

*THE SIICA INTERNATIONAL RETREAT
OF PHD STUDENTS IN IMMUNOLOGY*

*September 08-10, 2026
Udine, Italy*

PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 08

14.00-15.30 ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

Auditorium Sgorlon - Via Monsignor Pasquale Margreth, 3 Udine

15.30-15.45 WELCOME ADDRESS

- Silvia Tonon (SIICA Junior Faculty and local organizer)
- Massimo Locati (SIICA President)
- Gianluca Tell (Director of Department of Medicine, University of Udine)

15.45-16.30 IMMUNITY TO INFECTIONS: LECTURE

Chairperson: Massimo Locati and Marco De Carli

Prof. Bojan Polic

(University of Rijeka, Croatia)

"The role of IFN γ in systemic adaptations to acute viral infections"

16.30-17.30 ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION I

Chairpersons: Eleonora Timperi and Barbara Frossi

16.30-16.45: "Rafoxanide Potentiates Anti-PD-1 Therapy by Activating a VDAC1-Dependent mtDNA-Type I Interferon Axis in Colorectal Cancer" – *Lorenzo Tomassini, University of Rome Tor Vergata (Italy)*

16.45-17.00: "Control of neutrophil metabolism and differentiation by ACKR2 dependent signalling" – *Elisa Sbolli, IRCCS Humanitas Research Hospital, Rozzano (Italy)*

17.00-17.15: "CYP1A1 Limits AhR-Driven Immune Tolerance to Sustain cDC1-Dependent Anti-Tumor Immunity" – *Manola Mezzanotte, University of Perugia (Italy)*

17.15-17.30: "Human IL-12R β 1 deficiency reveals essential roles of IL-12 and IL-23 in adaptive immune responses" – *FRANCESCA MATANI, University of Florence (Italy)*

17.30-18.00 COFFEE BREAK

18.00-18.20 FLASH TALK: SESSION I

Chairpersons: Alessio Grimaldi and Giuseppe Pietropaolo

18.00-18.03: "Tumor-Selective IFN- λ Signaling Enhances NK Cell-Mediated Cytotoxicity and Synergizes with Bortezomib in Multiple Myeloma" – *BEATRICE CAPPUCCINI, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)*

18.03-18.06: "BRD4 Modulates Inflammatory Fibroblast Differentiation and Function in Inflammatory Bowel Disease" – *RACHELE FRASCATANI, University of Rome Tor Vergata (Italy)*

18.06-18.09: "Comprehensive analysis of low-density neutrophils isolated from healthy donors" – *ANA LAURA ORTEGA DEZEN, University of Verona (Italy)*

18.09-18.12: "Characterization of progenies from circulating inflammatory precursors in Common Variable ImmunoDeficiency (CVID) patients" – *FILIPPO PIOMBO, University of Genova (Italy)*

18.12-18.15: "Antibody response to Recombinant Zoster Vaccine and selective perturbation of NK cell compartment in Primary Antibody-Deficient patients" – *DANIEL CIUTI, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)*

18.15-18.18: "HLA-E/NKG2A Axis Reprograms NK Cells Toward a GZMK⁺ Poorly Cytotoxic Phenotype in Multiple Myeloma" – *FABIANA DROMMI, University of Messina (Italy)*

18.20-19.00 POSTER SESSION I (from P01 to P06 and from P14 to P19)

Chairpersons for Poster walk: Alessio Grimaldi, Silvia Tonon and Eleonora Timperi

20.00 SPEAKERS DINNER

Invited Speakers dinner: Restaurant Antica Maddalena, Via Pelliccerie 4, Udine

PARTICIPANTS DINNER

Other participants are responsible to organise their own dinner.

SEPTEMBER 09

9.00-09.45 TUMOR IMMUNOLOGY: LECTURE

Chairpersons: Francesco Annunziato and Giuseppe Pietropaolo

Dr. Beatrice Zitti

(IFOM, Milan - Italy)

"Cellular orchestrators of anti-tumor immunity"

09.45-10.45 ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION II

Chairpersons: Silvia Tonon and Carlo Pucillo

09.45-10.00: "Balancing pro- and anti-inflammatory EOMES+ CD4+ T-cell subsets in autoimmune diseases" – *CAMILLA RIGHETTI, Fondazione Istituto Nazionale di Genetica Molecolare, Milan (Italy)*

10.00-10.15: "Enhancing Head and Neck Squamous Cell Carcinoma Treatment: A Combinatory Therapy Using Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR)-T cell therapy and Tumor MicroEnvironment (TME)-targeting strategy" – *FLAVIA CECCARELLI, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Rome (Italy)*

10.15-10.30: "STAT3 Shapes the Effector Phenotype of NK Cells" – *GIORDANA GARZILLO, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)*

10.45-11.00: "Chemerin Orchestrates Spatially Defined CAF-Macrophage Niches in Lung Tumors" – *ELEONORA BONANNI, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)*

10.45-11.15 COFFEE BREAK

11.15-12.15 ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION III

Chairpersons: Irene Mattiola and Giuseppe Pietropaolo

11.15-11.30: "BRCA1 deficiency compromises regulatory T cell expansion, in association to enhanced type-2 immunity and stronger response to flu vaccine in germline BRCA1 mutation carriers" – *GIORGIA SARTORI, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)*

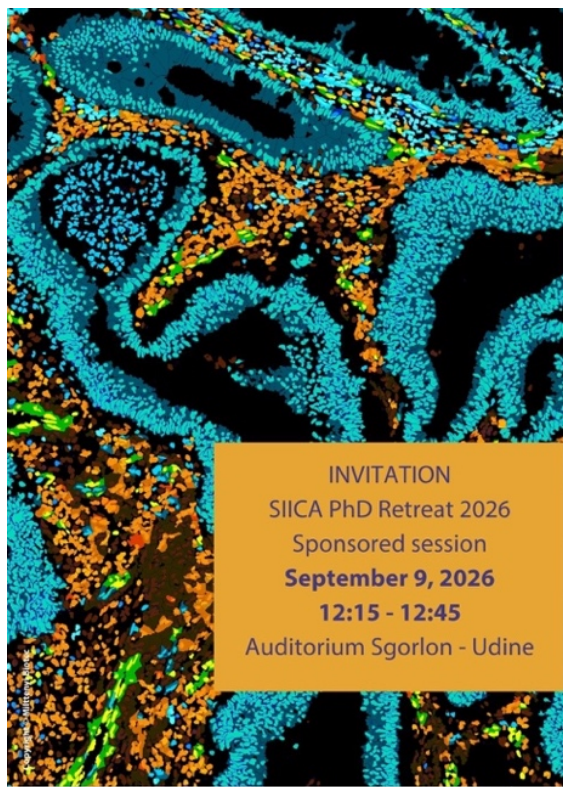
11.30-11.45: "Analysis of transcriptional profile of circulating neutrophils from young and elderly donors" – *CARLO FRIGENTI, University of Verona (Italy)*

11.45-12.00: "Synthetic tryptophan-derived ligands activate AhR to reprogram dendritic cell function" – *ALESSANDRO PINZI, University of Perugia (Italy)*

12.00-12.15: "Characterizing thymic function in pediatric and young adult patients receiving allo-HCT using the CD31 and CD38 markers" – *ALESSIO TAVIANI, Bambino Gesù Children Hospital, Rome (Italy)*

12.15-12.45 SPONSORED SESSION: MILTENYI

Chairperson: Alessio Grimaldi



INVITATION
SIICA PhD Retreat 2026
Sponsored session
September 9, 2026
12:15 - 12:45
Auditorium Sgorlon - Udine

**From Discovery to Clinic:
Turning Innovative
Immunology into
Tomorrow's Therapies**

Program

12:15 Scientific talk:
Development of CD318-targeted CAR T cells for clinical use in PDAC
Alexander Seitz, R&D Miltenyi Biotec

12:30 Interactive Conversation with Miltenyi R&D:
What Does It Take to Turn a PhD Project into a Life-Changing Therapy?
Moderator: Adriano Taddeo

[miltenyibiotec.com](https://www.miltenyibiotec.com)



12.45-14.00 LUNCH

14.00-14.45 INNATE IMMUNITY: LECTURE

Chairpersons: Renato Ostuni and Irene Mattiola

Prof. Andreas Diefenbach

(Charité, Berlin - Germany)

"Living in tissues: functional adaptation of tissues by innate lymphoid cells."

14.45-15.45 ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION IV

Chairpersons: Alessio Grimaldi and Giuseppe Pietropaolo

14.45-15.00: "CCRL2 Orchestrates the Recruitment of Protumor SiglecF⁺ Neutrophils in Lung Cancer" – *STEFANIA ZINI, University of Brescia (Italy)*

15.00-15.15: "Lactate-mediated NK cell dysfunction as a prognostic marker and therapeutic target in breast cancer" – *SIMONE IELPO, Tor Vergata University of Rome (Italy)*

15.15-15.30: "CCRL2 role in the regulation of colon epithelial homeostasis" – *MAHA WHEBE, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)*

15.30-15.45: "Deciphering the role of Mast cell in regulation of anticancer immunity in CRC" – *LUBNA SABEENA SUBAIR, University of Udine (Italy)*

15.45-16:00 MEET THE SIICA JUNIOR FACULTY

16:00-17:00 CAREER DEVELOPMENT SESSION

The goal of this career session is to provide the attendees with a genuine and inspiring perspective on the diverse career opportunities available after a PhD, helping them to thoughtfully consider all the important steps for the development of different professional pathways. The session will consist of a short presentation from each speaker followed by an open discussion with the audience.

Chairpersons: Eleonora Timperi and Irene Mattiola

"Beyond the PhD: Personal Journeys in Academia and Biotech"

Prof. Andreas Diefenbach

(Charité, Berlin - Germany)

Dr. Beatrice Zitti

(IFOM, Milan - Italy)

Dr. Adriano Taddeo

(Miltenyi Biotec, Italy)

Dr. Alice D'Andrea

(Miltenyi Biotec, Italy)

17.00-17.30 COFFEE BREAK

17.30-17.55 FLASH TALK: SESSION II

Chairpersons: Giuseppe Pietropaolo and Barbara Frossi

17.30-17.33: "CRISPR-Cas9 Genome Editing in Primary Innate Lymphoid Cells" – **SARA BARTOLINI**, *Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)*

17.33-17.36: "Expansion of a distinct CD8+ T-cell subset in peripheral blood and bronchoalveolar lavage fluid from patients with antisynthetase syndrome" – **MARCO DEL CARRIA**, *University of Florence (Italy)*

17.36-17.39: "Role of IL-1 Receptor 2 in Emergency Hematopoiesis" – **CHIARA FRIGE'**, *Humanitas Research Hospital, Rozzano, Milan (Italy)*

17.39-17.42: "Dissecting the role of leukocyte in cystic fibrosis cancer: how dysfunctional CFTR affects anti-tumor immunity" – **ALESSIA BELLASAME**, *University of Chieti-Pescara (Italy)*

17.42-17.45: "Linking Regenerative Agriculture to Immune Modulation: A Translational Approach" – **VITTORIA RIGHETTI**, *University of Brescia (Italy)*

17.45-17.48: "Compartmentalized microfluidic platforms as a tool to dissect the epithelial-fungal crosstalk in invasive aspergillosis" – *ANGELA DI BATTISTA, University of Perugia (Italy)*

17.48-17.51: "Integration of multi-omics approach to anticipate B cells repopulation in Relapsing-Remitting Multiple Sclerosis patients treated with Ocrelizumab" – *MATTEO PIVETTA, University of Udine (Italy)*

17.55-18.35 POSTER SESSION II (from P20 to P25 and from P07 to P13)

Chairpersons for Poster walk: Giuseppe Pietropaolo, Irene Mattiola and Barbara Frossi

20.00 SOCIAL DINNER

Casa della Contadinanza, Piazzale della Patria del Friuli 2, 33100 - Udine

SEPTEMBER 10

09.30-10.15 ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION V

Chairpersons: Alessio Grimaldi and Eleonora Timperi

9.30-9.45: "Absence of BRCA1 in regulatory T cells results in proliferation defects" – *FEDERICO NICCHIOTTI, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)*

9.45-10.00: "The interplay between microbiota and complement system in preterm birth" – *BARBARA FOGAR, University of Trieste (Italy)*

10.00-10.15: "Bridging the genotype-phenotype gap in Common Variable Immunodeficiency and Primary Immunodeficiencies: a multi-omics and functional modeling approach" – *LUCIA BARTOLI, University of Florence (Italy)*

10.15-11.00 MUCOSAL IMMUNOLOGY: LECTURE

Chairpersons: Francesco Annunziato and Barbara Frossi

Dr. Marco De Giovanni

(Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Milan, Italy)

"Regionalized immune programs define Peyer's patches along the small intestine"

11.00-12.00 FAREWELL AND PRIZES