Research for public health
The Istituto Superiore di Sanità is the leading technical and scientific body of the Italian National Health Service. Its activities include research, clinical trials, control and training in public health; it also serves as a major national clearing-house for technical and scientific information on public health issues.

The Institute is involved in collaboration and consultation with other institutions responsible for public health, including the Ministry of Health, regional health authorities, local health agencies and hospitals. It cooperates with those responsible for the design and implementation of health and scientific programmes at local and national level and also plays a leading role in several major international research projects.

The Institute provides scientific advice and assessments in the framework of international organizations, such as EFSA, EU, IARC, OECD, UNEP and WHO.
The Institute conducts scientific research in a wide variety of fields, from cutting-edge molecular and genetic research to population-based studies of risk factors for disease and disability. Research priorities are based on those set forth in the National Health Plan. The Institute is also involved in several major clinical trials, which are frequently conducted in cooperation with the Scientific Institutes for Research and Care (IRCCS) network and hospitals.
Inspection, Monitoring and Certification

An important activity of the Institute, which is mandated by the Minister of Health, or the Regions, is certification of the chemical and biological purity of drugs and vaccines, as well as the inspection and quality control of medical diagnostic devices and equipment, food products and packaging. The Institute monitors trends in disease, mortality and other health factors and provides technical support for health-related environmental surveys and for investigations of epidemics and other public health problems at national, regional and local level. It also supervises the laboratories engaged in the testing of prohibited substances in sport and the national veterinary institutes. Finally, it has an important role in monitoring and coordinating blood transfusion services and plasma production in Italy. A notified body authorized to award EC certification of medical devices operates within the Institute.
Documentation, Information and Publications

The Institute serves as a major source of information relating to public health and biomedicine in Italy through online connections to national and international scientific databases and data banks. It also serves as the national reference centre for MEDLARS (MEDical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System), a comprehensive international data bank coordinated by the US National Library of Medicine (NLM). The ISS library supports the Institute’s activities and specializes in scientific documentation in the biomedical field.

The Institute produces numerous publications, including a quarterly peer-reviewed journal (Annali), a monthly newsletter describing major research activities and services (Notiziario), and different series of technical reports.
Training and Scientific Meetings

The Institute plans, develops and organises courses on health education and training activities in the field of public health for the personnel of the National Health Service (NHS), with particular respect to the educational objectives set by the Ministry of Health through the Continuing Medical Education (CEM) project.

It develops and tests innovative training methods particularly in the area of web-based distance learning. The topics addressed include:

- health service management and evaluation of health services,
- epidemiology and biostatistics,
- health economics,
- management of human resources,
- instructional methods for training of trainers;
- health promotion, including environmental health.

The Institute also organises congresses, conferences, workshops and seminars on important public health issues addressed to a wide national and international audience.
International Activities

The Institute plans, implements and evaluates international public health projects, ranging from collaborations on research and development projects to humanitarian assistance. It actively promotes cooperation at three different levels: scientific partnerships with industrialised countries, scientific and development projects in partnership with economies in transition, development partnerships in Africa and with countries suffering natural emergencies or war situations. Current projects relate to the following fields: HIV/AIDS control and poverty-related diseases; tumours; vaccines; infectious disease epidemiology; capacity-building for central health administrations; technology transfer in public health management; technical support for national public health authorities, particularly within the context of health care reform; application of telematics to health issues.
Department

Cell Biology and Neurosciences

Director: Maurizio Pocchiari
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To study genetic, neurological and endocrine-metabolic diseases with a special focus on the development of innovative biotherapies

Units
- Behavioural neurosciences
- Biomarkers of degenerative diseases
- Clinical aspects diagnosis and therapy of degenerative diseases of the central nervous system
- Experimental neurology
- Gene and cell therapy
- Inflammatory and demyelinating diseases of the nervous system
- Metabolism and molecular and cellular endocrinology
- Molecular and cellular imaging
- Molecular neurobiology
- Neurotoxicology and neuroendocrinology
To protect the human population health through the definition and control of types and sources of chemical and biological risks, especially of environmental origin (water, air, soil)

Units
- Air hygiene
- Bioelements and health
- Environment and trauma
- Environmental epidemiology
  - Environmental microbiology and virology, and wellness
  - Experimental and computational carcinogenesis
  - Exposure and risk from materials
  - Fish farm and environmental quality
    - Genetic toxicology
    - Inland water hygiene
    - Mechanisms of toxicity
    - Molecular epidemiology
    - Pesticide
  - Quality of aquatic environments and bathing waters
    - Soil and waste
    - Toxicological chemistry
Haematology, Oncology and Molecular Medicine

Director: Filippo Belardelli
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E-mail: filippo.belardelli@iss.it

Study of the mechanisms responsible for hematologic, oncological, cardiovascular and genetic diseases.
Development of new therapies for the treatment of these diseases.
Quality and safety assessment of drugs and blood transfusion centres

Units
Applied biotherapy
Clinical biochemistry and molecular biology
Experimental immunotherapy
Hemoglobinopathies and hematopoiesis
Immunoregulation
Lipids and arteriosclerosis
Medical oncology
Molecular oncology
Oncological and hematological biotechnologies
Physiopathology of genetic diseases
Physiopathology of renal diseases and correlated pathologies
Stem cells and endothelium
Tranfusion methodologies
Infectious, Parasitic and Immune-Mediated Diseases

Director: Giovanni Rezza
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To protect the human population from diseases caused by pathogenic micro-organisms, viruses and parasites, and to study the mechanisms of immune-mediated diseases

Units
Anti-infectious immunity
Epidemiology
Gastroenteric and neurologic bacterial diseases
Gastroenteric and tissue parasitic diseases
Immune-mediated diseases
Molecular pathogenesis
Respiratory and systemic bacterial diseases
Superficial and systemic mycoses
Vector-borne diseases and international health
Viral diseases and inactivated viral vaccines
Viral diseases and live attenuated viral vaccines
Viral hepatitis
Technology and Health

Director: Velio Macellari
Tel: +39 064990 6212
E-mail: velio.macellari@iss.it

To research, develop and assess new biomedical and physical techniques for the protection and improvement of public health

Units

Assessment and quality of biomedical technologies
Biomaterials and contaminants
Biomechanics and rehabilitation technologies
Cardiovascular bioengineering
Complex systems models and their application to risk assessment
Ionizing radiation biophysics
Non ionizing radiation
Nuclear physics and technology for health
Physical technologies in biomedicine
Radiation dosimetry and radiation-induced defects
Radioactivity and health effects
Technologies for systems biology
Ultrastructural aspects of infectious diseases
Ultrastructural methods for innovative anticancer therapies
Department

Therapeutic Research and Medicines Evaluation

Director: Stefano Vella
Tel: +39 064990 6015-6016
E-mail: stefano.vella@iss.it

To contribute to public health by controlling the quality, efficacy and safety of drugs and through research into new drugs and treatments for human diseases

Units

Antitumor drugs
Cardiovascular pharmacology
Cell aging, degeneration and gender medicine
Central nervous system pharmacology
Drug dependence and doping
Molecular and cellular pharmacology
Natural substances, traditional medicine
Non clinical assessment of medicine and phase 1 clinical trial
Pharmacogenetics, drug resistance and experimental therapeutics
Pharmacology and therapy of viral diseases
Quality of chemical drugs. Anti-counterfeiting unit
Quality of chemical drugs: control and evaluation
Italian Pharmacopoeia, quality of drugs, safety of cosmetics
Research on children’s health
Department

Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety

Director: Umberto Agrimi
Tel: +39 064990 2330
E-mail: umberto.agrimi@iss.it

All technical and scientific activities concerning aspects of public health related to food safety, veterinary public health and nutritional diseases

Units

Chemical contaminants in food
Dietetics
Food and veterinary toxicology
Food chemical safety and human health
Food science, human nutrition and health
Foodborne zoonoses
GMOs and mycotoxins
Microbiological foodborne hazards
Microorganisms and food technologies
Nutrition
Nutrition and aging
Prions and emerging infectious diseases
Prophylaxis and control of bacterial zoonoses
Relations with the European Union and public health
Veterinary epidemiology and risk assessment
Viral zoonoses
National Centre
National AIDS Centre

Director: Barbara Ensoli
Tel: +39 064990 3207-3209
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To develop and clinically test preventive and therapeutic vaccines as well as new interventions against HIV/AIDS and related syndromes based on pathogenesis and correlates of protection

Units
Clinical trials (immunology and virology core-lab)
Experimental retrovirology and non-human primate models (virology core-lab)
Pathogenesis of retroviruses
Retrovirus infections in developing countries
Virus-host interaction (immunology core-lab)

National Centre
National Centre for Chemical Substances

Director: Rosa Draisci
Tel: +39 064990 4343
E-mail: rosa.draisci@iss.it

Technical and scientific application of the European Regulation no. 1907/2006 on registration, evaluation, authorisation and restrictions of chemical substances (REACH Regulation). Responsibility of biocides evaluation and other related issues

Units
Analytical methods and support for laboratories
Data management, exposure and risk characterization
Hazard evaluation of chemical substances
Hazard evaluation of preparations and mixtures
National Centre
National Centre for Epidemiology, Surveillance and Health Promotion

Director: Stefania Salmaso
Tel: +39 064990 4010
E-mail: stefania.salmaso@iss.it

To develop and apply epidemiological and biostatistical methods to monitor and protect human health and to evaluate health services

Units
Bureau of statistics
Cancer epidemiology
Clinical epidemiology and guidelines
Communicable disease epidemiology
Epidemiology of cerebro and cardiovascular disease
Genetic epidemiology
Mental health
Pharmacoepidemiology
Population health and health determinants
Woman, child and adolescent health
National Centre
Centre for Immunobiologicals
Research and Evaluation

Director: Carlo Pini
Tel: +39 064990 2585
E-mail: carlo.pini@iss.it

Evaluation, control, and surveillance of immunobiological drugs, including biotechnological drugs, by analytical procedures and documentation assessment at the national level and in cooperation with international bodies. Research aimed at the quality and safety of immunobiological drugs

Units
Bacterial vaccines
Biologicals
Viral vaccines

National Centre
National Centre for Rare Diseases

Director: Domenica Taruscio
Tel: +39 064990 4018
E-mail: malattierare@iss.it

Research, advice and documentation on rare diseases and orphan drugs for prevention, treatment and surveillance

Units
European and international networks for rare diseases
Genetic tests
Molecular markers and biological models
Orphan drugs
Prevention, surveillance, training and information
National Centre
Notified Body for Medical Devices
and Assessment of Cosmetics (ONDICO)

Director: Carmine Guarino
Tel: +39 064990 6146
E-mail: carmine.guarino@iss.it

CE Certification for medical devices according to the Council Directive 93/42/CEE
to allow their marketing in the European Union.
Technical and scientific assessment of cosmetic products
and their manufacturing sites.
Training for healthcare professionals and professional associations.
National Blood Centre

Director: Giuliano Grazzini
Tel: +39 064990 4953
E-mail: cns@iss.it

To carry on coordination and technical-scientific control of all transfusion medicine issues ruled by Italian and European legislative provisions

Areas
Medical and scientific section
Blood transfusion safety
Communication and education
Administration, general secretariat
Information system

National Transplant Centre

Director: Alessandro Nanni Costa
Tel: +39 064990 4040
E-mail: cnt@iss.it

To organise and manage the activities of organ donation, procurement and transplants throughout Italy

Areas
Organisation, communication and institutional relationships
Statistical analysis and survival reporting
Transplant activity management
Transplant information system
Technical Service
Service for Biotechnology and Animal Welfare

Director: Rodolfo Lorenzini
Tel: +39 064990 2844
E-mail: rodolfo.lorenzini@iss.it

To produce, manage and preserve microbiological cultures for experimental purposes. To monitor the housing, health and welfare of the animals used by the Institute for research purposes

Sectors
Biotechnology
Quality and safety of animal testing

Technical Service
Data Management, Documentation, Library and Publishing Activities

Acting Director: Franco Toni
Tel: +39 064990 3409
E-mail: ftoni@iss.it

To support institutional activities through: collection, processing and automation of health and technical-scientific data; management of database consultation systems; provision of library and information services; editing, printing, and dissemination of the Institute’s publications

Sectors
Data management
Documentation service
Library
Publishing activities
Governing Bodies
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Director General: Monica Bettoni
Board of Directors
Scientific Committee
Board of Auditors

Office of the President
Secretariat: Cristina D'Addazio
External Relations: Giovanni De Virgilio
Press Office: Mirella Taranto
Bioethics Unit: Carlo Petrini

Departments
Cell Biology and Neurosciences
Environment and Primary Prevention
Haematology, Oncology and Molecular Medicine
Infectious, Parasitic and Immune-Mediated Diseases
Technology and Health
Therapeutic Research and Medicines Evaluation
Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety

National Centres
AIDS
Chemical Substances
Epidemiology, Surveillance and Health Promotion
Immunobiologics Research and Evaluation
Notified Body for Medical Devices and Assessment of Cosmetics
Rare Diseases
Blood
Transplant

Technical-Scientific Services
Biotechnology and Animal Welfare
Data Management, Documentation, Library and Publishing Activities
Office of the Director-General
Director-General: Monica Bettoni
Secretariat: Tiziana Di Mauro

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VI. Recruitment and Grants

Central Directorate
Administrative Affairs and Financial Resources
Director: Rosa Maria Martoccia
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II. Tax Affairs
III. Contracts, Ordinary Services and Expenses, Foreign Contracts
IV. Consortia, Foundations, Company Holdings, Patents
V. Data Processing, Administrative Affairs and Public Relations

Building and Equipment Maintenance, Workers’ Health and Safety

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