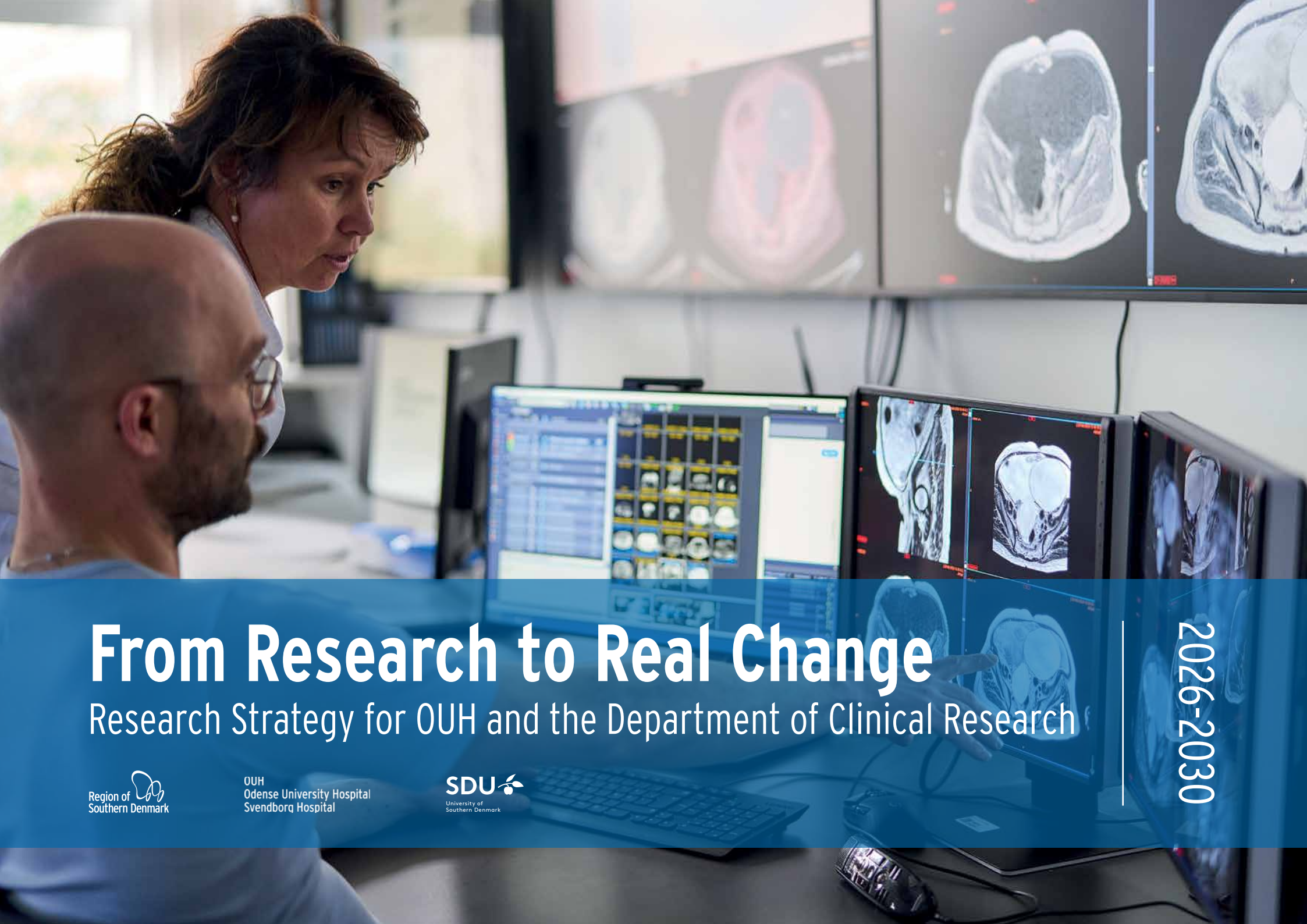




From Research to Real Change

Research Strategy for OUH and the Department of Clinical Research

2026-2030

Foreword

Research is a core activity for Odense University Hospital (OUH) and the Department of Clinical Research (KI) at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), on a par with education and patient care.

Research provides the knowledge base that makes it possible to offer the highest quality of care, develop new solutions and ensure a sustainable healthcare system for the future.

The Danish healthcare system is undergoing significant changes. The healthcare reform marks a shift towards a more integrated healthcare system, in which treatment is brought closer to the citizens. At the same time, demographic trends - with an increasing number of older people and a growing number of patients with chronic and complex conditions - are placing a strain on the capacity and organisation of the healthcare system. These changes place new demands on research.

The Co-location of OUH and SDU presents a unique opportunity to bring clinical work, education and research together under one roof. This provides a unique platform for supporting research at all levels - from basic research to clinical and practice-based research. This initiative must be undertaken in close collaboration with patients and their families, local authorities, general and specialist practices, businesses, other research institutions and national and international partners.

Our **vision** is: We conduct research together to shape the future of patient care. Our **mission** is: Together, we bring world-class research closer to clinical practice to generate innovative outcomes that improve patient health through education and effective implementation.

The framework for the research strategy comprises OUH's 'Patient First' vision, the Region of Southern Denmark's strategy for health research, the Faculty of Health Sciences' research strategy, along with relevant national and international strategies and research policy agendas.

OUH and KI have a particular responsibility to ensure that new knowledge is not only generated but also translated into improved treatment, organisational development and a more sustainable use of the healthcare system's resources.

With this research strategy, we are strengthening a focused, interdisciplinary and results-oriented research effort - for the benefit of patients, their families, the citizens, the healthcare system and society as a whole.

Happy reading!

Chief Medical Officer Bjarne Dahler-Eriksen, OUH, and Head of Department Rikke Leth-Larsen, Department of Clinical Research, SDU



Interdisciplinary research – putting people first

Our ambition is to conduct research based on the patient's entire journey - across diagnoses, specialities and sectors.



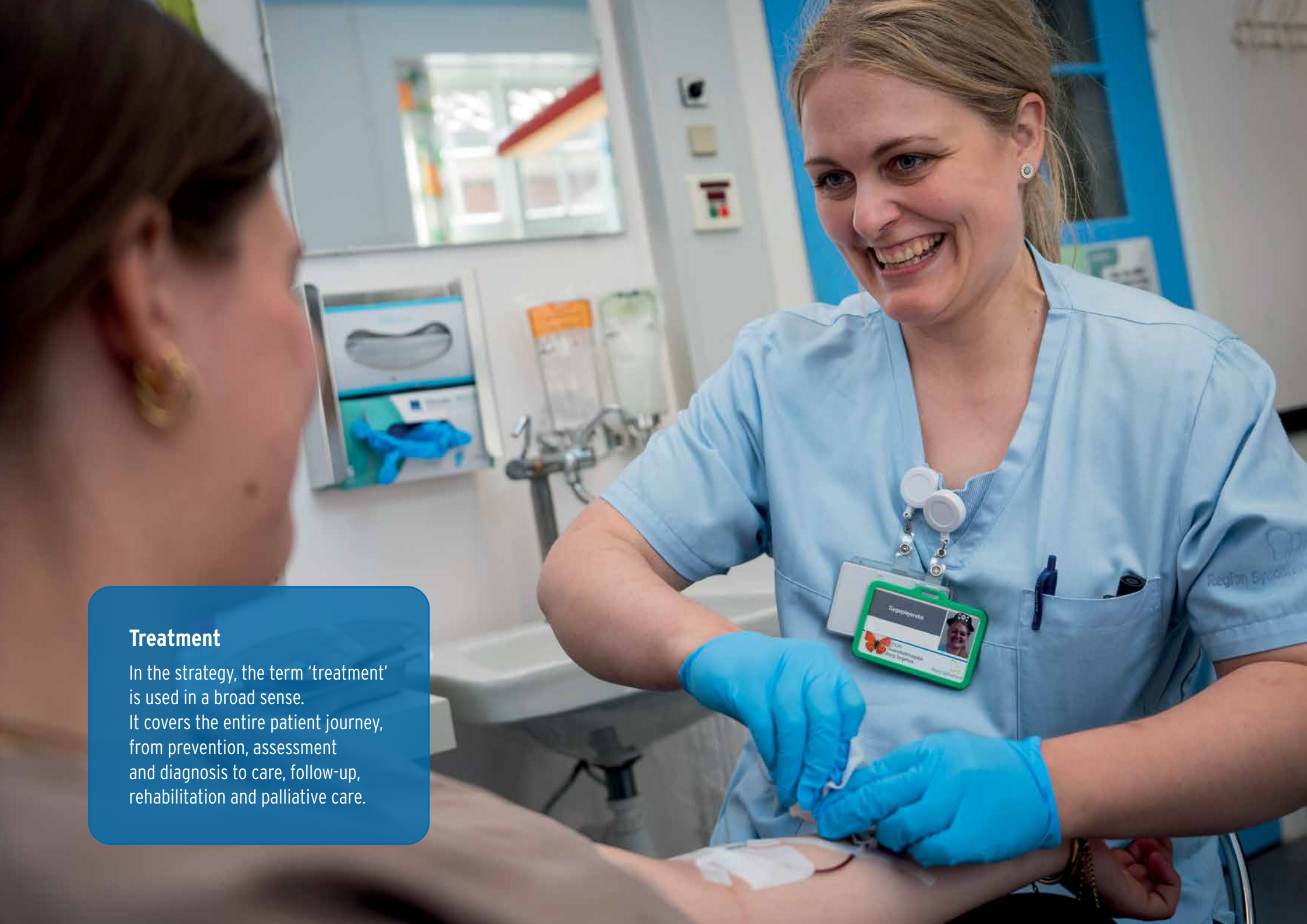
Strong research environments – as a driving force for development

Our ambition is to be a leader in shaping the healthcare system of the future through innovation and excellent research that sets new standards both nationally and internationally.



The path of research – from idea to impact

Our ambition is to strengthen the entire research process - from idea to clinical impact - through targeted support for researchers, clear career paths, transparent leadership and systematic implementation.



Treatment

In the strategy, the term 'treatment' is used in a broad sense. It covers the entire patient journey, from prevention, assessment and diagnosis to care, follow-up, rehabilitation and palliative care.

Interdisciplinary research – putting people first

Our ambition is to conduct research based on the patient's entire journey – across diagnoses, specialties and sectors.

Under the healthcare reform, hospitals will be given broader responsibilities, as well as additional and new tasks within the local healthcare system. Research should therefore not only follow the patient when in hospital, but also extend to the home, local authorities and general and specialist medical practices, which requires strong partnerships.

The research aims to contribute to the development of new knowledge regarding prevention, transitions between sectors, new organisational models and the use of health technology. This is intended to improve patient care – both within the local community and in hospital. With the establishment of the Health Affairs Office and General Practice clinical departments at OUH, we have a strong foundation for strengthening research in close collaboration with local authorities, general and specialist medical practices, SDU, patients, relatives and members of the public.

The research should also support a more holistic approach to care for patients with both mental and physical health conditions. This requires long-term capacity building and new forms of collaboration – e.g. through the establishment of new research centres, joint associate professorships and full professorships, as well as career paths that promote close interaction between psychiatry and somatic medicine.

Patients and their relatives are key contributors to the development of knowledge and solutions that promote quality, continuity and equality in care, wherever they come into contact with the healthcare system. Their experiences and perspectives enhance the relevance of the research and increase the likelihood that research questions, methods and solutions will be based on what matters most to them – that is what research is for. OUH and KI already have a strong tradition of involving patients and their relatives in research. We want to make this approach an integral part of our research culture – from concept and design through to execution, implementation and dissemination. Inclusion must be ethically responsible, based on active collaboration, embrace diversity and be tailored to the needs of the various research areas.



Local healthcare system

Healthcare services close to the public, including regional initiatives, general practice, specialist medical practices and local authority services.

Research into an integrated healthcare system

Objectives

- Increase the proportion of departments that have research collaborations with local authorities and/or general and specialist medical practices to at least 80% during the strategy period.
- Increase the number of new research projects carried out in collaboration with local authorities and/or general and specialist medical practices every year.

Actions

- The departments' research committees will identify relevant areas for collaboration with local authorities, general and specialist medical practices, and SDU, with a focus on an integrated healthcare system.
- Health Affairs Office and General Practice departments will explore options and models for establishing equal research partnerships between OUH and other stakeholders in the local healthcare system, with a view to creating more joint research projects, for example, on health inequalities, vulnerable groups and transitions between sectors.
- OUH and KI will organise events that support research into the integrated healthcare system.
- During the strategy period, OUH will award up to five PhD scholarships and five scholarships for master's students in the pre-thesis stage for research projects focusing on new organisational models, patient-centred prevention and patient pathways within the integrated healthcare system.
- OUH and KI will establish up to two frontline centres focusing on the integrated healthcare system.
- OPEN will provide the infrastructure needed to establish and support research collaborations with stakeholders in the local healthcare system, including methodological guidance, data exchange and the involvement of patient and family representatives.
- KI will develop models for potential career paths and/or research positions across sectors.

Close collaboration between psychiatry and somatic medicine

Objectives

- Increase the number of departments participating in research projects involving psychiatric and somatic specialities by 25% during the strategy period.

Actions

- The departments' research committees will identify opportunities for research collaboration across psychiatric and somatic specialities, including collaboration with the National Research Centre for Clinical Psychiatry.
- OUH and KI will prioritise targeted pre-award researcher support for major grant applications that strengthen collaborations between psychiatry and somatic medicine.
- OUH and KI will strengthen research across psychiatric and somatic specialities by allocating up to five PhD scholarships and five scholarships for master's students in the pre-thesis stage during the strategy period, and by establishing at least one joint professorship.

Patients and relatives as active contributors to research

Objectives

- Every year, OUH and KI will increase the number of research projects in which patients and their relatives are actively involved in several stages of the research process.

Actions

- The departments' research committees will decide how patients and their relatives are to be involved in the research and appoint a person to be responsible for this.
- OPEN will develop tools, guidelines and training programmes that support the meaningful involvement of patients and their relatives in the various stages of the research process, the communication of research findings in plain language, and diversity in recruitment.
- The research units will publish the results of projects involving active patient and family participation in plain language on their websites.

Strong research environments – as a driving force for development

Our ambition is to be a leader in shaping the healthcare system of the future through innovation and excellent research that sets new standards both nationally and internationally.

OUH and KI are creating an environment in which research and innovation can be rapidly translated into benefits for patients – from precision medicine and advanced therapies to digital solutions and health technology.

New health technology solutions, including artificial intelligence, are key to freeing up time for core tasks and creating more seamless patient pathways. OUH and SDU have a strong tradition of health technology research within organisations such as MedTech Odense, CIMT, CAI-X, CCR and the Centre for Digital Psychiatry, in which researchers, clinicians and external partners collaborate to develop solutions based on clinical needs. OUH and KI aim to strengthen the development, testing and implementation of health technologies that improve the quality, efficiency and continuity of patient care pathways.

In this context, the sustainable use of health data is key to ensuring that time and resources are used effectively. Drawing inspiration from the national 'Vælg Klogt' ('Choose Wisely') initiative, OUH and KI are promoting research projects that demonstrate value and phasing out those that do not. We will support flexible study designs such as master protocol trials, including platform trials, which enable the simultaneous and ongoing evaluation of multiple treatments within a particular field or speciality. This will make it possible to adapt treatment decisions more quickly in line with new findings. We will continue to produce systematic reviews to ensure that existing knowledge is utilised to the full and that new research projects are based on the documented evidence as a whole.

In addition, we will use real-world data (RWD) from patients' everyday lives, including data from patient records, PRO data and health technologies. By applying the FAIR principles, data can inform decisions such as the choice of treatment for individual

patients, the development of clinical guidelines, the prioritisation of new medicines and technologies, and strategic decisions within the healthcare system.

Life sciences is a strategic priority area for OUH and KI and encompasses research and innovation in fields such as pharmaceuticals, medical biotechnology, medical devices and diagnostic technologies. We are helping to achieve the national goal of making Denmark one of Europe's leading countries in the development, testing and implementation of advanced treatments. This is achieved through participation in clinical trials, collaborations with national and international partners – including commercial entities, Trial Nation and ATMP Denmark – and through the development of in-house advanced therapies. Advanced therapies in the field of stem cell therapy, gene therapy and immunotherapy, including ATMPs, place particular demands on research, quality and implementation. We provide the expertise and frameworks for developing and testing new therapies, whilst strengthening our position as an attractive partner in the national and international life science ecosystem.

We have a responsibility to conduct research at a high international standard, particularly within our highly specialised fields. This requires interdisciplinary environments and strong international partnerships.

Stays abroad are particularly beneficial to the careers of early-career researchers, and the appointment of international professors and associate professors helps to enhance the academic environments and impact of the research units.

The merger of OUH and SDU provides a strong foundation for further developing interdisciplinary collaboration with SDU's faculties – including in the areas of translational research and precision medicine.

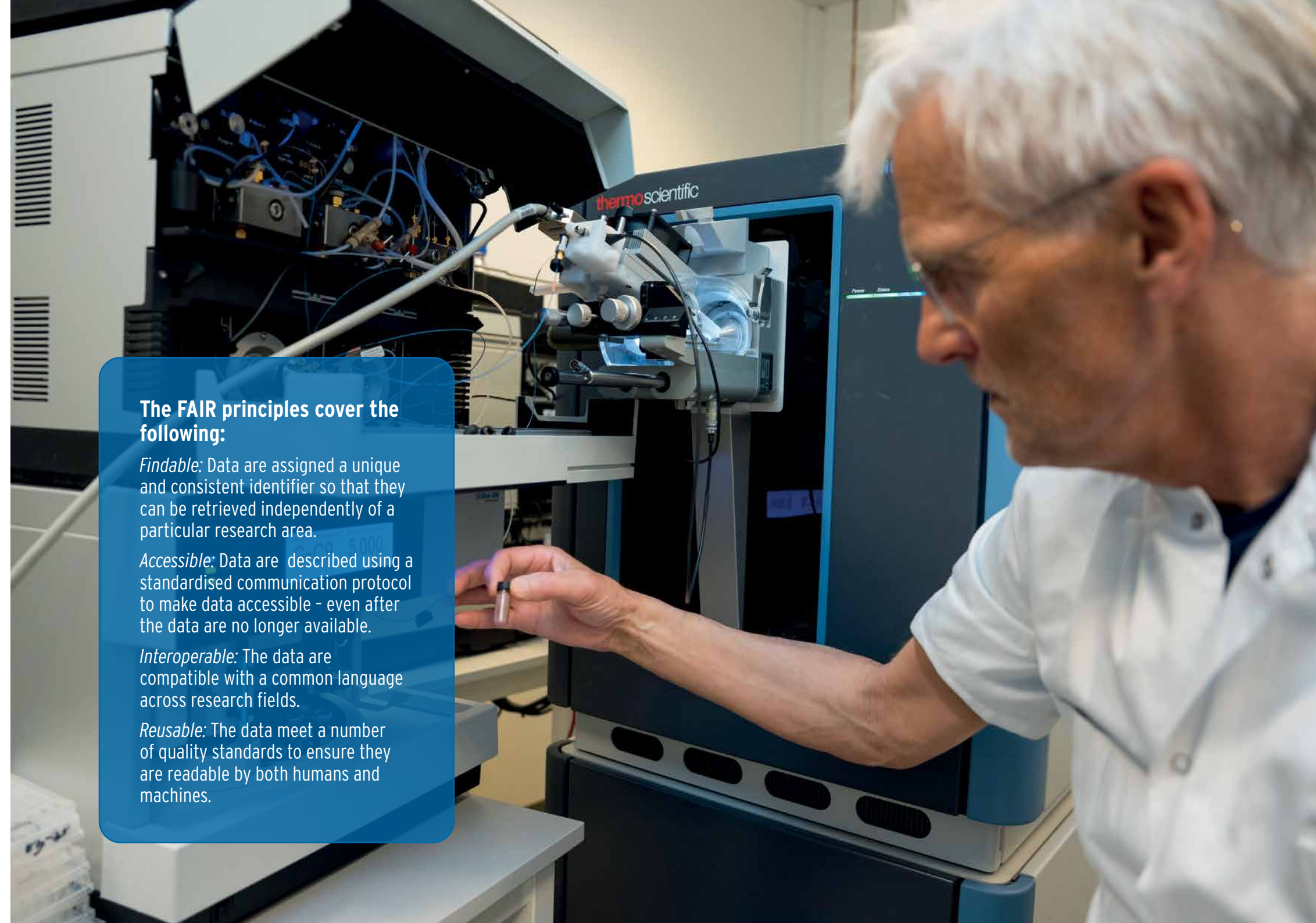
The FAIR principles cover the following:

Findable: Data are assigned a unique and consistent identifier so that they can be retrieved independently of a particular research area.

Accessible: Data are described using a standardised communication protocol to make data accessible – even after the data are no longer available.

Interoperable: The data are compatible with a common language across research fields.

Reusable: The data meet a number of quality standards to ensure they are readable by both humans and machines.





From technology to practice

Objectives

- Increase the number of research projects focused on developing and testing new health technologies every year.

Actions

- The departments' research committees will identify potential health technology research projects and assess relevant partners, including paraclinical departments, local healthcare providers, the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) and other national and international partners.
- Clinical Development will produce a guide to help researchers identify relevant funding opportunities for health technology research projects.
- Clinical Development will offer strategic support for the launch of health technology research projects.

Sustainable and strategic use of health data

Objectives

- OUH and KI will initiate or participate in at least one new master protocol trial each year.
- Increase the number of research projects using RWD every year.
- Launch research projects aimed at reducing waste in the healthcare system every year.
- Increase the number of systematic reviews carried out to inform new projects by 5% during the strategy period.

Actions

- The departments' research committees will identify areas where research projects can help reduce unnecessary tests, examinations, treatments, hospital admissions and data collection, thereby promoting the sustainable use of resources.
- The departments' research committees will identify opportunities to initiate or participate in master protocol trials, utilise RWD and conduct systematic reviews.
- OPEN will establish and further develop infrastructure to support systematic reviews, master protocol trials and research using RWD through consultancy and legal and organisational support.
- OUH and KI will allocate funds to launch and conduct master protocol trials.
- OPEN will explore how data, including RWD, existing metadata and biobank material, can be brought more closely into line with the FAIR principles.

Life sciences at the forefront - from idea to advanced treatment

Objectives

- Increase the number of clinical trials (Phases I-IV) conducted in collaboration with industry by at least 10% during the strategy period.
- Increase the number of departments participating in the Trial Nation partnership and ATMP Denmark during the strategy period.
- Double the number of clinical trials involving in-house developed and commercial medicines classified as ATMPs during the strategy period.

Actions

- The departments' research committees will identify opportunities for participation in clinical trials and the Trial Nation partnership.
- OPEN will identify departments with potential for clinical trials and provide guidance, skills development and targeted support for collaboration with industry and Trial Nation.
- OPEN will support the ATMP sector and other advanced therapies by providing administrative support for regulatory approvals and other regulatory processes relating to both clinical trials and treatment.
- OUH and SDU will ensure that existing laboratory solutions for testing and performing quality assurance of ATMP products are developed and can be used across the Hospital's and SUND's laboratories.

ATMP (Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products) refers to a group of innovative biological treatments, including gene and cell therapies, which often offer a cure rather than merely treating symptoms. These therapies are designed for serious or rare diseases.

Excellent research, global collaboration - local value

Objectives

- Increase the number of publications resulting from international collaboration by at least 5 percentage points during the strategy period.
- OUH and KI to participate in at least 30 new EU-funded research projects during the strategy period.
- Increase the proportion of professors at OUH and KI who are ranked among the world's top researchers in their respective fields, as assessed by Stanford University's Top 2% Scientists list, from 20% to 25% by the end of the strategy period.
- All research units will have at least one international adjunct associate professor or professor attached to them by the end of 2027.

Actions

- Heads of department and heads of research will ensure that research funding is allocated to highly specialised functions in accordance with the specialisation plan.
- The departments' research committees will identify opportunities for international research collaboration, including EU projects.
- The departments' research committees will identify areas where an adjunct associate professor or professor can help to strengthen research.
- Odense University Hospital, the Region of Southern Denmark and KI will expand their support for the preparation of EU grant applications.
- OUH and KI will compile a comprehensive overview of EU support functions, relevant international networks and collaboration platforms for researchers.
- OUH and KI will identify opportunities to participate in Danish and European framework programmes (e.g. COST networks, ERN, SPARK Denmark) and develop initiatives to link these programmes with the relevant research environments.
- OUH and KI will establish up to two new frontline centres and two new transdisciplinary elite research environments within highly specialised functions and/or precision medicine.
- OUH and KI will strengthen their interdisciplinary and translational collaboration through theme days, seminars and joint projects involving both OUH and the faculties at SDU.



'Impact' refers to the societal impact and influence of research

The path of research – from idea to impact

Our ambition is to strengthen the entire research process – from idea to clinical impact – through targeted support for researchers, clear career paths, transparent leadership and systematic implementation.

Research requires an effective framework and access to support. OUH and KI aim to strengthen support for researchers through a coherent infrastructure that frees up time for research, supports the research process from concept to implementation and focuses on increasing the acquisition of external research funding.

We aim to develop, attract and retain talented researchers at all stages of their careers, with a focus on diversity, interdisciplinarity and mobility. With targeted guidance, clear career progression pathways and initiatives that support recruitment, career progression and well-being, we will create a sustainable framework for academic development. A healthy working environment that allows for academic development is essential for quality, continuity and innovation.

Research must be an integral part of everyday clinical practice. This requires close collaboration between departmental management and the heads of research, who must work together to ensure a robust research unit focused on attractive career paths and capacity building. The aim is for research to gradually become a natural part of the department's work, with researchers, clinicians and administrative staff actively contributing to the research process and creating a common foundation for the clinic's ongoing development.

International visibility is crucial for enhancing the impact of research findings and attracting funding and talent. Going forward, we will adhere to the CoARA principles (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment). CoARA supports a broad and responsible assessment of research that takes into account not only publications and citations, but also societal impact, influence and practical relevance.



Research only has real significance when findings are shared and put into practice in clinical settings. We are strengthening the dissemination and accessibility of research results so that they have an impact both nationally and internationally. This includes, among other things, contributions to clinical guidelines and the targeted use of results in decision-making, where new knowledge supports development and prioritisation.

We will ensure that implementation is based on sound evidence and an assessment of clinical efficacy, user-friendliness, ethics and cost-effectiveness, including through the use of mini-MTV (Medical Technology Assessment) as a systematic tool. In this way, research is translated into tangible improvements for patients, the healthcare system and society.



Increased support for researchers and the securing of funding

Objectives

- Increase external research funding secured by OUH and KI by an average of 5 % every year.
- Double the number of major external research grants (minimum DKK 10 million) during the strategy period.

Actions

- The head of research and departmental management will draw up a funding strategy in collaboration with the research support units at OUH and SDU.
- The departments' research committees will identify areas of collaboration with SDU's faculties, which can form the basis for major joint applications for external funding.
- OUH and KI will set up a fund to cover the costs of workload reduction for staff involved in preparing major applications for external research grants.
- OUH and KI will ensure access to post-award functions that support professional administration of large research grants.
- OPEN will strengthen the legal support and advice provided to researchers, so that they are supported in conducting their research in accordance with current legislation.
- OPEN will establish a single point of contact that guides researchers to researcher support and core facilities across OUH and SDU.
- OUH and KI will organise targeted networking events with SDU's faculties to support the development of major joint applications.

Strong leadership and sustainable career paths

Objectives

- By the end of the strategy period, all research units will have established a sustainable and interdisciplinary pipeline of talent - from PhD students to professors - thereby ensuring generational renewal and continuity.
- All heads of research will complete relevant courses in research management and organisation during the strategy period.

Actions

- The departments' research committees will draw up a local research strategy based on the joint research strategy of OUH and KI.
- The head of research will be responsible for the onboarding process, as well as mentoring programmes and/or buddy schemes for newly recruited researchers.
- The head of research will support and promote the independence and mobility of early-career researchers and ensure that career guidance is available.
- The research units will actively work to promote diversity in the recruitment and development of their research environments, including interdisciplinary composition and representation across career stages, genders and disciplines - supported by initiatives from OUH and KI.
- OUH and KI will highlight career paths and opportunities for skills and talent development across academic groups, including models designed to retain early-career researchers in roles that combine clinical practice and research, as well as opportunities for a change of environment.
- OUH and KI will introduce schemes for senior staff that enable a gradual transition out of full-time work and retain the expertise of senior researchers as a resource for the next generation.
- OUH and KI will offer courses in research management and organisation.
- OUH and KI will assess researchers' well-being and implement targeted initiatives to enhance job satisfaction and staff retention.

Visibility, implementation and impact

Objectives

- OUH and KI will improve their ranking in relevant international benchmarks as a measure of the societal impact and international recognition of their research during the strategy period.
- All research units will have a Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) > 1 by the end of the strategy period, reflecting their international impact.
- The number of research news items from OUH and KI appearing in national and international media will increase every year.
- All publications will be available in (green) Open Access, where the journals permit this, by the end of the strategy period.
- The number of publications used in clinical guidelines will increase every year.

Actions

- All research units will follow the CoARA guidelines.
- The departments' research committees will identify and encourage researchers to contribute their expertise to national and international councils, boards and committees, as well as other decision-making bodies.
- The departments' research committees will assess the progress of research projects, including implementation, commercialisation, dissemination and further development.
- OUH and KI will highlight opportunities and encourage researchers to participate in advisory bodies and decision-making forums, so that knowledge can be put to greater use in society.
- OUH and KI will enhance their international visibility in accordance with the CoARA principles on broad and responsible research evaluation.
- OUH and KI will adapt the assessment criteria for their internal research funding schemes to reflect the CoARA principles.
- The SDU Library will provide bibliometric data to the research units and support publication via Green Open Access.
- OUH and KI will offer courses and workshops on research dissemination, with a focus on social media.
- OUH and KI will launch a course designed to enhance researchers' ability to demonstrate the impact of their research projects.
- OUH and KI will organise themed days and offer courses and advice on the implementation of research findings, including through mini-MTV.





The research strategy was drawn up by

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Region of
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Svendborg Hospital

SDU
University of
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