

THE DANISH CANCER SOCIETY RESEARCH CENTER

# STRATEGIC PLAN BEYOND 2020



# RESEARCH THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The Danish Cancer Society Research Center (DCRC) is uniquely positioned as a high-profile research center within Denmark's largest non-governmental organization with a strong voice in society. Credibility, transparency and involvement are values we share with the Danish Cancer Society, and it is in our DNA to focus our research on real-life problems by striving to reduce the risk of cancer and improve the life of cancer patients.

## **Our strengths build on:**

- › international and leading research in a multicultural research environment with unique registries, cohorts and methodologies;
- › excellence in research and career development; and
- › ambitious standards for knowledge-sharing and the dissemination of scientific results.

The DCRC originated from **strong research in basic biology and epidemiology**. Today, these research directions have merged into a cross-collaborative cancer research center with an **interdisciplinary and international research agenda**. Basic science is at the heart of the process that discovers new diagnostic and therapeutic possibilities. Epidemiologic research

identifies the causes of cancer and describes the disease burden to contribute towards improving public health. Translational ambitions complement these areas of focus to enable the development of new strategies to prevent, diagnose and cure cancer.

With this 2020–2024 DCRC strategy, we are taking the next steps towards realizing our mission of impactful cancer research. In this process we clarify current and future opportunities, identify and mitigate vulnerabilities and prioritize adjustments to chart the best path forward for our research leaders, staff and students. The way ahead is described through four signature initiatives:

- › impactful cancer research;
- › translational ambitions and potential;
- › preferred environment for research training; and
- › partner with patients and society.

We are committed to deliver this strategy in an international research environment that performs successful cancer research through collaboration, curiosity and communication.



**Mef Christina Nilbert,**  
**Research director,**

The Danish Cancer Society Research Center

## SIGNATURE INITIATIVES



IMPACTFUL CANCER  
RESEARCH



PREFERRED ENVIRONMENT  
FOR RESEARCH TRAINING



TRANSLATIONAL  
AMBITIONS AND  
POTENTIAL



PARTNER WITH PATIENTS  
AND SOCIETY

### The Danish Cancer Society Research Center (DCRC)

- › Proud research traditions that date back to the foundation of the Danish Cancer Registry for epidemiologic research in 1942 and the establishment of the Fibiger Institute for research in cancer biology in 1949.
- › An interdisciplinary and cross-collaborative research environment with 250 researchers from 24 countries in 25 research groups.
- › Cancer research ranging from discovery to societal application with particular focus and strengths in genomic integrity, lysosome biology, autophagy, prevention and early detection, predictive signatures, pharmacoepidemiology and survivorship perspectives.
- › Experimental and analytical services provided through four core facilities and expertise in administration, data handling and popular science communication provided by two staff-support functions.
- › An annual research production of around 300 articles and 10 defended PhDs.
- › An international scientific advisory board that advises the DCRC leadership and carries our regular research evaluations aimed at ensuring high-quality research, optimizing the use of core funding and promoting areas of excellence.



# IMPACTFUL CANCER RESEARCH

**We welcome and promote scientific excellence and prioritize high-quality impactful research.** International staff pave the way for future successful cancer research. Perspectives, measures and the meaning of impactful research may differ in the various fields of research, though the overarching ambition is to achieve scientific results and publications that are appreciated and shared and which can ultimately make a difference for cancer prevention, detection and treatment. High-impact scientific publications will also help our researchers successfully attract research grants to grow and develop the research center with the aim to make us a preferred partner in research networks and alliances. Our focus on high impact is our way to ensure that our **science is cutting edge, high quality and leading in key areas**. Our research aims to hasten new discoveries, inspire innovation and have a societal impact.

To support our ambitions within impactful research, we will:

- › recognize and reward excellence, stimulate and facilitate daring, ambitious cancer research, profile strengths and define complementary areas and desired skills for strategic recruitment and development;
- › motivate and promote high-quality impactful research through strong internal collaboration, regular evaluations and transparent qualification criteria linked to coaching, support and recognition;
- › provide state of the art, financially sustainable core facilities with high-quality service in response to user needs, connect to relevant research support networks and ensure access to new technologies, software and upgrading of key instruments.
- › support research through an efficient, transparent administration. We aim to advise and guide our researchers in the grant application process through peer-review and feedback. Credibility guides our work to ensure and further develop high standards for research integrity.



COMMITTED



# TRANSLATIONAL AMBITIONS AND POTENTIAL

To make a difference for tomorrow's cancer patients, our researchers build **bridges to clinical practice**. This is our way to ensure that discoveries advance into trials aimed at evaluating efficacy and clinical benefit and that clinical or epidemiologic observations are brought back into laboratory experiments to elucidate the underlying disease mechanism. The DCRC hosts considerable biobank resources and cohorts aimed at developing our translational ambitions through **exploration, validation and clinical observations**.

Research groups in the DCRC define their **translational ambitions** and aim to develop the routes to deliver this ambition. Since the DCRC does not have in-house clinical services, translational and clinical studies are planned and performed through external collaborations.

To accelerate our translational research ambitions, we will:

- › explore and develop our translational opportunities through defined translational ambitions and clarified potential patient benefits for the research in our groups;
- › prioritize state-of-the art clinical seminars and expert workshops to gain clinical insights, identify relevant translational research questions and strengthen academic-clinical networks; and
- › profile 'bench to bedside and back again' initiatives and support DCRC researchers in identifying relevant arenas for translational research presentations and networking.



**COLLABORATIVE**



# PREFERRED ENVIRONMENT FOR RESEARCH TRAINING

DCRC's ambition is to attract the best young candidates and, through **talent development** initiatives, help young researchers achieve their full potential. We aim to **identify, nurture and train future cancer research leaders** to ensure scientific skills within the center and contribute with strong cancer researchers and collaborators to national and international research arenas. Our competitive advantages to support this ambition include our common focus on cancer, a limited-size research center that allows for interaction and coherence, attractive working conditions and cross-collaboration. Interdisciplinary research training broadens young researchers' skills and provides them with valuable tools for their future careers.

To support our ambitions to further develop the DCRC as a preferred environment for research training, we will:

- › support talent development and interdisciplinary research training through group rotations and a buddy arrangement between researchers from different fields;
- › stimulate knowledge-sharing through scientific exchange fora and networks;
- › heighten the visibility of the DCRC as a research training center to attract the best young research candidates, e.g. by strategically collaborating with Danish universities and by providing an informative, easily accessible website; and
- › attract and retain the best researchers through the establishment of a tenure track system.





CURIOUS



# PARTNER WITH PATIENTS AND SOCIETY

Researchers at the DCRC generate knowledge that contributes to refined strategies for cancer prevention, early diagnostics and treatment and involve in the dissemination of such knowledge to administrations, organizations and the general public. Through credible, balanced and up-to-date popular science communication to members, volunteers and patients we provide feedback on research donations and share information on new evidence-based principles and possibilities.

Research-based communication and dissemination is an important basis for an **engaged interaction with patients and the public**. Initiatives in this area ensure awareness of the short-term and long-term impact of our research – from basic biology to epidemiology and translational projects.

In the "Research Communication Strategy", the Danish Cancer Society defines **ambitious standards for the dissemination of popular science results**.

To strengthen and develop our partnership with patients and society, we will:

- › encourage researchers' involvement in research communication and dissemination by including research communication responsibilities and skills in job descriptions and by recognizing and evaluating communication activities during annual performance reviews and research evaluations;

- › promote and profile the DCRC and our experts through research dissemination initiatives, including proactive organization of and participation in citizen science initiatives, societal discussions and debates;
- › strengthen our researchers' responsibilities and skills in research communication through a multitude of initiatives such as research presentations for patients and volunteers, media communication and presentations in popular and academic settings;
- › provide personalized advice on dissemination tasks and responsibilities; and
- › strengthen internal structures that facilitate communication and dissemination with close collaboration between researchers and communications officers. A DCRC patient panel will be established, and principles for patient and public involvement targeting each field of research will be implemented. A list of experts and a repository of popular science initiatives, resources and services for internal use will be established to facilitate prioritization and distribution of tasks among researchers.



COMMUNICATIVE



## **Danish Cancer Society Research Center**

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