

# Urology

## Group leader

Palou Redorta, Juan (F. Puigvert)

## Researchers

- Algaba Arrea, Fernando (F. Puigvert)
- Angerri Feu, Oriol (F. Puigvert)
- Breda, Alberto (F. Puigvert)
- Bujons Tur, Ana (F. Puigvert)
- Emiliani Sanz, Esteban (F. Puigvert)
- Errando Smet, Carlos (F. Puigvert)
- Gallioli, Andrea (F. Puigvert)
- Ponce de León Roca, Javier (F. Puigvert)
- Rodríguez Faba, Óscar (F. Puigvert)
- Sanguedolce, Francesco (F. Puigvert)



## DESCRIPTION

The investigation urology group is dedicated to advancing our knowledge of urological diseases and disorders, with a focus on urological malignancies, functional urology, stone disease, pediatric urology, renal transplant, and reconstructive surgery. Our team of expert clinicians collaborates to conduct innovative studies and clinical trials to improve patient outcomes and develop new treatments. The majority of research topics are clinical, with a special interest in technological advancements, rare urological diseases and biomarkers.

## MAIN LINES OF RESEARCH

The Urology Clinical and Basic Research group has been an associated group of IIB Santpau since its inception.

The group conducts clinical translational research in the field of urinary tract diseases along different lines from urological cancer, functional urology, stone disease, paediatric urology, renal transplant and reconstructive surgery.

Existing lines of research are:

In the area of urological cancer, Dr. Breda is leading several projects mainly related to liquid biopsy in urothelial and prostate cancers, focal treatment of prostate cancer, methodology in enhancing lymph nodes in prostate and upper urinary tract disease, intraoperative detection of tumour grade with confocal endomicroscopy to facilitate clinical decisions and avoid unnecessary procedures, the

role of systemic chemotherapy in upper urinary tract tumours and the role of PET-CT in renal masses and 3D reconstruction in to facilitate complex renal surgeries.

In testis cancer, we are evolving to minimally invasive surgery with robotic retroperitoneal dissection in metastatic disease and improving the diagnosis using the sentinel node technique in penile cancer, and also reconstructive surgery after partial penectomy plus laparoscopic lymphadenectomy of the groin.

Dr. Palou is primarily leading projects in bladder cancer: there is a collaborative translational research line on predictive biomarkers in NMIBC progression with the Inflammatory Group and Malmö University. He is leading several studies with new drugs (durvalumab, sansalimab, vedotin enfortumab, etc). Bladder preservation in high-grade tumours is a difficult decision, and the possibility to detect those who will progress will allow earlier aggressive treatment. Another line of research is the robotic nerve sparing surgery in cystectomy and neobladder reconstruction to preserve sexual function after radical surgery. He is also leading robotic retroperitoneal surgery in testis cancer and reconstructive surgery.

In the paediatric urology unit, led by Dra. Bujons, there are several topics under research related to long-term follow-up in reconstructive surgery, sexual function in neurological diseases and fertility in patients after scrotal surgery (varicocele, orchidopexy). This includes the study of the usefulness of botuline toxine in hyperactive bladder in children, PH urine studies for the risk of infection in urinary tract anomalies, optimisation of irrigation fluids for the prevention of unnoticed perioperative hypothermia in children during RIRS and NLP and the Autologous fat graft with stem cells as a treatment for abdominal wall defects in patients with complex exstrophy epispadias.

In the urolithiasis line chaired by Dr. Angerri, clinical and basic research is performed in the following topics: laser energy devices for stone destruction (holmium, thulium, superthulium) comparative outcomes and settings, collaboration with IIBSantPau General and Digestive Surgery Group for primary hiperparatiroidism, treatment and pH urine research for the management of cystinuria. In cystinuria, extensive collaborative research is

being conducted with IDIBELL for its genetic study, and there is active participation in the National Registry for this Rare Disease. New study to use Artificial Intelligence in the recognition of stone composition during endoscopic surgery, using our stone library of more than 50.000 stones analysed through infrared espectrofotometry.

The functional urology Unit by Dr. Errando is evaluating the clinical results of different surgical techniques and devices in incontinence in both sexes such as paraurethral substance injections, laparoscopic colposacropepy technique, long term functional results of botox in males, functional results of the transcavernous artificial urinary sphincter implantation in high risk patients, usefulness of probiotics in the prevention of recurrent urinary tract infections, acidification of urine pH for women with recurrent UTIs. A quality of life research collaboration with the Centre de Fisioteràpia de Barcelona RAP Barcelona (Abomino-Pelvic Reeducation) associated with the UAB Vall d'Hebron, has recently begun to evaluate clinical evaluation tools for patients with low urinary tract dysfunction.

The renal transplantation unit, led by Dr. Breda, is investigating 3D reconstruction models to facilitate renal transplants, aiming for a better preservation of the kidney. The group is establishing the robotic renal transplant all over Europe and undergoing analysis of the urogenital tumours in renal transplant patients to update and change daily practice.

BPH surgery is one of the most common in urology and the group of Dr. Ponce de León is investigating the way to perform surgery with preservation of anterograde ejaculation with different methodologies (TURP, Rezum). The group also studies the use of the Rezum system (intraprostatic vaporisation) in BPH, the quality of life of patients who had undergone urethroplasty due to urethral stenosis, and the use of oral mucosa for urethroplasties. A recent national collaboration for an Urethroplasties Registry has recently begun. In reconstructive urethral surgery and BPH, Dr Ponce de León is leading an international research prospective study on prostate inflammation to validate a clinical nomogram in patients with lower urinary symptoms, as well as a prospective

multicenter study on the effect of buccal mucosa extraction on patients' quality of life.

Dr. Gallioli leads the clinical coordination within the group. Mrs Vanessa Muñoz and nurse Ana Palomino are the coordinators of individual clinical studies and trials. They are key pieces to continue with the ongoing studies of the department.

## SCIENTIFIC CHALLENGES

- -To continue the national and international positions that increase the scientific networking of the department.
- -Participate in and evolve in the elaboration of European Guidelines.
- -Continue in basic and clinical research across the different established areas.
- -Continue and improve relations with industry (pharmaceuticals, medical devices industries, and biotechnology companies) to stay at the forefront in the development of new compounds and surgical techniques.

## SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

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