaches, and genomic and proteomic studies in thalassaemia.



## Dr Pavlos Costeas

**Executive Director of the  
Karaiskakio Foundation (Cyprus)**

Dr Costeas is the founding director of the Karaiskakio Foundation (KF) and the Center for the Study of Haematological and other Malignancies (CSHM), and through twenty five years of work, he has achieved the development of a foundation with international distinctions. The Cyprus Bone Marrow Donor Registry at KF stands as the largest registry per capita in the world, and the network of diagnostic laboratories at the KF currently serves as the reference diagnostic center in Cyprus in the fields of hematooncology, paediatric cancer and other cancer entities. The laboratories directed by Dr Costeas (Flow Cytometry, Molecular Diagnostics, Cytogenomics and Histocompatibility) are accredited by the National Accreditation Agency under ISO15189, the Histocompatibility laboratory under the European Federation of Immunogenetics (EFI) and the Bone Marrow Donor Registry and the Cord Blood Bank under the World Marrow Donor Association (WMDA) and the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (Fact-Netcord).

The acquired international status of the KF is also reflected on Dr Costeas personally, as he has gained invaluable experience through his participation in the European committee for Tissues and Cells and an active member of the European Leukemia Network. He served as an elected WMDA board member, elected as the Chairman of the Ethics Committee of the WMDA, a member of the advisory board of Bone Marrow Donors Worldwide (BMDW) and a member of the board of the European Federation of Immunogenetics. At the local level, Dr Costeas has served as an elected member on the first Board of Directors of the Cyprus Society of Human Genetics, served as a member of the first National Bioethics Committee in Cyprus, the Board of Directors of the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics, as an advisor to the Cyprus Ministry of Health in regulatory issues regarding Tissues & Cells and the National Board for Clinical Laboratory Medicine.

As a molecular biologist, Dr Costeas is highly regarded among the Cyprus research community. He has gained extensive experience in the study of developmental control mechanisms of cellular functions using in vitro cellular models during his doctoral and post-doctoral training and has numerous publications in this field. He has invaluable knowledge in the field of molecular biology, immunology and immunogenetics and more than twenty-five years of experience in the area of molecular pathology and genetics. His current research interests are the study of molecular mechanisms of tumorigenesis and cancer metastasis.





**Mrs. Shadia Said Hanood  
Al Sinawi**

**Chief Biomedical Scientist  
Sultan Qaboos University Hospital  
(Oman)**

Mrs. Al Sinawi is a Chief Biomedical Scientist with 23 years of experience in Immunohistochemistry at The Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, Pathology Department.

She has received her Bachelor's Degree in Biology from the College of Science, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Muscat, Sultanate of Oman and her Master of Science by Research and Dissertation, in recognition of the program of work entitled (Pathogenesis of breast cancer in Omani Patients), Kingston University, London, United Kingdom (UK).

Currently she is a Master's student in Biobanking at Medical University of Graz, Austria.

Contributed to research at SQUH and supervised Postgraduate students in their final project. Project Title: Implementation of the First Biobank in the Sultanate of Oman: Chances and Obstacles.



## Dr. Christos Yapijakis

**Associate Professor of Genetics,  
National Kapodistrian University of  
Athens (Greece)**

Christos Yapijakis (DMD,PhD) is a medical geneticist, currently Associate Professor of Genetics at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens Medical School and Director of Cephalogenetics Diagnostic Center in Athens, Greece. He has extensive experience in research, clinical diagnosis of craniofacial diseases, genetic counseling and teaching.

He has established two research facilities at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens Medical School, namely the Research Laboratory of Molecular Biology at the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (2004-2014) and the Clinical and Molecular Neurogenetics Unit at the Department of Neurology (1993-2004). He has also established two private molecular diagnostic laboratories, namely the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics at Cephalogenetics Diagnostic Center (since 2012) and the Laboratory of Molecular Biology at Bioerevna Diagnostic Center (1995-2010).

He is currently organizing the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics and the Unit of Orofacial Genetics in the 1st Department of Pediatrics, School of Medicine, National Kapodistrian University of Athens after an invitation by Emeritus Professor George P. Chrousos.



## **Prof. Michalis Panagiotidis**

**Department Head of Cancer  
Genetics, Therapeutics &  
Ultrastructural Pathology,  
Cyprus Institute of Neurology &  
Genetics (Cyprus)**

Professor Panagiotidis is currently the Department Head of Cancer Genetics, Therapeutics & Ultrastructural Pathology at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics. Previously, he has held a number of academic positions across the world including: (i) Assistant Professor positions at the Universities of North Carolina and Nevada in USA and the University of Ioannina Medical School in Greece as well as (ii) Full Professorial positions at the Universities of Heriot Watt and Northumbria in UK.

Professor Panagiotidis has research interests pertaining to (i) experimental cancer therapeutics, (ii) cancer genetics & epigenetics in biomarkers' development and (iii) nutrition & cancer prevention as evident by over 120 peer reviewed publications, in a wide range of scientific journals.

Professor Panagiotidis has been the recipient of a number of grants, from various funding agents, including the European Commission, American Institute for Cancer Research & the World Cancer Research Fund and Leverhulme Trust, among others.

Furthermore, he is a Scientific Advisory Board Member for the International Institute of Anticancer Research in addition to have been a Marilyn Gentry Fellow of the American Institute for Cancer Research & World Cancer Research Fund. Moreover, he has acted as an ad hoc reviewer for more than 50 international peer-reviewed journals while he is on the Editorial Board of several journals that span across different scientific disciplines.



## Dr Esther Ghanem

**Associate Professor,  
Notre Dame University (Lebanon)**

Dr Esther Ghanem is an Associate Professor of Biology at Notre Dame University, Lebanon, since 2011 with a Master and PhD degrees in Cellular and Molecular Biology from Jacobs University Bremen in Germany.

Dr Ghanem has been engaged in multidisciplinary collaborations at national and international levels resulting in numerous publications and awards, including the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO), and Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds.

Her scientific journey started with basic research related to the trafficking of proteins in the early and late secretory pathway. She then diverged to explore the field of nanoscience with main focus on the development of biocompatible nanovehicles for the theranostics of chronic diseases and tumors.

She recently joined the biobank.cy at University of Cyprus as a visiting researcher with the objective of establishing a biobank unit at her affiliated institute in Lebanon.



## Dr George D. Vavougiios

**Postdoctoral researcher,  
University of Thessaly (Greece)**

Dr George D. Vavougiios M.D., Ph.D. graduated from the Medical School of the University of Patras, where he graduated in 2010. In 2015 he was awarded a doctorate from the Medical School of the University of Thessaly with distinction. In 2015 he was placed as a resident neurologist at the Naval Hospital of Athens (ANH) and received his specialty title in 2020; he remained as a research associate of ANH's Neuroimmunology Laboratory since then.

He completed his first postdoctoral research in 2021, with parallel scholarship duties during the period 2020-2021. He is a delegate of the Alzheimer's Association SARS-CoV-2 Consortium, and member of its International and European committees since 2020. Since 2021, he has been a member of the translational research panel of the European Academy of Neurology.

During 2020-2022 he was an adjunct lecturer at undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for the University of Thessaly. He has received 10 travel scholarships in the period 2013-2022 from the European Academy of Neurology (8) and the European Society for the Study of Sleep (2) and participated as a salaried researcher in a national scholarship for Greece in 2020-2021.

He has authored over 65 papers in international journals, over 80 papers in national and international conferences, and two book chapters in the thematic area of life sciences. Currently, he is a visiting academic (Lecturer) at the University of Cyprus, and a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Thessaly.

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## Dr Özkan Özdemir

**Biobank Manager,  
Acibadem University biobank  
Istanbul (Turkey)**

Özkan Özdemir completed his undergraduate education in the Marmara University Biology department in 2007.

After completing his master's degree in the Department of Immunology at IU Aziz Sancar Institute of Experimental Medicine in 2010, he fulfilled his Ph.D. in the Department of Genetics at the same institute in 2017. In this process, Özkan Özdemir, who worked as a researcher in many national and international projects related to epilepsy genetics, founded the Genus Research and Development Company in 2014.

He worked as a bioinformatics specialist at Acibadem Labmed Genetic Diagnosis Center in 2018. Özkan Özdemir started to work as a postdoc researcher in Dr. Sebahattin Çırak's laboratory at CMMC at the University of Cologne in 2019.

In 2021, he returned to Turkey due to the pandemic. He began to work as a postdoctoral researcher at Acibadem University and ACU Biobank Manager. Özkan Özdemir published articles containing high output data on rare diseases and epilepsy research. And he continues his studies at Acibadem University.

MEET OUR PARTICIPANTS



## **Dr Yosr Hamdi**

**Genetic Biologist,  
Institut Pasteur de Tunis  
(Tunisia)**

Yosr Hamdi is a biologist and research assistant at Institut Pasteur de Tunis, Tunisia.

She is a specialist in cancer genomics and precision oncology. Dr. Hamdi is a member of several international Consortia including BCAC, CIMBA, H3ABioNet, H3Africa and the COVID-19 Host Genetics Initiative. She serves on the advisory boards of several pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies related to genomics and cancer targeted therapies.

Dr. Hamdi started in the field of human genetics in 2004 with the Human Genome Project, at Laval University, Quebec, Canada. Then, she had a Master degree in Cellular & Molecular Biology at the Faculty of Medicine, Laval University, Canada. In 2009, she joined the Genomics Center of the Centre de Recherche du Centre Hospitalier de l'Université Laval (CRCHUL), QC, Canada where she obtained her PhD in Molecular Medicine.

By combining genomics, molecular biology and bioinformatics, Dr. Hamdi is continuing the investigations of cancer disease in African populations by implementing Genomic Medicine and Precision Oncology in North Africa.

Thank you for your active participation and for sharing your expertise and experience at the  
**MediEuro Network - Workshop 2022**



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MediEuro Network - Workshop 2022

## Biobanking & Biomedical Research

May 16th & 17th 2022

Organized by [biobank.cy](http://biobank.cy) in Nicosia, Cyprus

The CY-BIOBANK Consortium:



This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the University of Cyprus, under grant agreement No. 857122.

