

CiViA DNRF Scientific annual report 2023-2024

1. Annual highlights

Center for Immunology of Viral Infections (CiViA) was officially **launched** on 23 May 2023 in a festive ceremony at Aarhus University (AU) that included speakers from the DNRF, the Dean of AU's Faculty of Health, our Scientific Advisory Board, and our Principal Investigators (PIs). You can see some photos from this event on our website here:

<https://biomed.au.dk/civia/news-and-events>.

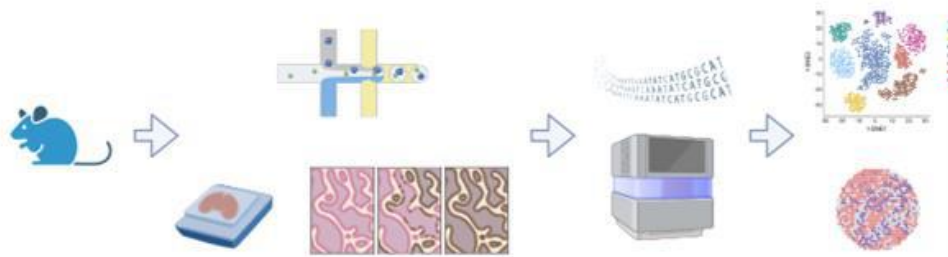
A crucial part of this initial consolidation phase entailed the first **annual retreat** of the entire Center in October 2023. During this 2.5-day event, which over 60 Center members joined, we discussed existing projects and future synergies, as well as more strategic deliberations about the successful course of the Centre. This retreat was kindly supported by Aarhus Universitets Forskningsfond (AUFF).



Group photo of entire CiViA group during first annual retreat at Sandbjerg Gods, October 2023.

Following on from these discussions, we set up a series of regular **meetings** for the entire Center (as hybrid meetings also accessible for colleagues remotely). During these meetings, early-career researchers (ECRs), such as PhD students and postdocs, are invited to present their ongoing or planned projects in an informal atmosphere (coffee/tea and cake are always provided) with their peers. This format allows them to identify together solutions for any potential challenges or pitfalls, and to receive input from Center members outside their own lab groups. This has already resulted in highly fruitful discussions and new collaborations among ECRs. To this end, we also launched three **subgroups**, focusing on methodologies, processes and concepts in immunobiology.

The image below, provided by one of our PhD students, shows a general workflow of our experiments, combining the strengths and capabilities of various groups within the Center.



A schematic diagram illustrating the application process of single-cell technology, starting from sample collection, moving through single-cell sorting and library sequencing, and concluding with data analysis.

Image provided by Xiangning Ding, PhD student.

To further raise the Center's international profile, we have launched a series of **lectures** by international experts (thus far, we could welcome Troels Scheel from the University of Copenhagen, and Leo James from Cambridge University). This lecture series has now been expanded into a cross-Faculty series together with the Infection & Inflammation Network at AU Health and the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics at AU's Faculty of Natural Sciences. We are also in the process of formalising the process for PhD students to obtain credit points for attending these lectures.

Senior members of the Center have been leading in organising this upcoming **conference**:

- 4th Danish Single Cell Symposium: Technology towards Biology and Medicine (Odense, 2-3 May 2024)

We were also pleased to award our first internal **travel grants**, which supported three CiViA ECRs to participate at international meetings, and a scientific exchange grant supporting a short sabbatical by CiViA PI (Trine Mogensen) at Rockefeller University, USA.

These exchanges contributed to deepen existing collaborations with partners at the universities of Gothenburg, Stockholm, Hannover, Rotterdam, and Rockefeller University.

Key scientific aspects underpinning our Center have already been covered in news articles:

- <https://sciencenews.dk/en/how-viral-infection-causes-neurons-to-self-destruct>
- <https://www.bt.dk/samfund/kendt-corona-forsker-i-front-for-nyt-viruscenter>
- <https://www.tv2ostjylland.dk/aarhus/soeren-faar-millioner-til-forskning-i-virus>