



## RNA Horizons 2024 Therapeutics Symposium

Unlocking the RNA's Potential in Medicine

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Alfandega Congress Centre, Porto, Portugal

**Prof. Dr. Evelien Smits** completed her PhD in Medical Sciences at UAntwerp in 2008. As a postdoc, she did research visits at University of Cardiff (UK), University of Southampton (UK), King's College London (UK) and Radboud University Nijmegen (NL), resulting in a broad research network and successful international collaborations. In 2013, she founded her own research team at the Center for Oncological Research (CORE). Currently she is Full Professor, head of CORE and co-founder of the recognized research excellence consortium with 9 promotors and more than 100 research members, the Integrated Personalized and Precision Oncology Network (IPPON; [www.uantwerp.be/ippn](http://www.uantwerp.be/ippn)). The strategic mission of her research is to improve the quality-of-life and the lifespan of cancer patients by increasing the applicability of immunotherapy, both in terms of number of responsive cancer types and number of responsive patients. Therefore, the team develops novel immunotherapeutic strategies to treat cancer by combining immune activation and tackling immunosuppression. The three major research lines are on 1) natural killer cell therapy; 2) immune checkpoints; and 3) cold atmospheric plasma therapy. Her research team currently consists of 3 full-time postdocs, 15 PhD students and 4 lab technicians. In addition, she is co-principal investigator of 3 ongoing academic investigator-driven dendritic cell therapy studies at the Center for Cell Therapy and Regenerative Medicine at the Antwerp University Hospital. By doing so, her research comprises the full spectrum from basic research till clinical studies. Her research has resulted until now in 170 Web-of-Science indexed publications, 6 patent applications and 3 ongoing academic clinical studies. She is a member of several grant review committees in Belgium and abroad and she is an appointed expert at the Belgian Superior Health Council since 2014. She has finished her term as invited member of the advisory board of the Lancet Haematology (2014-2019) and as elected member of the Belgian Young Academy (2015-2020). Amongst several prizes, in December 2017 she received the FWO/FNRS AstraZeneca Foundation Award in Immunotherapy as only laureate.