

DUTCH UMCS: STRENGTHENING EUROPE'S HEALTH THROUGH RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Factsheet

Europe faces major health challenges. Ageing populations, the growing burden of chronic disease, escalating healthcare costs, and the persistent threat of emerging infections are placing unprecedented pressure on health systems. Addressing these challenges demands sustained, strategic investment in health research and innovation as a cornerstone of Europe's resilience, competitiveness, and societal wellbeing. In addition, it requires the leading health research organisations in Europe to strengthen their collaboration and deliver results. The seven Dutch university medical centers (UMCs), united in UMCNL, combine patient care, research, education and valorisation in one integrated environment that is unique in Europe.

Key characteristics of the Dutch UMCs:

- Fully integrated ecosystem: seamless connection between clinical practice, research, education and societal impact
- Scientific excellence at scale: leading contributors to Europe's biomedical and health research output
- Economic and societal impact: key drivers of the life sciences and health innovation ecosystem
- European leadership: highly active as coordinators and partners in European research collaborations



Strategic Focus Areas of Dutch UMCs

The Dutch UMCs focus on research domains where integrated clinical expertise and advanced scientific capabilities can deliver the greatest societal impact. Our most important research areas include:



Prevention and population health



Personalised and precision medicine



Regenerative medicine and advanced therapies



Data-driven healthcare and artificial intelligence

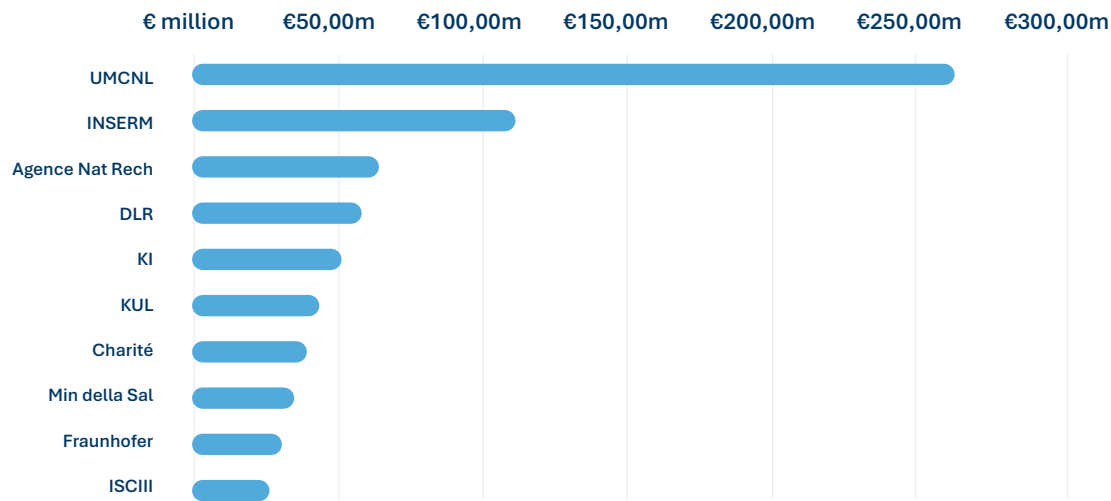


Pandemic preparedness and infectious diseases research



Rare diseases research

The vanguard of European Health research: Top 10 EU-contributions per organisation in Horizon Europe Health cluster



Source: European Commission, Horizon Dashboard, July 2026. Notes: Non-competitive subsidies have been excluded. To allow comparison with collective research units like Inserm, the contribution to the Dutch UMCs has been combined. Individually all 7 UMCs are in the top 20. Total research contributions to UMCs under Horizon Europe exceed €500 million.

Policy priorities

The Dutch UMCs are strong advocates of a health research agenda that enables effective translation of discoveries into societal impact. To realise this, it is vital to achieve:

1. A strong, dedicated position for health within European research and innovation policy
2. End-to-end support for the R&I pipeline, from fundamental discovery to clinical uptake and system implementation
3. Investment in world-class research infrastructures and interoperable European health data ecosystems
4. Long-term, trust-based European partnerships that enable critical mass and continuity
5. Simplified funding instruments and reduced administrative burden to maximise impact and participation

Dutch UMCs – a trusted partner for health in Europe

UMCNL and its members stands ready to work with European institutions, member states, and research & innovation partners to strengthen Europe's health, resilience, and competitiveness. We welcome research collaborations that help ensure the translation of scientific breakthroughs into better health for European citizens and are more than willing to share our expertise with policy makers to support informed decision making. Europe needs strong health research. Dutch UMCs help deliver it.



For more information and examples of our work, visit umcnl.nl

E-mail: umcnl@umcnl.nl
Telephone: +3130 273 98 80

Oudlaan 4
3515 GA Utrecht
The Netherlands

UMCNL is the umbrella organization of the UMCs. UMCNL is active in various regional, national, and international networks. In the political sphere, UMCNL represents the interests of the UMCs.

