

SPEAKER

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Disappearing Neighbors: Tumor–Epithelial Interactions & Translational Opportunities in Upper GI Cancer

Date: September 23 – **Time:** 16:00 CEST



[Link to Zoom](#)

Cancers in the liver and pancreas are among the most aggressive solid tumours and are associated with some of the poorest prognoses. The two most common are pancreatic cancer and liver metastases from other primary tumours, particularly colorectal cancer.

Marco Gerling's laboratory studies how these tumours invade healthy liver and pancreatic tissue. In this translational seminar, Dr Gerling will introduce key principles and current insights into tumour invasion in the liver and pancreas, also highlighting research conducted at Karolinska. Together with colleagues from Karolinska's departments of surgery and oncology, his team addresses clinical and translational questions about how these tumours invade surrounding tissues.

The talk will cover how tumour cells interact with the resident epithelial cells of the tissues they invade: hepatocytes in the liver and acinar cells in the pancreas. These epithelial cell populations respond to tumour invasion in distinct ways that depend on tumour aggressiveness and may, in turn, actively shape invasion at the tumour–normal tissue interface. Because tumour-induced changes reorganise tissue on a scale that extends beyond the microscopic level, they can, in principle, be detected directly in patients. This concept forms the basis of IMAGINE-1, a first-in-human PET study investigating the imaging of tumour-induced fibrosis in liver tumours before surgery.

Dr Marco Gerling is a group leader at the Dept of Clinical Science, Intervention, & Technology at Karolinska Institutet and an oncologist specializing in upper GI cancer at Karolinska University Hospital Huddinge, Theme Cancer, Unit for upper GI diseases. He is the Co-Director of Cancer Research KI and steering board member of FoTO, Karolinska's Doctoral Programme in Tumor Biology and Oncology.

Dr Gerling's laboratory investigates how pancreatic cancer and liver metastases invade healthy tissue, focusing on how tumour cells interact with resident epithelial cells at the tumour–normal interface. By linking these tissue changes to patient imaging and blood-based biomarkers, the team aims to translate fundamental insights into new ways of detecting, visualising, and understanding tumour invasion in the clinic.

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