



As we continue to refine our communication channels, we're excited to bring you this month's newsletter packed with engaging content and valuable updates from our vibrant research community. Here's what you can look forward to in this issue:

- A Throwback to the Academic Year Kick-Off Event: Careers beyond Academia
- From Session Chair to Scientific Pitch: A Successful DSR Autumn Meeting for CAPHRI's Marius Smits
- Molecular Insights and Networking: Anne Verkerk Showcases Antibiotic Resistance Research
- Key Findings on Pain and Aging by Saskia Truijen
- Social Context and Intervention Strategies: Sophie Jooren Tackles the Dilemma of Outdoor Tobacco Control
- CAPHRI PhD Candidates Running for Charity
- Registrations are Open for the Public Health Strategy Seminar June 2026
- We're Looking for You - Join the CAPHRI PhD Reps
- Upcoming courses and events
- A look at the PhD defences for September and October

We hope you find this edition both informative and inspiring. Happy reading!



## Academic Year Kick-Off Event: Careers beyond Academia

### CAPHRI news

The CAPHRI PhD Academic Year Kick-Off Meeting 2025 on October 8th was a success! We gained valuable insights into the diverse career paths available to PhD graduates.

The dynamic career panel of professionals who

have transitioned outside the university setting answered the burning questions of PhD candidates. They shared their personal experiences, shedding light on the various career opportunities beyond academic research. It was nice to have so many different perspectives that inspired us to take control of our trajectory, because we are more than our PhD. The snacks and drinks after the career discussion were well appreciated during our deserved break, and afterwards we had a nice pub quiz that stimulated us to combine our knowledge and network with our fellow PhDs.

The next meeting will be fully informal, creating a cosy atmosphere with good snacks and (alcoholic) drinks to celebrate the end of the year during the Christmas Meeting. Hope to see you there!



## From Session Chair to Scientific Pitch: A Successful DSR Autumn Meeting for CAPHRI's Marius Smits

### CAPHRI news

Marius Smits (FPR) recently played a significant role in the Dutch Society for Rheumatology (DSR) Najaarsdagen (Autumn Meeting) in Arnhem.

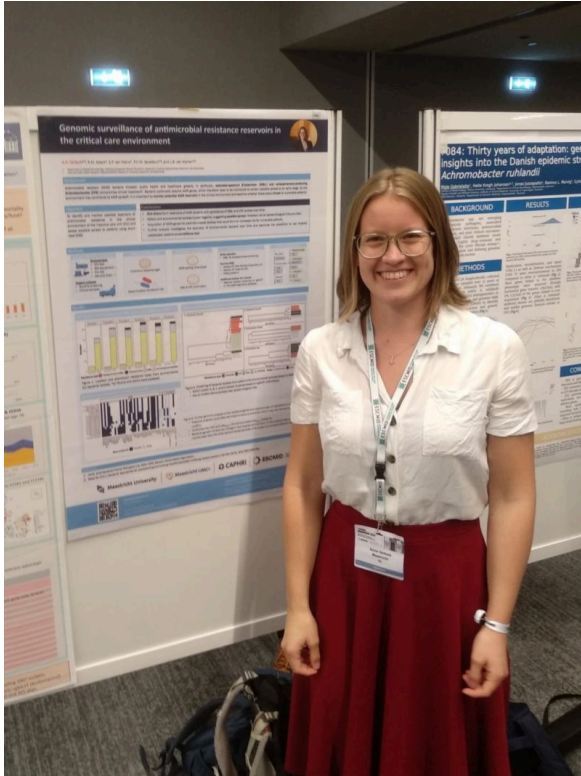
Marius was honoured with the opportunity to serve as a session chair during the two-day event, contributing to the smooth running and intellectual engagement of the meeting. In addition to his role as chair, he successfully presented a "pitch" of their team's recent study.

The presented research focused on the crucial topic of predicting residual disease in axial spondyloarthritis. This work, which aims to improve prognostic capabilities in rheumatology, was highlighted during the congress, underscoring the relevance and impact of research conducted within the CAPHRI school.

Marius described the experience as an "honour" and looked back on "two incredibly inspiring days," noting the value of connecting with fellow experts

and sharing important findings with the wider rheumatology community.

Find out more about Marius' research



## Molecular Insights and Networking: Anne Verkerk Showcases Antibiotic Resistance Research

CAPHRI news

Anne Verkerk (HISP) recently gained valuable international experience by attending her first international conference, the IMMEX XIV 2025 meeting in Porto.

The conference, which focused on molecular microbiology and human health, provided Anne with a prime opportunity to connect with experts and immerse herself in cutting-edge science. She highlighted learning about exciting new developments in molecular typing and particularly enjoyed the insights shared during the bioinformatics session.

The true highlight, however, was presenting her work during the poster session. Anne showcased her ongoing and future research exploring antimicrobial-resistant bacteria in the clinical environment, the environmental reservoirs pose to patients, and the potential for surveillance strategies. This session allowed her to network and meet others working in the field, fostering crucial scientific connections.

Looking ahead, Anne expressed enthusiasm for the final two years of her PhD journey, energized by the knowledge and contacts gained at IMMEX XIV.





## Key Findings on Pain and Aging by Saskia Truijen

CAPHRI news

CAPHRI PhD candidate Saskia Truijen (FPR) is celebrating the culmination of her intensive three-year research project in Rheumatology, which included setting up her own study and collecting data from 450 participants for the STAR study.

Her research on Musculoskeletal Pain (MSP) in The Maastricht Study offers intriguing cross-sectional findings: MSP prevalence does not continue to rise after age 60, and older adults report a less negative mental health impact from pain than middle-aged adults.

Initial cross-sectional results from the STAR study on rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and aging also suggest that while older RA patients have lower physical function, their rate of functional decline with age appears comparable to healthy peers. This outcome may indicate current treatments are successfully limiting functional loss.

These relevant findings emphasize the need for a general, yet adaptable, approach to chronic pain management across age groups. Saskia is now preparing to share her results internationally with a trip to Chicago later this month.

[Find out more about Saskia's research](#)



## Social Context and Intervention Strategies: Sophie Jooren Tackles the Dilemma of Outdoor Tobacco Control

CAPHRI news

We've all accepted that lighting up indoors is a no-go—even on university campuses. But step outside, and enforcing those same smoke-free rules gets complicated. Why is compliance so tricky when smokers are outside?

CAPHRI PhD candidate Sophie Jooren (PHPC) tackled this exact question. Using her background in anthropology and a healthy dose of curiosity about human behaviour, Sophie conducted a realist review to figure out the underlying mechanisms of compliance (or non-compliance) with outdoor tobacco policies in the Netherlands.

Her research, funded by ZonMw, found that success boils down to three core factors: clear communication, accessible support to quit smoking, and the public's acceptance of the policy. For policymakers, this means practical steps are crucial—think removing those sneaky ashtrays still lingering in smoke-free zones, and making sure policy reminders are regular. The national campaign 'The Smoke-free Generation', which focuses on children growing up smoke-free, is a prime example of effective communication.

Conversely, non-compliance is often driven by factors like addiction, feeling stigma, and a lack of faith in the policy's effectiveness or enforcement. Sophie's findings provide a roadmap for regional public health services to create smarter, more effective outdoor interventions. Want the full breakdown of her research and policy tips?

[Read the Nice To Meet You with Sophie here](#)

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## CAPHRI PhD Candidates Running for Charity

### CAPHRI news

A group of CAPHRI PhD candidates from HSR recently laced up their shoes and joined the annual Campusrun Maastricht, supporting the Ronald McDonald Huis Maastricht.

Alongside many other participants, they ran through the Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus, passing Maastricht University, Maastricht UMC+, and the MECC. This event was a great way to combine physical activity with contributing to a meaningful cause.

The group shared: "The atmosphere was great, and the encouragement from the volunteers, especially near the Ronald McDonald House, was truly motivating."

See you next year!?

## Public Health Strategy Seminar for CAPHRI PhD Candidates

### CAPHRI seminar

CAPHRI, together with the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) and the Open Medical Institute (OMI), has set up a Public Health Academy to provide high-level training opportunities. As part of this collaboration, CAPHRI PhD candidates are invited to apply for the seminar Public Health Strategy, taking place from 28 June to 4 July 2026 in Salzburg, Austria.

### Outline seminar

The seminar Public Health Strategy includes:

- Seminar on PH in a nutshell with the introduction to PH Law and PH Leadership.
- Advanced Seminar on PH Law
- Advanced Strategy executive seminar for the PH leaders who will work on introducing change and implementation of legal solutions and change in their work context

### Seminar leaders

Prof. Dr. Kasia Czabanowska is a professor of public health leadership and workforce development and a Chair of the Department of International Health, CAPHRI Institute, Maastricht University, the Netherlands.

Dr. Timo Clemens, is an associate professor at the department of International Health, CAPHRI Institute, Maastricht University, the Netherlands.

Scott Burris, JD is Professor of Law and Public Health at Temple University, where he directs the Center for Public Health Law Research.

### Fee

€300. Including dinners and hotel accommodation. For your travel expenses, there will be a reimbursement up to €200 (after submission of original receipts).

Please register by 31 January 2026 via [caphri-phdcourses@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:caphri-phdcourses@maastrichtuniversity.nl), after consulting your supervisor.

[Find out more](#)



## Join the CAPHRI PhD Representatives Team

### CAPHRI news

Are you a PhD candidate at CAPHRI with a passion for building a strong and supportive community? Do you want to represent your fellow PhDs and help shape the PhD journey at our institution? We are currently looking for new members to represent the OPC and FPR research lines.

As a PhD Representative, you'll be the voice for your peers, acting as a crucial link between PhD candidates and the CAPHRI leadership. This is an excellent opportunity to gain experience in communication, advocacy, and organisation, all while making a tangible impact on the PhD community.

If you're enthusiastic and motivated to help us build an even more vibrant community, we want to hear from you! Please get in touch with the current representatives to learn more about the role and how you can get involved.

Don't hesitate to reach out to us at [caphri-phdreps@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:caphri-phdreps@maastrichtuniversity.nl). We look forward to hearing from you!

[Find out more](#)

[Save the Date and Register](#)

## Events and Courses

**Pélerin symposium - Maastricht**

October 22, 2025

- [Click to explore the details](#)

**FHML Autumn Session - Maastricht**

October 23, 2025

- [Click to explore the details](#)

**BiBB Career Day - Den Bosch**

26 november 2025

- [Click to explore the details](#)

**CAPHRI Research Day 2026 - Maastricht**

June 10, 2026

**Public Health Strategy Seminar June 2026 - Salzburg**

June 28 - July 4, 2026

Application Deadline: January 31, 2026

- [Click to explore the details](#)
- [Register and enhance your skills](#)



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## PhD Ceremonies

### October and November 2025

**Dennis Cornelissen** | VHC/FPR

08-10-2025

"Improving osteoporosis care and fracture prevention with emphasis on adherence. One size does not fit all"

**Lianne Zondag** | PHPC

09-10-2025

"The midwife as influencing factor in clinical decision-making: Exploration of the relationship between personal and professional factors and midwives' clinical decisions about childbirth interventions"

**Jeffrey Chan** | HISP

16-10-2025

"The Impact of Neighborhood Environments on Lifestyle, Socioeconomic Health Disparities, and Cardiovascular Disease"

**Laura Damen** | VHC

27-10-2025



*Good luck and congratulations  
to the CAPHRI PhD's*



["Organising the right care in the right place: Exploring healthcare relocation in the Netherlands from multiple perspectives"](#)

**Lieve Vonken** | PHPC

12-11-2025

**Ganesh Babu Balu Subburaman** | VHC

13-11-2025

"Evidence-Based Management In Eye Hospitals: Drivers, Practices, And Organizational Outcomes"

**Carlijn Wiertz** | FPR

19-11-2025

"From struggle to strength: Post-COVID rehabilitation"

**Chitegetse Archangela Minanago** | PHPC

27-11-2025

"Exposure to Inter-Parental Violence and Child Development: An Exploration in the Context of Tanzania"

[Watch the PhD Defences Live](#)



## Share your research story

Have you recently contributed to a podcast, given an interview, or presented at a conference? Reached a significant milestone in your research? Perhaps you're organizing an event or have an exciting project in the pipeline?

We want to hear from you! Your innovative work and achievements deserve recognition. [Contact our Communications Officer Charlotte Pabst](#) to explore opportunities for featuring your work on our social media channels, website and in our newsletter.

[Share your story!](#)

UMployee

## CAPHRI PhD Community

Have you already discovered our CAPHRI PhD community group on UMployee? In this group you

Navigating through the PhD Journey

## CAPHRI PhD Guide

In the CAPHRI PhD Guide you will find information on all aspects of doing a PhD at CAPHRI, ranging from the training programme, guidelines for

will find the latest news, events and other relevant internal information.

Follow us now!

supervision, and the PhD defense. It contains valuable information for current and prospective PhD students as well as for supervisors.

Check out the CAPHRI PhD Guide

Support

## Contact persons for PhD candidates

Please check out the [CAPHRI website](#) for information and contact persons for PhD candidates.



Maastricht University



Maastricht UMC+



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