

UMCG Cohort Symposium 2026

Programme

12:00 - 12:50

Lunch (Fonteinpatio)

13:00 - 14:00

Opening and keynotes (Rode Zaal)

Keynote 1: From data to better care for women - Dr. Lilian Peters



In this keynote, Associate Professor Lilian Peters presents FemHealthData. The mission of this data infrastructure is to improve women's health across the life course. She introduces how long-term research, cross-domain collaborations, and active return of results form the foundation of a data infrastructure designed to make women's health visible and impactful in research and care.

Keynote 2: Connecting Cohorts & Biobanks to the Dutch AI Factory in Groningen (NLAIF) – Bart Scheerder

How can cohort and biobank researchers benefit from the Dutch AI Factory in Groningen (NLAIF)? This keynote explores practical ways to connect data, samples, metadata and expertise to the NLAIF, enabling secure and responsible AI development with sensitive health data. Bart explains how the UMCG is mobilizing the health and life sciences ecosystem by building use cases, supporting ready-to-run projects, and aligning governance and access with national and European initiatives such as the European Health Data Space (EHDS). The session looks ahead to the AI expertisecentre planned for 2026 and opportunities for early community engagement.

14:00 - 14:45 Breakout sessions round 1

Data-driven innovation: Datapoort - Gateway for external and societal partnerships

How can we enable data-driven collaboration between cohorts, healthcare providers, municipalities, and wider societal stakeholders? In this session, Datapoort will be introduced through a series of real-world examples illustrating how Datapoort can support secure data sharing, interdisciplinary cooperation and evidence-based decision-making across domains, including healthcare and local government.

Mini workshop on communication: How to increase visibility and awareness

In this interactive session, participants will work on developing a low-key, communication strategy for their cohort. The biobank value model will be used as a basis to help identify the unique value of each cohort. Key questions in this sessions will be: who is the target audience you want to reach? Which communication channels are most relevant? And what type of news and information would you like to share per channel? Sophie Meijberg, Communication Officer at the CBCH, will guide participants through the process using a step-by-step approach. By the end of the workshop, you will have a concrete communication strategy in hand, enabling you to take the first steps towards greater visibility and recognition for your cohort.

Use cases: Collaborating with other partners across the care pathway

During this breakout session, three cohorts will present how they have established collaborations with partners across the care pathway. They will discuss the underlying background, organisational prerequisites, and the added value of these collaborations.

- Use case 1: Illness in interaction: using routine vaccinations as a model to study early-life parental pain responses – Elske Hogendoorn (TRAILS and TRAILS NEXT)
- Use case 2: From UMCG to Regional Hospitals: Scaling OncoLifeS Through Regional Partnerships Empowering Collaboration to Transform Cancer Care and Research – Janny Nagel (OncoLifeS)
- Use case 3: Sustainable collaboration in axial spondyloarthritis – Anneke Spoorenberg and Suzanne Arends (GLAS cohort)

14:45 - 15:30

Coffee break and networking

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15:30 - 16:15

Breakout sessions round 2

Data-driven innovation: Valorisation and impact

We all aim to create sustainable and long-lasting impact on patients and the general population, but how do we move from a result or innovation to tangible and lasting impact? Anne Loohuis (general Practitioner and researcher, Eerstelijns geneeskunde en langdurige zorg) together with Craig Grove (business developer, Innovation Center) will share about how they managed to find a way to sustain the URinControl app: a health application for women suffering from urine incontinence. They will share about the choices they made and creative solutions they came up with to create significant and lasting impact.

Let's connect: The Value of Cross-Cohort Collaboration

In this session, Rinse Weersma will talk about how, in the field of the microbiome, he collaborates with both other clinical and population-based cohorts such as Transplantlines and Lifelines. What does this collaboration look like, which data are being used, and what can others learn from it? This unique example demonstrates that collaboration between cohorts is not only feasible, but also highly valuable for advancing research and generating meaningful insights.

Use cases: Applying AI in cohort research

During this breakout session, three cohorts will present use cases demonstrating how they have applied AI in their research. They will outline the underlying research questions, the data and AI methods used, and how AI adds value to their work.

- Use case 1: Data-Driven Insights into the Clinical, Pathological and Genetic Architecture of Neurodegenerative and Psychiatric Disorders - Inge R. Holtman - Rosalind Franklin Fellow, Assistant Professor (Netherlands Brain Bank, Netherlands Neurogenomics Database)
- Use case 2: Rapid Learning Radiotherapy using Real-World Data from prospective cohorts in head and neck cancer: a valuable alternative for randomized controlled trials – Prof. Hans Langendijk (Standard Follow up Program Head and Neck Cancer)
- Use case 3: From Data to Decisions: Explainable Multimodal AI for Early Recognition of Acute Disease - Jie Li, Postdoctoral researcher in the department of Internal Medicine (Acutelines)

16:15 - 17:00

Pitches and closing (Rode zaal)

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