

EAA Andrology Training Center  
Centre Report

**2019**



University Hospitals Leuven, Gasthuisberg  
Andrology unit  
Herestraat 49  
3000 Leuven  
Belgium

## **CENTRE REPORT**

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### **History of Center**

The Leuven andrology center is more than 50 years old. The first pioneer and founder of andrology in Leuven was Professor Omer Steeno. He started an andrology outpatient clinic as well as a sperm lab in 1966 within the division of endocrinology, after following a specific andrology training in Germany and the USA.

From the early days on, there has been a very active andrological research interest in Leuven. Guido Verhoeven started a research lab investigating the role of androgens in spermatogenesis. Frank Claessens and Dirk Vanderschueren now continue this research line. Currently also other non-reproductive targets of sex steroid action such as bone, muscle and more recently brain and kidney are investigated within the center.

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### **Organization of the center**

The clinical activity of the Leuven andrology center is characterized by a close collaboration between the division of urology (Maarten Albersen, Frank Van der Aa, Guy Bogaert, and Koen Van Renterghem) and endocrinology (Dirk Vanderschueren, Leen Antonio, Phillipe Marcq and Brigitte Decallonne). Both divisions have specific andrology outpatient clinics and offer tertiary management and treatment as well as training for the full spectrum of andrological pathology. The position of the andrological care programs within the framework of the hospital is shown in the figure.

The andrology centre is responsible for the diagnostic sperm lab (director Carl Spiessens) and for the cryopreservation of sperm (both donor banking and banking for oncological patients) as well as the surgical care of andrological patients (Maarten Albersen).

There is also close interaction with the fertility center. The andrologists are involved in the clinical care of patients suffering from male subfertility as well as the donor insemination program. Regular clinical multidisciplinary staff meetings for case discussions are organized (andrologist, gynaecologist, genetic counselor and sexologist).

Furthermore, the andrologists and endocrinologists are involved in the medical steering committee for hormonal assays. In recent years, we were able to develop and validate specific LC-MS/MS assays for sex steroid hormone measurements (Dirk Vanderschueren, Brigitte Decallonne).

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**Educational activities**

The master of medicine contains introductory courses for endocrinology and urology, also covering basic aspects of andrology. Every year, several medical students do a master thesis in the field of andrology.

Andrology is not a recognized specialty in Belgium. However, specialists in training for internal medicine, endocrinology and urology follow some theoretical andrology courses and participate to the andrology outpatient clinics. Urologists are trained in andrological surgical interventions.

In addition to this basic training, there is an opportunity for a more dedicated andrology track for those urologists and endocrinologists who want to obtain the EAA certification of clinical andrologist. This program may also involve clinical research.

Furthermore, there is a specific andrology course (20 hours) in the master of sexology (Organized by Dirk Vanderschueren and Maarten Albersen). Also from the master of sexology, each year several students choose our andrology centre for their master thesis.

The andrology centre is also responsible for the andrological training of ESHRE-fellows in reproductive medicine.

In January 2018 the center organized the first EAA-postgraduate course in Belgium, in collaboration with the centers of Ghent and Brussels.

In November 2018 we had a visiting fellow from Portugal (Dr. Nelson Cunha).

Prof. Vanderschueren and dr. Antonio were actively involved in the writing of EAA guidelines.

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**Research activities**

The primary research focus of the center has been on androgen signaling and action. The research coordinator of this program is Frank Claessens. Our research program investigates different aspects of androgen action from bench to bedside, including epidemiological, clinical, fundamental as well as translational research (animal models of androgen action). The core collaboration is between the lab of clinical and experimental endocrinology (Dirk Vanderschueren, Leen Antonio, Brigitte Decallonne) and molecular and cellular endocrinology (Frank Claessens). Our research is supported by a university grant as well as governmental grants. There are actually 2 postdocs and 9 PhD Students. The center also intensively participates in the European Male Ageing

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Study (EMAS). Both at the ECA meetings of 2016 and 2018 we had poster presentations of our research.

From October 2018 til January 2019 dr. Antonio did a fellowship at the EAA centre of Copenhagen (Centre director dr. Niels Jørgensen), supported by an EAA travel grant.

For male sexual dysfunction we have established basic research lines (Maarten Albersen, Frank Van der Aa, Dirk De Ridder) in the study of the pathophysiology or erectile dysfunction following prostatectomy (1 PhD student) and in Peyronie's disease (1 PhD student) and established a fund for the study of Peyronie's disease. Furthermore, we are studying the treatment of penile fibrosis (both cavernous Fibrosis and Peyronie's disease) with stem cell therapy (1 PhD student).

Furthermore we are recognized as referral centre for penile cancer which is obviously closely linked to andrological pathology. Clinical oncological and functional outcomes research is performed in penile cancer.

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### **Clinical activities**

The clinical activities of the center include a coordinated program of clinical care of andrological patients. The clinical care is organized in specific clinical pathways (male reproductive disorders, male sexual dysfunction, male hypogonadism, gynecomastia, Klinefelter syndrome...). Clinical care consist of:

- 1) Diagnosis, counselling, medical treatment and management of andrological disorders in the two outpatient clinics of andrology within the divisions of endocrinology and urology (Dirk Vanderschueren, Leen Antonio, Maarten Albersen). These clinics are organized in the same hospital. There is close interaction and referral between the two divisions, as well as with the fertility center.
- 2) Nurse-led clinics for counseling and education of patients with male sexual dysfunction.
- 3) Laboratory diagnosis of andrology disorders which involve not only the sperm lab but also the genetics and hormonology labs.
- 4) Radiological diagnosis of andrological disorders with the radiological department (director Raymond Oyen).
- 5) Surgical treatment of andrology disorders within the Urology division.
- 6) Sexological as well as fertility counselling within the hospital setting (Director Paul Enzlin).

**Name and address of Centre**

University Hospitals Leuven, Gasthuisberg  
 Andrology unit  
 Herestraat 49  
 3000 Leuven  
 Belgium

**Type of Centre**

University	<input type="checkbox"/>
University Hospital	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Private Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

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**1. Director**

Dirk Vanderschueren, MD PhD

Academician     Affiliated Member     Clinical Andrologist

**2a. Clinical responsible**

Maarten Albersen, MD PhD

Academician     Affiliated Member     Clinical Andrologist

**2b. Clinical responsible**

Leen Antonio, MD, PhD

Academician     Affiliated Member     Clinical Andrologist

**2c. Clinical responsible**

Brigitte Decallonne, MD, PhD

Academician     Affiliated Member     Clinical Andrologist

**2d. Clinical responsible**

Philippe Marcq, MD

Academician     Affiliated Member     Clinical Andrologist

### 3. Present Staff (*Senior Scientists*)

- 1) Name Dirk Vanderschueren  
 Degree MD, PhD  
 Speciality Clinical endocrinology  
 Academician  Affiliated Member  Clinical Andrologist
- 2) Name Frank Claessens  
 Degree PhD  
 Speciality Molecular endocrinology  
 Academician  Affiliated Member  Clinical Andrologist
- 3) Name Carl Spiessens  
 Degree PhD  
 Speciality Embryologist – head of clinical andrology lab  
 Academician  Affiliated Member  Clinical Andrologist
- 4) Name Maarten Albersen  
 Degree MD, PhD  
 Speciality Urology  
 Academician  Affiliated Member  Clinical Andrologist
- 5) Name Brigitte Decallonne  
 Degree MD, PhD  
 Speciality Clinical endocrinology  
 Academician  Affiliated Member  Clinical Andrologist
- 6) Name Leen Antonio  
 Degree MD, PhD  
 Speciality Clinical endocrinology  
 Academician  Affiliated Member  Clinical Andrologist

**Additional staff**  
**MD/Biologists/Chemists**

- 1) Name Philippe Marcq  
 Degree MD  
 Speciality Clinical endocrinology  
 Full time/part time Part time  
 Academician  Affiliated Member  Clinical Andrologist
- 2) Name Paul Enzlin  
 Degree PhD  
 Speciality Sexology  
 Full time/part time Full time  
 Academician  Affiliated Member  Clinical Andrologist

**Specialists**

- 1) Name Hilde Toelen (sexology)  
 2) Name Marlies Meerssman (sexology)

**Postdocs**

- 1) Name Christine Helsen  
 2) Name Florian Handle

**PhD Students**

- 1) Name NaRi Kim  
 2) Name Rougin Khalil  
 3) Name Lisa Moris  
 4) Name Sarah El Kharraz  
 5) Name Roy Eerlings  
 6) Name Elien Smeets

**Nurses**

- 1) Name Annelies Buelens  
 2) Name Hilde Morobé  
 3) Name Sofie Vandenhoeck  
 4) Name Sophie Achten  
 5) Name Renka Van Heyste  
 6) Name Katrien VanSteevoort  
 7) Name Annelies De Vadder

**Laboratory Technicians**

- 1) Name Pascale Bols  
 2) Name Elly Vergison  
 3) Name Ludo Deboel  
 4) Name Dieter Schollaert  
 5) Name Hilde De Bruyn

**Administrative Personnel**

- 1) Name Nadia Scheys  
 2) Name Christel Van Meerbeeck



#### 4. Clinical Activity

##### A. Outpatients: Consultations per year in the last 3 years

	2016	2017	2018
New patients	996	946	1032
Follow-up patients	600	655	741

Type of patients in the last years (%)	2016	2017	2018
Male infertility	486	520	570
Male sexual dysfunction	601	624	681
Male Hypogonadism	263	277	299
Klinefelter	±10 new cases	±10 new cases	±10 new cases
Gynaecomastia	38	41	34
Varicocele	10% of 'Male infertility'	10% of 'Male infertility'	10% of 'Male infertility'
Cryptorchidism	10% of 'Male infertility'	10% of 'Male infertility'	10% of 'Male infertility'
Male sex accessory gland infections	±10 cases	±10 cases	±10 cases
Testicular tumours	Total: 307 New: 34	Total : 323 New : 56	Total : 291 New : 20
Disorders of gender identity	±20 new cases	±20 new cases	20 new cases
Other	delayed puberty, hypersexuality ...	delayed puberty, hypersexuality ...	delayed puberty, hypersexuality ...

##### B. Ultrasound (testis, penile, prostate) (performed at the radiology department)

	2016	2017	2018
Total	Testis: 816	759	784
	Penis: 57	64	73
	Prostate:2342	2201	2225

##### C. Andrological surgery procedures

	2016	2017	2018
Testicular biopsies	57	74	48
Varicocele ligation <i>through antegrade and retrograde embolisation</i>	32	20	18

Prostate biopsies	395	349	353
BPH	146	126	110
Prostate cancer	Non-metastatic Total :1664  New: 428  Metastatic Total: 464 New:157	Non – metastatic Total :1685  New: 434  Metastatic Total : 458 New:148	Non- metastatic Total :1765  New: 475  Metastatic Total: 493 New:162
Vasectomy	148	188	208
Vaso-vasostomy	5	9	4

**5. A. Andrology laboratory activity**

	2016	2017	2018
Semen analyses	1643	1114	1119
Sperm antibodies	683	397	419
Seminal markers	277	157	100

**5. B. Andrology laboratory activity**

Sperm banking donors Yes  No

Sperm banking cancer patients Yes  No

**If yes:**

	2016	2017	2018
Number of samples	64	74	64

**5. C. Histopathological evaluation of biopsies** Yes  No

**5. D. Reproductive Hormones Assays** Yes  No

If yes please specify type of assays and number of samples in the last year (2018)

Reproductive Hormones Assays	FSH	1974
(FSH, LH, testosterone, SHBG, prolactin)	LH	2043
	Inhibine B	93
	Testosterone	3430
	Prolactine	1732
	Oestradiol	405
	hCG	914

We have in-house developed LC-MS/MS methods for testosterone/ androstenedione and estradiol available

**5. E. Y chromosome microdeletions according to EAA/EMQN guidelines** Yes  No

1046

**If yes** number of tests in the past year

Participation to the EAA quality control scheme? Yes  No

Blood karyotyping Yes  No

Other genetic tests (please specify)

Exome sequencing of some primary prostate cancer samples

Cystic fibrosis

FISH sperm

Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis

Amniotic fluid karyotyping

### 6. Collaborations with other Clinical Units of the University/Hospital

<b>IVF Unit</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Urology Clinic	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Endocrine Clinic	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Genetics Lab/Unit	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Paediatric Unit	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Central Hospital Laboratory	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Radiology Unit	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Private Centres	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

### 7. Clinical teaching activity

Duration of training (years):

	Number
A: Trainees in the last five years	2
B: Trainees who passed EAA-ESAU\exam for Clinical Andrologist in the last 5 yrs	1
C: Trainees working in the centre preparing to pass the EAA-ESAU examination	1
D: PhD Students	9 training periods of 4 year
E: Medical Students	400/year
F: Other students (MSc)	30 (sexology) 20 ( biomedical sciences)

### 8. Formal Andrology teaching program

*If yes:* specify duration (years/months):

Yes  No   
 Years  Months

	Hours of formal teaching per year	Professional training (weeks/months)
Medical Students	4	
PhD Students	4	40 weeks / year
Post Graduate students	8	
Trainees	4	4 months internal medicine - 2 years endocrinology
Other degrees (please specify) master sexology 20 hours per year/ master biomedical sciences 4 hours/year		

**9. Research Activity** (maximum 1 page)

Please shortly describe the main research topics of the center and list the most relevant papers in peer review journals (with IF) related to these activities.

Research includes andrological endocrinology, sexology as well as infertility and involves animal, in vitro as well as human and epidemiology.( see p 4-5)  
*The full list of publications from the last 5 years are presented at the end of this report.*

**10. Research Funding**

Please specify the amount of available funds in the last 3 years and their source (Government, European Union, University, Local Government, Pharmaceutical Industries, Banks, Foundations....)

<b>Year</b>	2016
<b>Total amount (€)</b>	ca. 750.000
<b>Funding Source(s)</b>	Government – University- Pharmaceutical industries - foundations

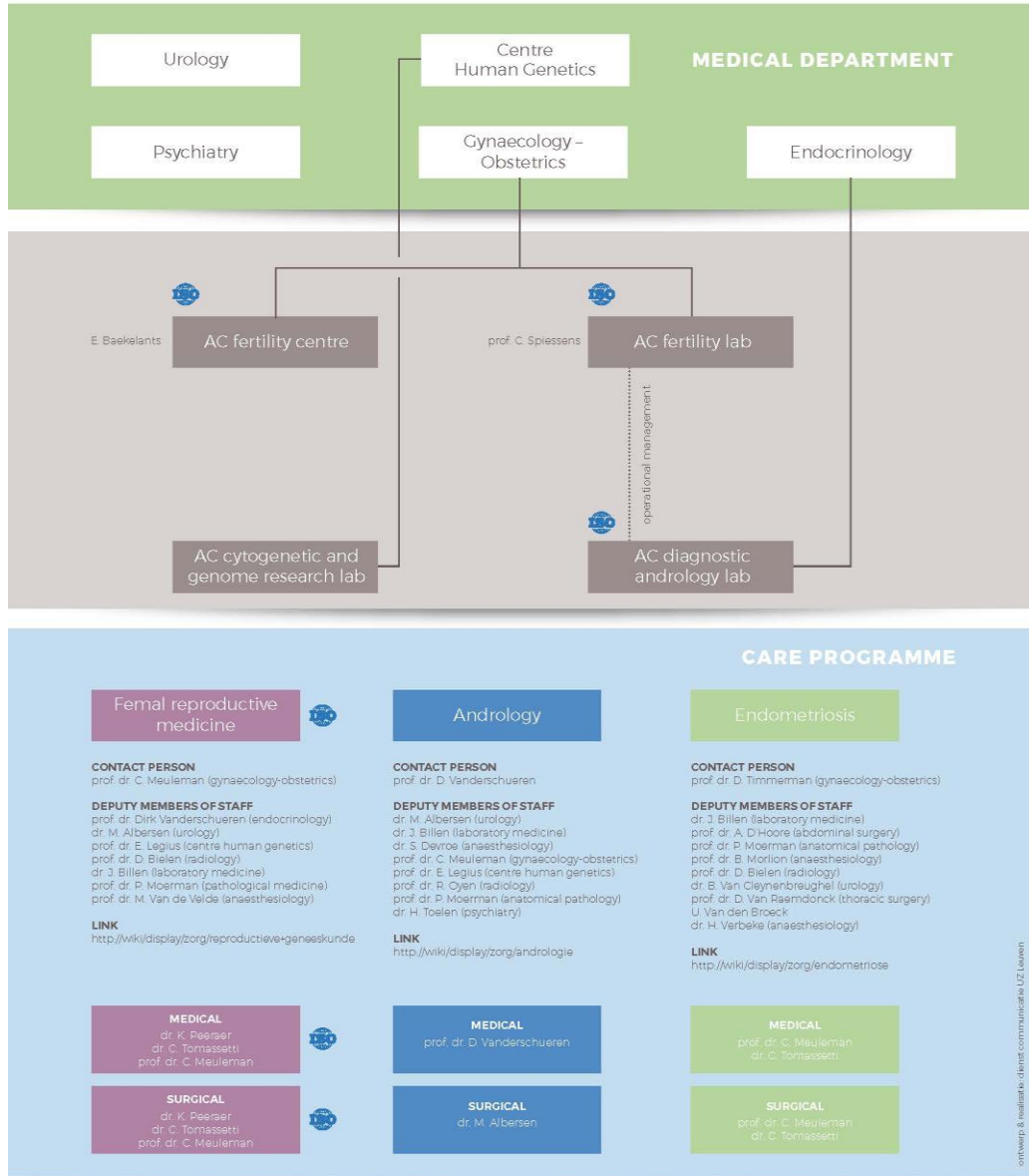
<b>Year</b>	2017
<b>Total amount (€)</b>	ca. 750.000
<b>Funding Source(s)</b>	Government – University –Pharmaceutical industries- foundations

<b>Year</b>	2018
<b>Total amount (€)</b>	ca. 750.000
<b>Funding Source(s)</b>	Government – University-Pharmaceutical industries - foundations

ORGANIZATION CHARTS

# ORGANISATIONAL CHART

## Leuven University Fertility Centre



**CENTRE PHOTOS**

*Uit Beeldbank UZ Leuven*

## FULL LIST OF PUBLICATIONS (with IF) of staff members between 1-1-2015 and 15-6-2019

### Journal articles

Berghen, C., Albersen, M., Blanchard, P., Bossi, A., Briganti, A., Cozzarini, C., Decaestecker, K., Fonteyne, V., Haustermans, K., Joniau, S., Lim Joon, D., Khoo, V., Nguyen, P.L., Ost, P., Villeirs, G., Vulsteke, C., Zietman, A., De Meerleer, G. (2019). Readdressing the rationale of irradiation in stage I seminoma guidelines: a critical essay. *BJU Int*, 124 (1), 35-39. doi: [10.1111/bju.14686](https://doi.org/10.1111/bju.14686) (Impact factor: 4.69) [Open Access](#)

Handle, F., Claessens, F. (2019). AR variants: lost in translation to clinical practice? *Nat Rev Urol*. doi: [10.1038/s41585-019-0204-4](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41585-019-0204-4) (Impact factor: 8.09)

Ramos, R.J., Albersen, M., Vringer, E., Bosma, M., Zwakenberg, S., Zwartkruis, F., Jans, J.J.M., Verhoeven-Duif, N.M. (2019). Discovery of pyridoxal reductase activity as part of human vitamin B6 metabolism. *Biochim Biophys Acta Gen Subj*, 1863 (6), 1088-1097. doi: [10.1016/j.bbagen.2019.03.019](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbagen.2019.03.019) (Impact factor: 3.68)

Bixby, H., Bentham, J., Zhou, B., Di Cesare, M., Paciorek, C.J., Bennett, J.E., Taddei, C., Stevens, G.A., Rodriguez-Martinez, A., Carrillo-Larco, R.M., Khang, Y-H., Soric, M., Gregg, E.W., Miranda, J.J., Bhutta, Z.A., Savin, S., Sophiea, M.K., Iurilli, M.L.C., Solomon, B.D., Cowan, M.J., Riley, L.M., Danaei, G., Bovet, P., Chirita-Emandi, A., Hambleton, I.R., Hayes, A.J., Ikeda, N., Kengne, A.P., Laxmaiah, A., Li, Y., McGarvey, S.T., Mostafa, A., Neovius, M., Starc, G., Zainuddin, A.A., Abarca-Gomez, L., Abdeen, Z.A., Abdrakhmanova, S., Ghaffar, S.A., Hamid, Z.A., Garba, J.A., Abu-Rmeileh, N.M., Acosta-Cazares, B., Adams, R.J., Aekplakorn, W., Afsana, K., Agdeppa, I.A., Aguilar-Salinas, C.A., Agyemang, C., Ahmad, M.H., Ahmad, N.A., Ahmadi, N., Ahmadvand, A., Ahrens, W., Ajlouni, K., AlBuhairan, F., AlDhukair, S., Al-Hazzaa, H.M., Ali, M.M., Ali, O., Alkerwi, A., Al-Othman, A.R., Al-Raddadi, R., Alvarez-Pedrerol, M., Aly, E., Amarapurkar, D.N., Amouyel, P., Amuzu, A., Bo, L., Anderssen, S.A., Angquist, L.H., Anjana, R.M., Ansari-Moghaddam, A., Aounallah-Skhiri, H., Araujo, J., Ariansen, I., Aris, T., Arku, R.E., Arlappa, N., Aryal, K.K., Aspelund, T., Assah, F.K., Assuncao, M.C.F., Aung, M.S., Auvinen, J., Avdicova, M., Azevedo, A., Azizi, F., Azmin, M., Babu, B.V., Baharudin, A., Bahijri, S., Baker, J.L., Balakrishna, N., Bamoshmoosh, M., Banach, M., Bandosz, P., Banegas, J.R., Barbagallo, C.M., Barcelo, A., Barkat, A., Barros, A.J.D., Barros, M.V.G., Bata, I., Batieha, A.M., Batista, R.L., Battakova, Z., Batyrbek, A., Baur, L.A., Beaglehole, R., Bel-Serrat, S., Ben Romdhane, H., Benedics, J., Benet, M., Berkinbayev, S., Bernabe-Ortiz, A., Bernotiene, G., Bettiol, H., Bhagyalaxmi, A., Bharadwaj, S., Bhargava, S.K., Bi, H., Bi, Y., Biehl, A., Lele, E.C.B., Bikbov, M., Bista, B., Bjelica, D.J., Bjerregaard, P., Bjertness, E., Bjertness, M.B., Bjorkelund, C., Blokstra, A., Bo, S., Bobak, M., Boddy, L.M., Boehm, B.O., Boeing, H., Boggia, J.G., Boissonnet, C.P., Bonaccio, M., Bongard, V., Bopp, M., Borchini, R., Borghs, H., Braeckelvel, L., Braeckman, L., Bragt, M.C.E., Brajkovich, I., Branca, F., Breckenkamp, J., Breda, J., Brenner, H., Brewster, L.M., Brian, G.R., Brinduse, L., Bruno, G., Bueno-de-Mesquita, H.B., Bugge, A., Buoncristiano, M., Burazeri, G., Burns, C., Cabrera de Leon, A., Cacciottolo, J., Cai, H., Cama, T., Cameron, C., Camolas, J., Can, G., Can, G., Candido, A.P.C., Canete, F., Capanzana, M.V., Capuano, E., Capuano, V., Cardoso, V.C., Carlsson, A.C., Carmuega, E., Carvalho, M.J., Casanueva, F.F., Casas, J-P., Caserta, C.A., Celikcan, E., Censi, L., Cesar, J.A., Chamukuttan, S., Chan, A.W., Chan, Q., Chaturvedi, H.K., Chaturvedi, N., Rahim, N.C.A., Chen, C-J., Chen, F., Chen, H., Chen, S., Chen, Z., Cheng, C-Y., Cheng, Y.J., Chetrit, A., Chikova-Iscener, E., Chiolero, A., Chiou, S-T., Chirlaque, M-D., Cho, B., Cho, Y., Christensen, K., Christofaro, D.G., Chudek, J., Cifkova, R., Cilia, M., Cinteza, E., Claessens, F., Clarke, J., Clays, E., Concin, H., Confortin, S.C., Cooper, C., Coppinger, T.C., Costanzo, S., Cottel, D., Cowell, C., Craig, C.L., Crampin, A.C., Crujeiras, A.B., Cruz, J.J., Cucu, A., Cui, L., Dallongeville, J., Damasceno, A., Damsgaard, C.T., Dankner, R., Dantoft, T.M., D'Arrigo, G., Dasgupta, P., Dastgiri, S., Dauchet, L., Davletov, K., De Backer, G., De Bacquer, D., De Curtis, A., De Gaetano, G., De Henauw, S., de Oliveira, P.D., De Ridder, K., de Rooij, S.R., De Smedt, D., Deepa, M., Deev, A.D., Dehghan, A., Delisle, H., Delpuech, F., Dennison, E., Deschamps, V., Dhana, K., Dhimal, M., Di Castelnuovo, A.F., Dias-da-Costa, J.S., Diaz, A., Dika, Z., Djalalinia, S., Do, H.T.P., Dobson, A.J., Donati, M.B., Donfrancesco, C., Donoso, S.P., Doering, A., Dorobantu, M., Dorosty, A.R., d'Orsi, E., Doua, K., Drygas, W., Duan, J.L., Duante, C.A., Duda, R.B., Duleva, V., Dulskiene, V., Dumith, S.C., Dzerve, V., Dzionkowska-Zaborszczyk, E., Eddie,



R., Egbagbe, E.E., Eggertsen, R., Eiben, G., Ekelund, U., El Ati, J., Eldemire-Shearer, D., Eliassen, M., Elliott, P., Engle-Stone, R., Erasmus, R.T., Erem, C., Eriksen, L., Eriksson, J.G., Escobedo-de la Pena, J., Evans, A., Faeh, D., Fall, C.H., Sant'Angelo, V.F., Farzadfar, F., Fattahi, M.R., Felix-Redondo, F.J., Ferguson, T.S., Fernandes, R.A., Fernandez-Berges, D., Ferrante, D., Ferrari, M., Ferreccio, C., Ferrer, E., Ferrieres, J., Fijalkowska, A., Fink, G., Fischer, K., Flores, E.M., Foeger, B., Foo, L.H., Forslund, A-S., Forsner, M., Fouad, H.M., Francis, D.K., Franco, M.D C., Franco, O.H., Frontera, G., Fuchs, F.D., Fuchs, S.C., Fujita, Y., Furusawa, T., Gaciong, Z., Gafencu, M., Galeone, D., Galvano, F., Gao, J., Garcia-de-la-Hera, M., Gareta, D., Garnett, S.P., Gaspoz, J-M., Gasull, M., Gates, L., Gazzinelli, A., Geiger, H., Geleijnse, J.M., Ghanbari, A., Ghasemi, E., Ghasemian, A., Gheorghe-Fronea, O-F., Giampaoli, S., Gianfagna, F., Gill, T.K., Giovannelli, J., Gironella, 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