

4 CNIC News and Views

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1. Visiting Scientists

Spain's growing international profile in scientific research makes it an increasingly attractive destination for visiting scientists from around the world.

Fundación Occident Visiting Researchers Program

Since 2013, the CNIC and *Fundación Occident* have worked together to bring international scientists to the CNIC through the *Fundación's* Visiting Researchers Program. The program supports research visits to Spanish institutions, with the aim of building inter-institutional ties and opening new lines of research.

Three research-visit proposals were approved in 2025:

- 1. Dr. Francesco Costa**, Professor at the University of Messina, Italy; Interventional Physician at Virgen de la Victoria Hospital in Málaga; and Researcher at the Málaga Biomedical Research Institute and Nanomedicine Platform, Spain.
- 2. Dr. Anthony Firulli**, Director of the Cardiac Developmental Biology Program at the Herman B. Wells Center for Pediatric Research, Riley Heart Research Center, Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, USA.
- 3. Dr. Stepan Heymans**, Chair of the Heart Failure Research Centre and the Clinical Cardiomyopathy Program at Maastricht UMC, Netherlands, and Professor of Inflammation & Matrix Biology at the University of Leuven, Belgium.

In September 2025, Dr. Costa began his collaboration with the CNIC, working in the group led by Dr. Borja Ibáñez. His stay that will continue until September 2026.

2. Awards and Honours

CNIC General Director Dr. Valentín Fuster received the following awards and recognitions in 2025.

Orden de Duarte, Sánchez y Mella – the Dominican Republic's highest distinction

The Dominican Republic honored Dr. Valentín Fuster with the *Orden de Duarte, Sánchez y Mella*, the country's highest order of merit, awarded for distinguished service, outstanding achievements, contributions to humanity, scientific discoveries, exceptional works of art, and other noteworthy accomplishments.



Doctor Honoris Causa and Presidential Honorary Award in Cyprus

During an official ceremony, the President of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides, presented Dr. Fuster with the Presidential Honorary Award, acknowledging his outstanding contributions to cardiovascular health and his lifelong commitment to advancing medical science. The European University of Cyprus also awarded Dr. Fuster the title of Doctor Honoris Causa, a distinction reserved for individuals whose scientific achievements and dedication have had a profound impact on society.



Tribute to Dr. Valentín Fuster at Fundación Jiménez Díaz

Dr. Fuster was a featured speaker at the lecture series organized by *Fundación Jiménez Díaz* (FJD) to celebrate its 90th Anniversary. Nearly 300 attendees gathered in the hospital's Aula Magna to hear Dr. Fuster reflect on his personal and professional journey. In a conversation with CNIC Scientific Director and FJD cardiologist Dr. Borja Ibáñez, Dr. Fuster spoke about medical vocation, the value of mentors, and the need for a more human approach to medicine.



**Dr. Miguel Torres receives the 2025 National Genetics Award**

The Spanish Genetics Society (SEG) awarded Dr. Miguel Torres Sánchez with the 2025 National Genetics Award in the applied category, recognizing his contributions to the development of regenerative therapies for the heart.

**Dr. Silvia G. Priori awarded the 2025 Valentin Fuster Award for Innovation in Science by the American College of Cardiology**

Dr. Priori was recognized alongside other 2025 Distinguished Award winners at the American College of Cardiology's Annual Scientific Session (ACC.25), held March 29-31, 2025, in Chicago

**Dr. Jorge Alegre-Cebollada named recipient of the 2026 Michael and Kate Bárány Prize**

The Biophysical Society named Jorge Alegre-Cebollada recipient of the 2026 Michael and Kate Bárány Award for his pioneering studies of protein mechanics in living systems, revealing how mechanical forces govern protein function and contribute to human disease.

**Dr. Agustín Clemente Moragón receives a CSIC Outstanding Doctoral Thesis Award**

Dr. Agustín Clemente Moragón, a member of the Translational Laboratory for Cardiovascular Imaging and Therapy led by Dr. Borja Ibáñez, received a Relevant Doctoral Thesis Award from the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC).

These awards recognized theses defended in 2023 and 2024 that stood out for their quality, impact, and scientific relevance. Dr. Clemente Moragón carried out his thesis under the supervision of Drs. Borja Ibáñez and Eduardo Oliver, and defended it at the UAM on 24 February 2023. Titled "Translational and Mechanistic Study about Beta-1-Adrenergic Receptor Modulation on Neutrophils as a Therapy against Ischemia/Reperfusion Injury," the work examines a potential therapeutic approach to a major challenge in cardiac care.

**Dr. Vicente Andrés and Dr. Ana Baretino honored in the inaugural awards of the Chair of Rare Diseases at the University of Almería**

Dr. Vicente Andrés was honored for the Best Scientific Publication and Dr. Ana Baretino received a special mention for her doctoral thesis in the inaugural awards of the Chair of Rare Diseases at the University of Almería. The awards aim to promote research, raise awareness of the social and healthcare impact of rare diseases, and foster public understanding.





CNIC research into cardiotoxicity in cancer awarded the AECC prize for best scientific article

Anabel Díaz-Guerra received the prize for the best scientific article published in 2024 by recipients of AECC pre-doctoral grants. Her article, *Anthracycline Cardiotoxicity Induces Progressive Changes in Myocardial Metabolism and Mitochondrial Quality Control: Novel Therapeutic Target*, was published in *JACC: Cardioncology*, 6, 217-232.



FECYT awarded quality certification to REPISALUD

The Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT) awarded its quality certification to REPISALUD, the institutional repository of the Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII) and its foundations—the CNIC and CNIO.

CNIC research featured on the cover of National Geographic Spain

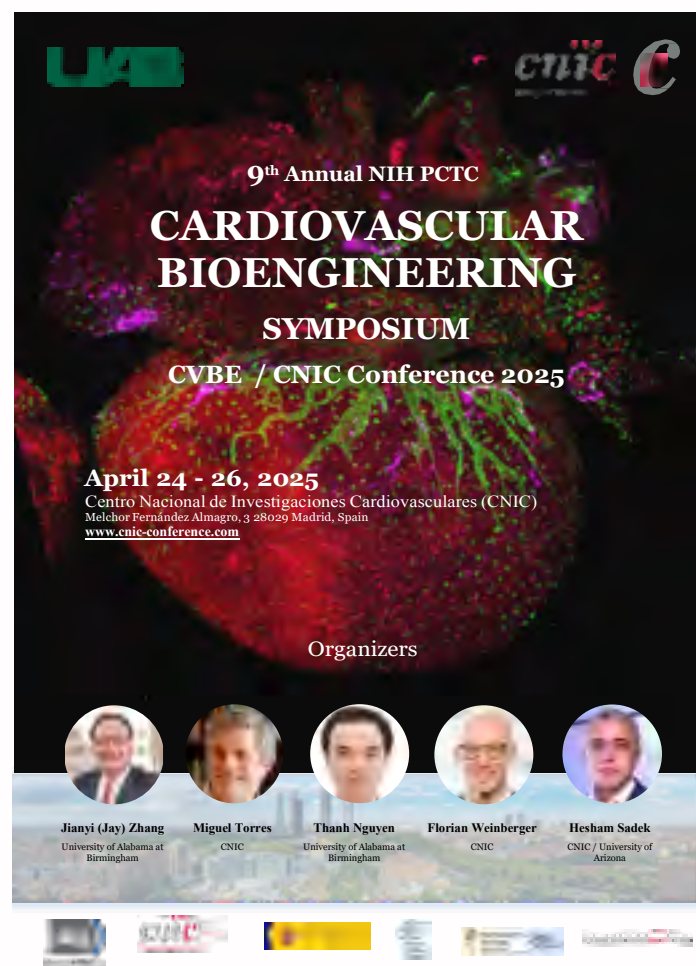
The November 2025 issue of the Spanish edition of *National Geographic* magazine dedicated its cover story to the heart and the latest advances in cardiology, with a prominent focus on the CNIC.



3 Scientific Events

CNIC Conference: 9th Annual Cardiovascular Bioengineering Symposium

The 9th Annual Cardiovascular Bioengineering Symposium, organized by the CNIC and the National Institutes of Health (USA), highlighted cutting-edge research in stem-cell biology, cardiac regeneration, vascular biology, metabolism, and cardiology. The meeting was held in the CNIC Auditorium.



The CNIC at the European Society of Cardiology Congress

The CNIC played a prominent role at the European Society of Cardiology Congress (ESC Congress 2025 August 29-September 1), held in Madrid. CNIC experts led scientific sessions, presented high-impact studies and consensus documents, and received international recognition, reinforcing the center's standing as a leading institution in cardiovascular research.

Held under the theme “Global Health: cardiology without borders,” the congress brought together thousands of professionals to address global cardiovascular health challenges and discuss the latest scientific and clinical advances.

CNIC General Director Dr. Valentín Fuster was selected by the World Heart Federation (WHF) to deliver the Inaugural Lecture at the WHF World Congress of Cardiology, held within the ESC Congress. This distinction—awarded by the WHF for the first time—recognizes individuals with exceptional contributions to global cardiovascular health.



Cardiovascular health with a gender perspective: experts from 21 European countries gather in Madrid for the JACARDI General Assembly

The CNIC hosted the Third General Assembly of JACARDI, the major European initiative to improve the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, with gender and health equity at the center of the agenda.

The Assembly brought together more than 200 representatives from 21 European countries, along with spokespersons from the European Commission, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, scientific societies, and patient organizations. Key themes included gender equity, sustainability, data monitoring, and the upcoming EU Cardiovascular Health Plan.



CNIC co-hosts CardioTox 25, the leading international congress on cardiovascular health in cancer patients

The CNIC hosted opening sessions of CardioTox 25 on November 4, with Hospital La Paz hosting subsequent sessions on November 5 and 6. CardioTox is the leading international meeting dedicated to cardiovascular health in cancer patients. As in previous editions, the event brought together professionals from multiple disciplines—including oncology, hematology, cardiology, primary care, nursing, and other health fields—with a shared goal: optimizing cardiovascular care across the cancer journey. The meeting was chaired by cardiologist Dr. Teresa López-Fernández, who also participates in CNIC-coordinated research projects.



PHDAY: Stronger Science, Healthier Lives

Held on Friday November 28 under the title “Stronger Science, Healthier Lives,” explored the impact of science on cardiovascular health and how cutting-edge research is shaping the future of medicine. The event brought together experts from multiple fields to discuss the latest advances in cardiology, lifestyle interventions, and aging, while offering more than 170 early-career researchers participants valuable networking and learning opportunities. More information at <https://phday.cnic.es/>.



CNIC and the Ramón Areces Foundation organize the international symposium “Understanding the Neurovascular Network to Prevent Dementia”

Held on December 4, 2024, at the Ramón Areces Foundation Auditorium, this symposium addressed one of the greatest global health challenges of the 21st century. Recent research highlights the essential role of the neurovascular network—encompassing cerebral blood flow, the blood-brain barrier, and the brain’s drainage systems—in maintaining cognitive function and brain health.

The meeting brought together leading international experts to address, from a multidisciplinary perspective, the neurovascular mechanisms that contribute to cognitive decline. It was coordinated by CNIC General Director Valentín Fuster; Costantino Iadecola, Director of the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute at Weill Cornell Medicine (New York); Marta Cortés-Canteli, from the Cajal Center for Neuroscience (CSIC); and María Ángeles Moro, Coordinator of the CNIC Program on Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Brain Health.





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CNIC joins GRACE, a European project to transform cardiovascular care through innovation

The CNIC has been allocated €405,625 for its involvement in GRACE, a project focused on developing innovative strategies to improve the detection and management of cardiovascular diseases.



Two Marie Skłodowska-Curie grants awarded to CNIC researchers

Dr. Pablo Rodríguez Silvestre will study the influence of fatty-acid oxidation on the immune response, while Dr. Jennifer Monereo Sánchez will investigate the relationship between brain health, atherosclerosis, and cardiovascular risk.



4. Grants

Three CNIC projects receive more than €5 million in ERC Advanced Grant funding

Three CNIC projects received European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant funding from the European Commission. ANTI-ATHERO: *Age-Associated Antigens in Atherosclerosis Immunity and Immunotherapy*, led by Dr. Almudena Ramiro, and MINTRAF: *Cell-Cell Communication by Mitochondrial Intercellular Traffic*, led by Dr. José Antonio Enríquez, will each receive €2.5 million over the next 5 years.

A further €2.5 million was awarded to Nab-Heart: *Nanobody-Targeted Camk2d Inhibition for Cardiac Arrhythmia*, led by Dr. Silvia Priori, professor of cardiology at the University of Pavia (Italy) and head of the CNIC Molecular Cardiology Group. Of the total, €250,000 is assigned to her CNIC group.



Two CNIC projects selected in the 2025 "la Caixa" Foundation Health Research funding round

The two CNIC projects were among 34 cutting-edge biomedical research projects selected from a total of 714 proposals:

The Legacy of Anthracyclines in Bone Marrow and Long-Term Cardiovascular Risks in Cancer Survivors, led by Dr. Borja Ibáñez

Improving Gene Therapy for Life-Threatening Heart Diseases, led by Dr. Juan Bernal.



Isabel Gemio Foundation awards €60,000 to CNIC research project led by Henar Cuervo

Fundación Isabel Gemio awarded a €60,000 grant to the project "Identification and Characterization of Key Factors in the Progression of Arteriovenous Malformations," led by Dr. Henar Cuervo of the Molecular Genetics of Angiogenesis Research Group at the CNIC.



5. Outreach Activities

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

On February 11, the CNIC organized a special morning event to mark the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, aimed at promoting scientific vocations and raising visibility of the role of women in STEM.

The event opened with a video introducing students to the professional and personal journeys of several CNIC researchers, followed by a roundtable discussion on the role of women in research, the barriers that persist in scientific careers, and the opportunities to drive meaningful change.

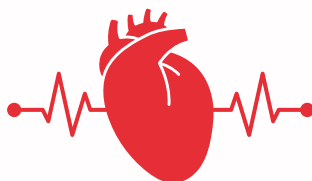


International Women's Day and European Day for the Prevention of Cardiovascular Risk

To mark International Women's Day (March 8) and the European Day for the Prevention of Cardiovascular Risk (March 14), the CNIC organized a public event on the afternoon of March 13 focused on cardiovascular risk prevention in women.



Dr. Maria Rubini, cardiologist, CNIC researcher, and chair of the Gender Working Group of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), participated in "A WakeUp Call: Key Trends and Policy Issues in Cardiovascular Health for Women and Girls," organized in the European Parliament in collaboration with the ESC. Her presentation, "Shedding Light on Cardiovascular Disease in Women and the Need for Action," highlighted the importance of raising awareness of cardiovascular disease in women.





European Researchers' Night

On Friday, September 26 the CNIC took part in the 16th edition of the European Researchers' Night, joining this European Commission initiative held simultaneously in more than 350 cities across Europe. The CNIC organized twelve outreach activities designed to bring participants closer to the Center's research, engaging audiences of all ages through workshops, guided visits, hands-on experiments, talks, and demonstrations.

Topics ranged from rare diseases and cardiac physiology to neuroscience, DNA extraction, PCR, nutrition and lifestyle, blood-flow dynamics, and an immersive virtual-reality experience on drug design.



World Heart Day

The CNIC, with the collaboration of Dr. Borja Ibáñez reaffirmed its commitment to the detection, treatment, and prevention of cardiovascular diseases—and reminded the public that heart health also depends on everyday choices. Healthy lifestyle habits can prevent most cardiovascular diseases, which remain the leading cause of death worldwide. The CNIC's key recommendations:

- Maintain a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and legumes, and low in saturated fats and sugars.
- Engage in regular physical activity—at least 30 minutes a day.
- Avoid tobacco and minimize alcohol consumption.
- Monitor risk factors such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes through regular check-ups.
- Take care of your mental health, get enough sleep, and manage stress.



Science and Innovation Week

As part of the 26th Science and Innovation Week 2025, held November 4 to 16, the CNIC organized twenty-one activities to showcase its research and bring science to people of all ages. Through hands-on experiments, workshops, demonstrations, and talks, participants engaged with recent discoveries and technological advances across a wide range of topics: cell fate, cardiovascular physiology, genetics, neuroscience, cancer-heart interactions, rare diseases, adolescent cardiovascular health, molecular biology, and interactive formats including escape rooms and virtual-reality experiences.





6. Social and CNIC

CNIC receives a donation to research Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome

The Molecular Cardiovascular Physiopathology and Genetics Laboratory, headed by Dr. Vicente Andrés, received a donation of €10,000 from the Alexandra Peraut Progeria Association, raised at a fundraising gala last March. The funds will support research on Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome (HGPS), an ultra-rare genetic disease affecting approximately 1 in 20 million people.



CNIC obtains the *Equality in the Workplace* distinction from the Women's Institute

The *Equality in the Workplace* distinction is a mark of excellence recognizing organizations that excel in implementing equality plans and policies across areas such as access to employment, working conditions, work-life balance, shared responsibility, equal pay, inclusive communication, organizational model, and social responsibility. It is governed by Royal Decree 1615/2009, as recently amended by Royal Decree 333/2023.



Dr. Vicente Andrés, Director of Basic Research at the CNIC, accepted the award at a ceremony held as part of a conference organized by the Women's Institute—an autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Equality, chaired by Minister of Equality Ana Redondo—under the slogan “Breaking Barriers, Multiplying Talent.”

Through its Equality Plan, the CNIC promotes and disseminates the principle of equality, ensures the implementation of ethical codes and procedures that support it, and applies policies to prevent all forms of discrimination in recruitment, wages, risk prevention, and work-life balance. These commitments also extend to all activities involving third parties—including public tenders and agreements—through specific gender impact reports.

CNIC participates in the 16th Popular Heart Race to promote cardiovascular prevention

On Saturday, September 27, the CNIC participated in the 16th Heart Popular Race, organized by the Spanish Heart Foundation. The event brought together thousands of participants united by a shared goal: raising awareness of the importance of physical activity in preventing cardiovascular disease. The CNIC's participation reflects its ongoing commitment to healthy lifestyle habits and public cardiovascular health.

