



# GERONTE

TRANSFORMING PATIENT CARE



## NEWSLETTER

A STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION  
FROM THE GERONTE CONSORTIUM

ISSUE #IV

Streamlined **Geriatric** and **Oncological** evaluation based on  
IC **Technology** for holistic patient-oriented healthcare  
management for older multimorbid patients  
European Union's Horizon 2020  
research and innovation program.



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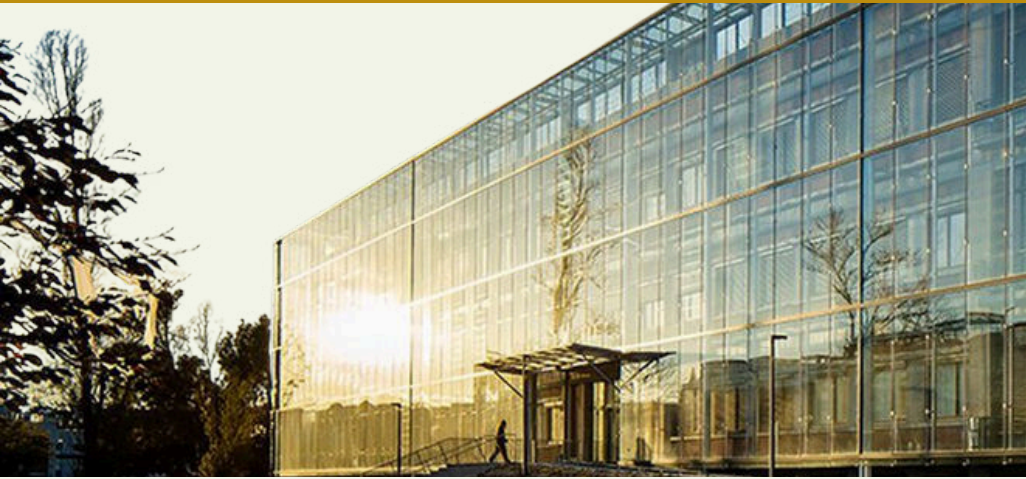
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Università Commerciale  
Luigi Bocconi



**SIOG**  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
OF GERIATRIC ONCOLOGY



## *MESSAGE FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR*

The Silver Tsunami will have dramatic consequences on our health systems in the future. Our current clinical pathways for older patients with or without cancer are not appropriate, leading to excessive risks of complications. Most of them are predictable and could be avoided if the necessary assessment and appropriate measures were proposed in a timely manner by experienced multidisciplinary and multi-professional teams.

We are all convinced that our project, the Geronte care pathway, can solve many of these future problems that the global health systems will face. It is our duty to accumulate data on its performances in terms of patient outcome, health system impact, sociological impact and health economics. It is our duty to demonstrate its performance in the care of multimorbid older patients.

We still have a lot to do, but the multiple problems we have faced, and the solutions we have found together convince me that we are a strong consortium capable of tackling difficult challenges. This will take more time than initially planned, but we will manage to offer future patients and our colleagues a new care pathway supported by a digital tool for a better result. Our ability to work together, complementary skills, and responsiveness despite busy schedules made this possible. I want to thank everyone for being part of this program that can improve our care, certainly for older multimorbid cancer patients, but also probably for all older multimorbid patients. I am proud to be part of this team.

**Prof. Pierre Soubeyran, MD**

Professor of Medical Oncology

University of Bordeaux France



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# *Consortium Meeting*

*in Leuven, Belgium*

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## *Belgium, March 2024*

The traditional yearly GERONTE project meeting was held in Belgium for two days in March 2024. Set against the backdrop of the historic city of Leuven, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and academic excellence, this meeting provided a dynamic platform for collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange that will prove very beneficial for the project's future.



The GERONTE Consortium Meeting held in Leuven, Belgium, in March 2024 has concluded with high hopes for the research into the field of gerontology. Renowned European researchers, practitioners, and experts convened to discuss and plan the future of oncogeriatrics.

One main observation became the golden thread of this meeting: there is not enough research on the oncogeriatric field. Such a lack of data will become a weakness for European healthcare systems in the very near future if we do not address it. Fortunately, the numerous research papers published (open source) by GERONTE project fill in some of this void, and will hopefully inspire other researchers to take on this subject.

Highlights from the meeting include meaningful conversations that resulted in innovative solutions to test in the oncogeriatric field, and important decisions to shape the future of the GERONTE project. For these tasks, the GERONTE Consortium was accompanied by Nicolas MARTELLI and Fred PACCAUD, members of the External Stakeholders Advisory Board (ESAB), and by Katleen FAGARD and Theo van ACHTERBERG, from the Katholieke Universiteit of Leuven.

There is no better way to improve the strategies than meeting experts in different fields and combining their expertise. That is why we sincerely thank all the participants of this meeting. Attendees left inspired and equipped with new knowledge and collaborations to continue advancing the field. The findings from the GERONTE Consortium Meeting are poised to shape the future of gerontology and improve the well-being of older adults worldwide.



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# Consortium Meeting

in Leuven, Belgium

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# *Work Package 1 Reporting*

*Stichting Diakonessenhuis*

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Although the deliverables of Workpackage 1 were finished last year. We were present at the SIOG Annual Meeting in Valencia last November. Nelleke presented her poster on what symptoms we will monitor in GERONTE and how they were chosen. Furthermore, we published the last papers explaining how the input we gathered led to the development of the GERONTE care pathway.

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# *Work Package 3 Reporting*

*Bocconi University*

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**Enhancing care coordination for multimorbid patients involves analyzing existing care pathways and identifying appropriate indicators for their evaluation.**

As part of WP3, Bocconi conducted two main activities aimed at enhancing the coordination of care pathway for multimorbid patients.

1. Analysis of the As-Is Care Pathway: as part of Task 3.5., this activity involves a comprehensive examination of existing care pathways for older multimorbid cancer patients across clinical trial sites in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. More than 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with various stakeholders, including site Principal Investigators, oncologists, geriatricians, nurses, and data experts. These interviews aimed to assess the professionals involved, care settings, activities performed, and overall variability in care processes for multimorbid patients. The analysis provided insights into the current state of care pathways before the implementation of GERONTE, serving as a baseline for future intervention implementation analysis.

2. Definition of a Set of Indicators to Evaluate the Care Pathway for Multimorbid Patients: the literature shows that the current set of indicators to evaluate the care pathway for multimorbid patients are often single-disease-oriented and unable to evaluate the care pathway for multimorbid patients as a whole. This activity focuses on defining a broader set of indicators to assess multimorbidity beyond the trial setting. As part of WP3, Task 3.4, Bocconi is actually conducting a scoping literature review of indicators for evaluating multimorbidity and monitoring the care pathway. The review aims to be comprehensive, exploring indicators related to the quality of care for multimorbid patients across different healthcare systems.

Following the literature review, a panel of experts, including project partners, will discuss the indicators, rate their priority and feasibility, and conduct a feasibility assessment to compile a list of indicators. This dashboard of indicators will extend beyond the indicators listed in previous deliverables and provide valuable insights into managing multimorbidity in various healthcare settings.

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## *Work Package 3 Reporting, continued*

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The preliminary results of these activities were presented at the International Conference on Integrated Care (ICIC), from the 22nd to the 24th of April 2024, in Belfast.

Reference:

Lucia Ferrara, Vittoria Ardito, Valeria D. Tozzi, Lien Degol, Marije Hamaker, Hans Wildiers, Paul Davis, Aurore Barthod-Malat, Celia Fourier, Cindy Kenis, Marion Kret, Simone Mathoulin-Pélissier, Bridget O’Sullivan, Florence Saillour-Glenisson, Christine Schwimmer, Anthony Staines, Vincent Thevenet, Pierre Soubeyran, Rosanna Tarricone (2024). “Innovative Evaluation Methods for Integrated Care Projects: The GerOnTe Project”, 22-24 April 2024, ICIC, Belfast

<https://integratedcarefoundation.org/conference-pages/icic24-interactive-programme>

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## *Work Package 4 Reporting*

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WP4 is responsible for the 2 identical randomized prospective GERONTE clinical trials evaluating the feasibility and effectiveness of the GERONTE intervention.

FRONE is the clinical trial scheduled in France, and TWOBE is the clinical investigation in Belgium and the Netherlands.

FRONE received approval from the CNIL on 14 December 2023. Site Initiation Visits were performed online with the 8 participating centres in France. Patient accrual can start as soon as the digital tool (= patient application and healthcare professional dashboard) is finalized. This is expected later in 2024.

For TWOBE, the SLA (Service Level Agreement) between KULeuven and Institut Bergonie/University de Bordeaux was finalized and completely signed on February 1 2024. The potential start date of patient accrual within TWOBE will be later in time due to recent changes in the digital tool development. These changes have an impact on the contracting with the participating sites and with IRB approval. These topics were discussed at the GERONTE Consortium Meeting in Leuven on 18 and 19 March 2024.



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## *Work Package 4 Reporting, continued*

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### **Contractual and Regulatory Aspects**

After a few months of preparation, the tripartite agreement between Institut Bergonié, University of Bordeaux and UZ Leuven is now signed by all parties. Additionally, other contractual agreements have been in preparation, (data transfer agreements, clinical trial agreements for the TWOBE study).



As stated in the last external newsletter, we applied for an authorization from the CNIL (Commission Nationale Informatique & Libertés - the French National Personal Data Protection Agency) for the FRONE study. After a few months of exchanges with the CNIL, we obtained their approval in December 2023. This was the last regulatory approval required before being able to launch the FRONE study.

Following a request from the CNIL, the FRONE study protocol and informed consent forms were amended and we received approval from the ethics committee in February 2024. In parallel, we have been preparing an amendment to the clinical investigation plan and informed consent forms for the TWOBE study for future submission to competent authorities in Belgium and the Netherlands.

### **Preparation of Study Launches**

Despite new delays in the development of the digital tool postponing the launch of the FRONE and TWOBE studies, University of Bordeaux and UZ Leuven have kept working hard on finalising study documents and translating them into French and Dutch. The remaining three site initiation visits for the FRONE study were done in October and November 2023. Refresh sessions will be planned with the sites before the launch of the FRONE study.

### **Dissemination**

An abstract submitted by Lucia Ferrara entitled “Innovative Evaluation Methods for Integrated Care Projects: The GERONTE Project” was accepted for an oral presentation at the 24th International Conference on Integrated Care (ICIC24), taking place from 22 – 24 April 2024 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Additionally, the GERONTE Trials protocol paper was submitted to the Journal of Geriatric Oncology and was resubmitted in March after a request for minor revisions.



*Lien Degol*

### **Welcome and Goodbye!**

There were a few changes in the coordinating teams, with Kévin Giscard Housinou joining the EUCLID clinical trial unit (University of Bordeaux) as coordinating clinical research assistant in January and Lien Degol sadly leaving the UZ Leuven team in March. Thank you for your dedication and hard work, Lien! You will be missed.



*Kévin Giscard  
Housinou*

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# *Work Package 5 Reporting*

*Dublin City University / Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi*

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## **March 2024 Updates**

DCU will present at the International Integrated Care Conference on GERONTE's comprehensive, and practical approach to evaluating complex and technology-supported interventions. GERONTE's novel approach to evaluating complex and technology-supported interventions combines established and leading evaluating methods, namely Realist research principle, the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Science (CFIR), and the Non-Adoption, Abandonment, and challengers to Scale-up, Spread, and Sustainability of technology in health and social care setting (NASSS). This combination provides a comprehensive evaluation based on established methods, and it has been received positively by those in the evaluation area.

As part of Work Package 5, Dublin City University has completed the internal report documenting the implementation preparation and training conducted by the trail managers across the clinical trial sites and reporting on the common and site-specific challenges.

## **DCU Next Stage**

DCU will continue the data collection and analysis as the intervention is implemented across the trial sites to inform the business, implementation, and economic evaluation.





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# Work Package 6 Reporting

## E-Seniors

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Within the GERONTE project, WP6 is responsible for ensuring stakeholder engagement throughout the duration of the project. Following the various co-creation sessions carried out during the first period of the project, the member partners of WP6 (namely ESE, UBx, DIAK, KUL and DCU) have prepared the first materials to ensure the successful implementation of the GERONTE ICT tool during clinical trials. The first versions of the four training manuals, for patients and clinicians, have been completed and are now being reviewed and refined, while the other training materials, such as videos, will be finalised in the coming months.

In order to present the project to the general public and civil society, E-Seniors took part in the Forums des Associations organised between September and October 2023 in Paris. We presented the latest news from GERONTE and discussed our care pathway concept.



The E-Seniors association also organised two events dedicated specifically to seniors: the Semaine Bleue event (part of the French week dedicated to seniors) on 5 October 2023, and the Galette des Rois gathering on 25 January 2024. This was an opportunity to discuss the GERONTE Project in a convivial atmosphere, and to raise participants' awareness of the importance of a health plan tailored to their needs.

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# Work Package 7 Reporting

SIOG

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## As of March 2024 – 56 publications tracked at Zenodo:

Datasets:	22
Journal Articles:	9
Project Deliverables:	34
Presentations:	10
Abstract (poster):	1
Newsletter:	3

**We are very proud to announce that GERONTE publications have been viewed a total of 5,110 times with 1,535 downloads!**

## In 2024, SIOG will be organising/participating and presenting the GERONTE Project at the following events:

- ASCO 2024
- SIOG Advanced Course (Treviso)
- ESMO 2024 (Barcelona)
- SIOG Annual Meeting 2024 (Montreal)
- SIOG Masterclass in Clinical Trial Design 2024 (Fribourg)
- ESMO Asia 2024 (Singapore)

*Read more on our website - <https://geronteproject.eu/>*

*Explore our publication library by visiting the [GERONTE Zenodo](#) community.*





# PUBLICATIONS

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As the GERONTE project progresses, our consortium partners regularly publish peer-reviewed articles on the results of their work in the project and collaborations with other experts. Below are some of the most recent publications.

- A care pathway for older patients with multimorbidity including cancer – Design of the GERONTE pathway.  
Seghers, P. A. L. N., Rostoft, S., O’Hanlon, S., Degol, L., Kenis, C., Wildiers, H., Soubeyran, P., & Hamaker, M. E. (2024).  
Journal of Geriatric Oncology, 15(2), 101654.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jgo.2023.101654> - <https://zenodo.org/records/10580705>  
This paper describes the GERONTE care pathway by describing its phases, components and all involved stakeholders
- Self-reported electronic symptom monitoring in older patients with multimorbidity treated for cancer: Development of a core dataset based on expert consensus, literature review, and quality of life questionnaires.  
Seghers, P. A. L. (Nelleke), Hamaker, M. E., O’Hanlon, S., Portielje, J. E. A., Wildiers, H., Soubeyran, P., Coolbrandt, A., & Rostoft, S. (2024).  
Journal of Geriatric Oncology, 15(1), 101643. // <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jgo.2023.101643> - <https://zenodo.org/records/10613356>  
This paper describes the selection procedure of the symptoms that will be monitored by the patient app and their frequency of monitoring
- How to incorporate chronic health conditions in oncologic decision-making and care for older patients with cancer? – a survey among healthcare professionals – Accepted in Journal of European Geriatric Medicine
- GERONTE project: Combining Realist Research and established implementation and technology frameworks to implement and evaluate a structured technology-supported care pathway.  
O’Sullivan, B., Staines, A., Davis, P., White, C., Connolly, R., O’Hanlon, S., Lehn, E., Hamaker, M., Nelleke, Corrigan, T., White, C. Fourrier, C., Soubeyron, P.  
GERONTE’s structured and comprehensive approach to implementation and evaluation aims to provide a structured, replicable, and user-friendly way to frame and analyse the intervention and its implementation in the multiple different contexts in which GERONTE is being tested.

***Where can you learn more about the GERONTE Project?  
As the Consortium progresses towards completing its objectives,  
you can find more through the GERONTE Zenodo community.***



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