

Dr. Maria Ikonomopoulou

Senior researcher and Head of Research Line in Translational Venomics



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Dr. Maria Ikonomopoulou is a Senior Research TALENTO Fellow (Program of excellence in research by the Madrid Government) and leads the Translational Venomics Lab at IMDEA-Food Institute in Madrid. She had been in Australia for over 15 years before returned to Europe in 2017 with the award of the Marie Curie “AMAROUT” Fellowship to conduct her independent research in Spain. She has international research experience in biology and biotechnology in Australia, Spain, Greece, Ireland and Malaysia and has been successfully collaborating with the industry for over ten years. Dr. Ikonomopoulou holds a BSc in Agricultural Technology from the Technological Educational Institute in Western Macedonia in Greece and part of her degree was conducted in the Biotechnology Department at the Teagasc-Moorepark Research Centre in Ireland (Leonardo Da Vinci EU Program). She has a MSc in Zoology from the University of Tasmania (2003) and a PhD in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Queensland (2009) in Australia (UQ & APAI Fellowships). She has held postdoctoral positions at the University of Queensland and at QIMR Berghofer MRI in Australia.

Objective

Our goal is to build a large and diverse animal-venom biobank for therapeutic purposes.

Research interest

In our group, we focus on the identification, characterization & development of anticancer, anti-aging, senolytic and immunomodulatory bioactive compounds. We use interdisciplinary approaches, including molecular/cell biology, state-of-the-art venomics, animal models of chronic/metabolic diseases and cancer as well as molecular modeling to reveal and modify the key amino acid domains responsible for the activity of venom-derivatives. Our goal is to apply our candidates in the clinic and attract the Biopharma industry for their commercialization applications.

Awards & Appointments

- Honorary Associate Professor, Institute for Biomedical Sciences, The University of Queensland, Australia
- Stakeholder Coordinator, Core Management Committee COST Action CA19144 EUVEN European Venom Network

Memberships

- Mentor in Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Career Development Mentoring Program, The University of Queensland, Australia
- Member of STRATAGEM COST Action CA1704
- Member of Women in STEMM Australia

Personnel

- Dr. Javier Moral Sanz (Senior Postdoc)
- Ms Rachael Ryan (PhD student, co-supervision)
- Ms Sabela Fernandez-Vila (PhD student, co-supervision)
- Ms Ana Vela Sebastian (Research Assistant)

Alumni

- Irrati Torre
- Maria Serra Recuero
- Luz Alonso Dasques
- Beatriz González

Current Grants

Programme: 2018-T1/BIO-11262

Period: 2019-2023

Funding Institution: Talento mod. 1 Project Grant, Madrid Regional Government

Programme: PEJ-2020-AI/BIO-17904

Period: 2021-2023

Funding Institution: Garantia Juvenil funding, Madrid Regional Government