



Finnish Society for Study of Infectious Diseases – report for 2023 travel grant

I want to thank the Finnish Society for Study of Infectious Diseases for supporting my doctoral studies. Thanks to this travel grant, I had the opportunity to participate in the European Society of Clinical Virology (ESCV) conference held in Milan, Italy. This conference marked a significant milestone in my career, being the first international conference I have had the privilege to attend. The experience provided a platform for me to share my findings on cutavirus prevalence in malignant and non-malignant tissues. Together with my thesis supervisor Maria Söderlund-Venermo and our collaborators (mentioned below), we collected and analyzed formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded (FFPE) samples from large numbers of international patient cohorts, and searched for CuV DNA. This is an ongoing project that will result in a publication, which will be part of my doctoral thesis, in the near future. The conference provided a platform for networking, enabling me to establish connections with researchers and experts in the field of clinical virology. I had the privilege of learning about ongoing projects and gaining insights into novel methods being employed in laboratories globally. These interactions have also inspired new ideas and approaches for my future research goals.

Irini Assimakopoulou, Sally Chesnut, Olga Bugaeva, Liisa Väkevä, Julia Scarisbrick, Mahmoud Kamel, Ahmed Sayed Abdel-Moneim, Annamari Ranki, Alexander Salava, Maria Söderlund-Venermo. Title: **Cutavirus prevalence in malignant and non-malignant tissues**

Abstract

Cutavirus (CuV), the newest human parvovirus, has recently received attention due to its association with cutaneous T-cell lymphoma (CTCL), a group of rare skin malignancies of unknown etiology. The aim of this study is to confirm the CuV-CTCL association with a larger number of international patient cohorts, including malignancies and diseases with T-cell infiltration. We searched for CuV DNA, by quantitative PCR, in a total of 173 patients (103 from Finland, 11 from the UK and 59 from Egypt), of which 26 were diagnosed with CTCL, 1 with the pre-CTCL parapsoriasis, 102 with other cancers and 15 with healthy skin. CuV DNA was detected in 5/183 (2.7%) FFPE specimens, all being skin biopsies; 3/5 were from patients with CTCL or pre-CTCL and the remaining 2 were from moles of patients with other early skin cancers: melanoma in situ or Bowen's disease. This ongoing study will reveal if the CuV-CTCL association stands, and is one step closer to revealing whether CuV only thrives in cancer cells or possibly causes cancer.

Thanking you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Irini".

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Irini Assimakopoulou, Doctoral Researcher
Department of Virology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Helsinki
irini.assimakopoulou@helsinki.fi