IRCCS REGINA ELENA NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE, ROME
in collaboration with **THE MANCHESTER CELL-MATRIX CENTRE, THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER, AND THE CANCER RESEARCH UK MANCHESTER INSTITUTE**

8th WORKSHOP IRE ON TRANSLATIONAL ONCOLOGY

EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX IN CANCER: TUMOR MICROENVIRONMENT DYNAMICS AND TRANSLATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

ROME, OCTOBER 19-20, 2026

IRCCS REGINA ELENA NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

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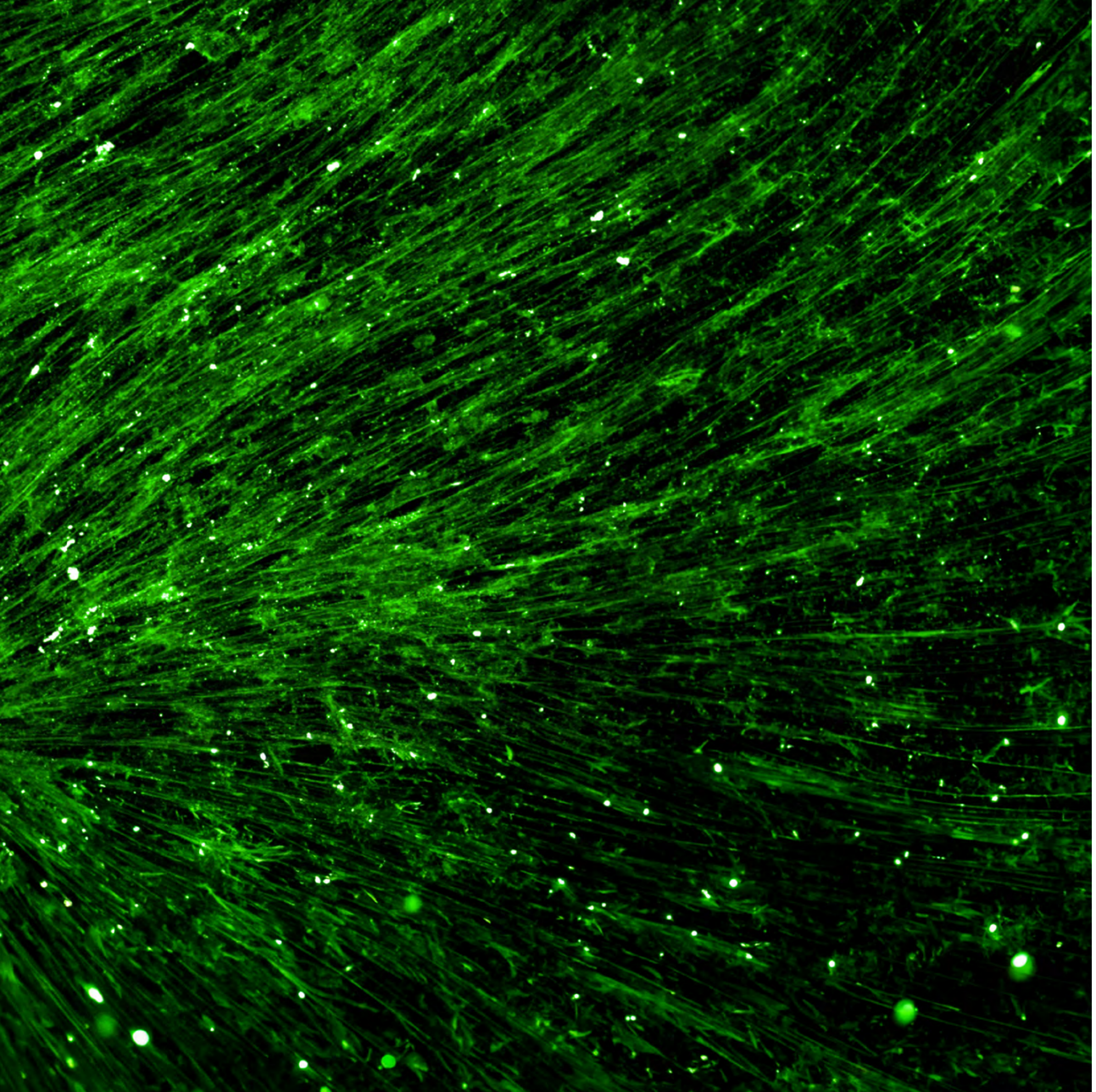
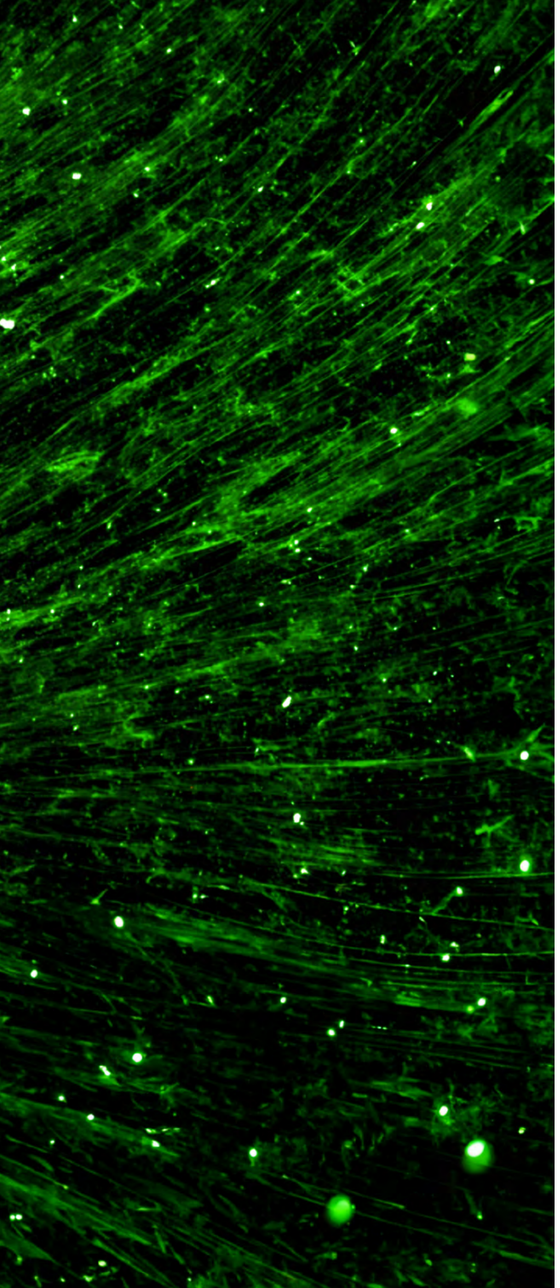


WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The extracellular matrix (ECM) is a dynamic and active component of the tumour microenvironment that shapes cancer progression, metastasis and therapeutic response through its biochemical, structural and mechanical properties. By orchestrating the interactions among tumour cells, fibroblasts, immune cells and the vasculature, the ECM plays a critical role in tumour evolution and treatment outcome.

Recent advances in spatial omics, imaging technologies, engineered models and computational approaches are transforming our understanding of ECM biology. However, integrating these discoveries into clinically relevant biomarkers and therapeutic strategies remains a major challenge.

This workshop will bring together leading experts in ECM biology, mechanobiology, immunology and oncology to discuss how ECM dynamics regulate tumour-stroma interactions and how these insights can be translated into innovative diagnostic and therapeutic opportunities. Through interdisciplinary dialogue, the meeting aims to foster collaborations that will accelerate ECM-driven advances in cancer research and patient care.



ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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Rome, Italy

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PROGRAM

MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2026

13.30-14.00
Welcome Address
Livio De Angelis
CEO Istituti Fisioterapici Ospitalieri
Rome, Italy

Giovanni Blandino
Scientific Director
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

Claus Jørgensen
Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

SESSION I

Chairpersons:
Mario Colombo
IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori
Milano, Italy

Anna Bagnato
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

14.00-14.30
Lecture sponsored by
the Italian Foundation for Cancer Research
FORCING INFLAMMATION-DEPENDENT TUMOR INITIATION AND PROGRESSION
Valerie Weaver
University of California
San Francisco, USA

14.30-15.00
THE DUAL ROLE OF INFLAMMATION IN CANCER IMMUNITY
Santiago Zelenay
Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

15.00-15.30
TARGETING PIN1 TO BREAK ECM-DRIVEN IMMUNE EVASION
Giannino Del Sal
University of Trieste
Trieste, Italy

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-16.30
MECHANOSENSITIVE ADHESION NETWORKS IN CANCER: LINKING THE EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX TO GENE REGULATION
Adam Byron
The University of Manchester
Manchester, UK

16.30-17.00
BEYOND THE ACTIN CYTOSKELETON: MENA AS AN ARCHITECT OF THE EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX AND THE TUMOR IMMUNE MICROENVIRONMENT IN LUNG CANCER
Paola Nisticò
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

17.00-17-30
STROMA-RELATED IMMUNOSUPPRESSIVE AND IMMUNOCOMPETENT NICHES IN CANCER
Fatima Mechta-Grigoriou
Institut Curie,Paris, France

TUESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2026

YOUNG INVESTIGATOR SESSION

Chairpersons:

Marta Di Martile
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

Roberto Dinami
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

09.30-09.45
THE ROLE OF PLASTICITY AND HETEROGENEITY IN SMALL CELL LUNG CANCER INVASION
Martin Baker
University of Manchester
Manchester, UK

09.45-10.00
THE LOX-MENA-ECM AXIS TO DEFINE SPATIAL IMMUNITY AND IMMUNOTHERAPY RESPONSE IN NSCLC PATIENTS
Nicla Porciello
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

10.00-10.15
THE ENDOTHELIN A RECEPTOR SENSES STIFF EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX TO GUIDE DRUG RESPONSE IN HIGH-GRADE SEROUS OVARIAN CANCER
Piera Tocci
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

10.15-10.30
THE ROLE OF MATRIX STIFFNESS IN DRIVING HEAD AND NECK CANCER RECURRENCE
Martina Dragonetti
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-11.15
FINDING KRAS'S PARTNERS IN CRIME
Nasir Haider
Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

11.15-11.30
METABOLIC PLASTICITY OF CANCER-ASSOCIATED FIBROBLASTS ENABLES STROMAL REPROGRAMMING IN PANCREATIC DUCTAL ADENOCARCINOMA
Francesca Romana Auciello
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

11.30-11.45
FROM METABOLIC STRESS TO HEPATOCARCINOGENESIS: HIPK2 ROLE IN SHAPING THE PREMALIGNANT MICRO-ENVIRONMENT
Silvia Sozzi
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

11.45-12.00
AGE-ASSOCIATED CHANGES IN THE LUNG MICROENVIRONMENT THAT IMPACT MELANOMA METASTASIS
Lutong An
Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

12.30-14.00 Light lunch

SESSION II

Chairpersons:

Claus Jørgensen
Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

Paola Nisticò
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

14.00-14.30
A 3D MORPHOGENETIC BLUEPRINT FOR METASTATIC OUTGROWTH IN BREAST CANCER
Stefano Piccolo
University of Padua
Padua, Italy

14.30-15.00
TARGETING PATHOPHYSIOLOGICAL ECM REMODELING IN TUMOR MICROENVIRONMENTS
Irit Sagi
Weizmann Institute of Science
Rehovot, Israel

15.00-15.30
TISSUE PHASE TRANSITION IN CANCER EVOLUTION AND IMMUNE RESPONSE
Giorgio Scita
IFOM – The AIRC Institute of Molecular Oncology
University of Milan
Milan, Italy

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-16.30
THERAPY-INDUCED EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX REMODELING AND ITS POTENTIAL CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS
Yuval Shaked
Technion – Israel Institute of Technology
Haifa, Israel

16.30-17.00
ECM AND IMMUNOTHERAPY RESISTANCE IN HEAD AND NECK CANCER
Amanda Psyrri
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), School of Medicine
Athens, Greece

17.00-17.30
CLOSING REMARKS
Giovanni Blandino
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

Claus Jørgensen
Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

FACULTY

Lutong An
Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

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Rome, Italy

Martina Dragonetti
IRCCS Regina Elena National Cancer Institute
Rome, Italy

Nasir Haider
Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

Claus Jørgensen
Deputy Director of the Cancer Research
UK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

Fatima Mechta-Grigoriou
Institut Curie,
Paris, France

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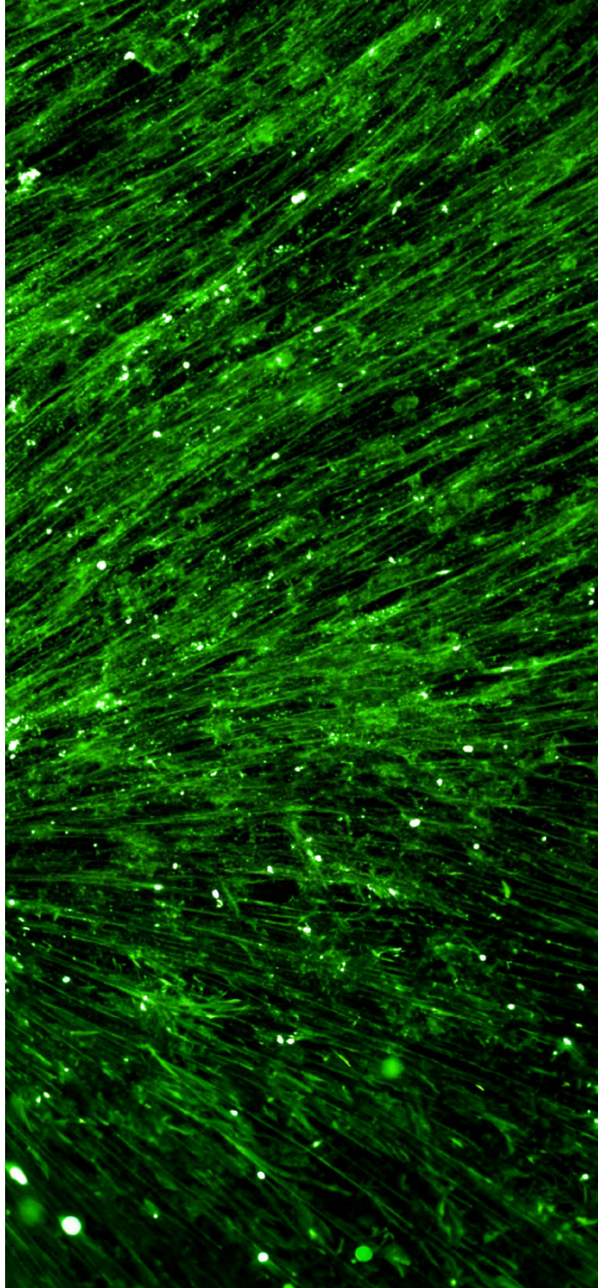

GENERAL INFORMATION

VENUE

Regina Elena National Cancer Institute - Centro formazione Bastianelli
via Fermo Ognibene, 23 - Rome

REGISTRATION

Registration is free of charge. Please complete the process to register at our site **www.mitcongressi.it**

CME INFORMATION

The event will be accredited by the Italian Ministry of Health.
The CME Provider is IFO - Istituti Fisioterapici Ospitalieri (ID 1270).
This CME event will be held in presence (CME - RES).
Course ID: 1270-495338 - The workshop duration is 8 hours - CME: 5,6
The scientific sessions will be accredited for BIOLOGIST, MEDICAL DOCTOR (ALL THE MEDICAL SPECIALTIES).

HOW TO GET CME CREDITS

- **Register on https://ifo.sailportal.it/**
- **Select the course from the catalogue.**
- **Click on "Access the course".**
- **Participants are required to attend at least 90% of the accredited sessions and the detection of the presence.**
- **At the end of the event, you will receive 2 paper questionnaires (satisfaction and evaluation questionnaire). You will need a score of 75% or higher on the learning assessment questionnaire.**
- **CME Certificate will be available on the Educational Platform in your personal area.**

For any further information please contact dirscire@ifo.it

CME PROVIDER & SCIENTIFIC SECRETARIAT

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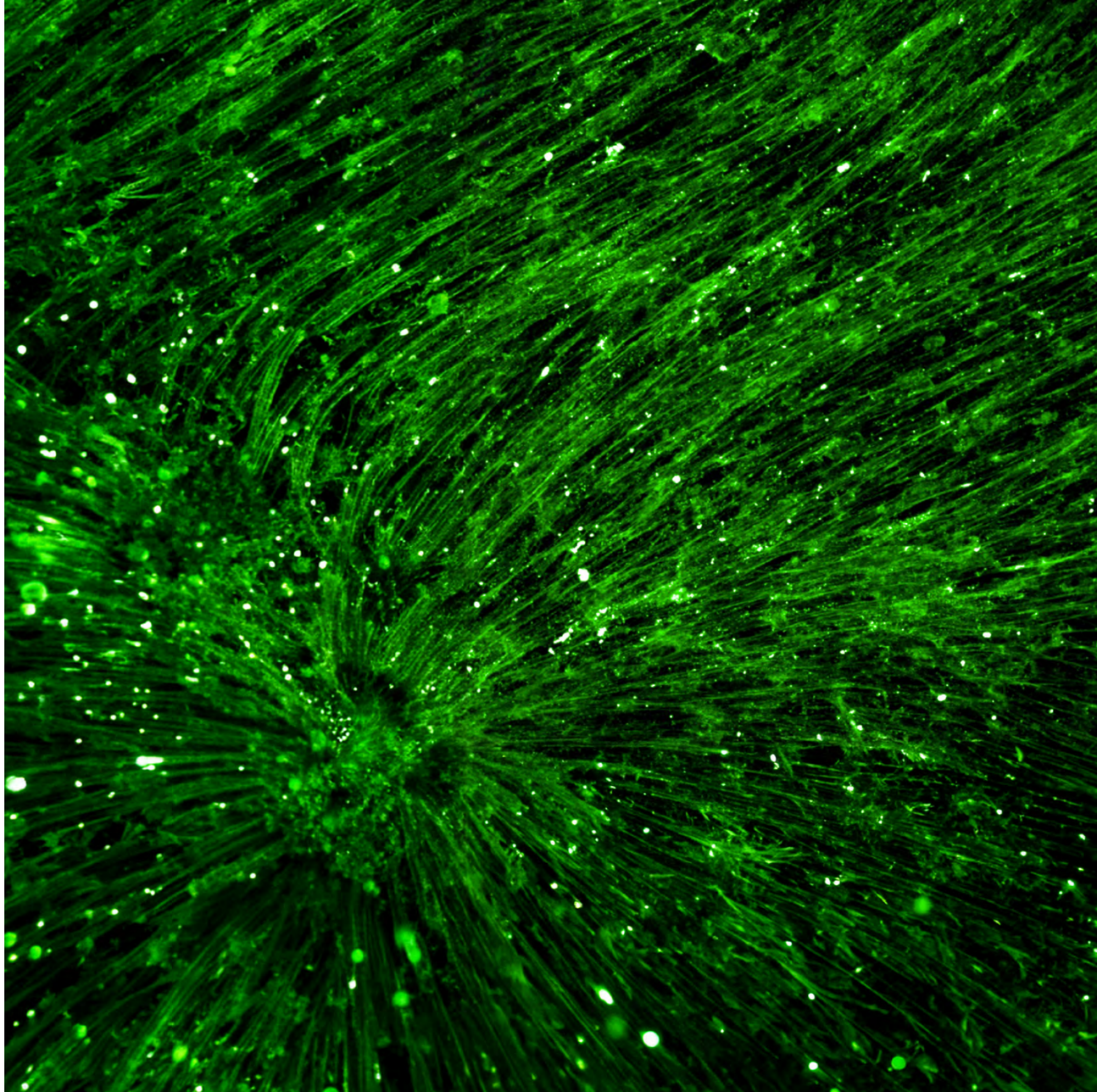

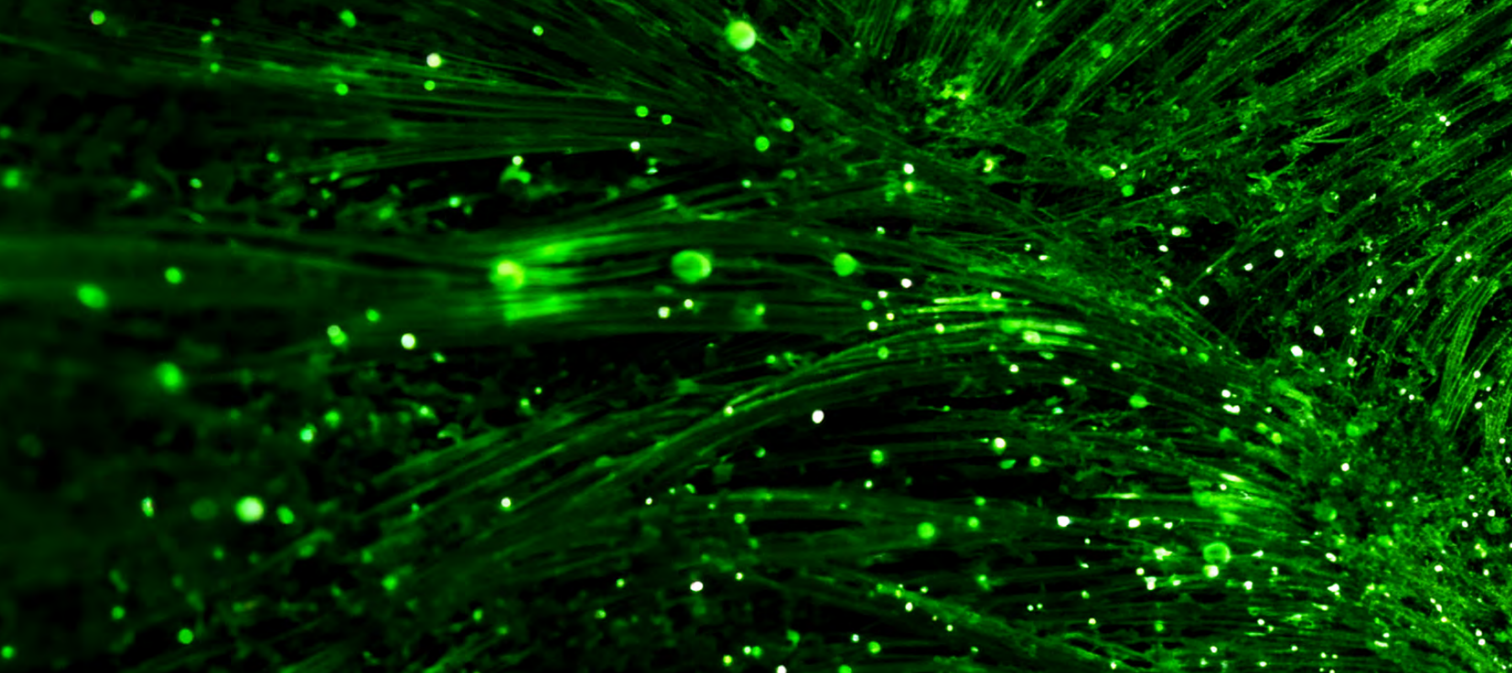

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