

Cardio-Metabolic Disorders Research Priority Group (CMD-RPG)

Advancing collaborative research in cardiometabolic medicine across CMHS, Tawam Hospital, and Sheikh Tahnoon Medical City – SEHA Al Ain

College of Medicine and Health Sciences · United Arab Emirates University · Al Ain, UAE

Overview

The Cardio-Metabolic Disorders Research Priority Group (CMD-RPG) brings together basic scientists, clinical investigators, and translational researchers from the College of Medicine and Health Sciences and its affiliated clinical partners to catalyse high-impact cardiometabolic research, improve patient outcomes, and elevate the regional and international research profile of UAE University.

Investigator Matchmaker & Registration

Find collaborators, browse the research subgroups, and register your interest through the CMD-RPG matchmaker:

<https://cmd-rpg-matchmaker.netlify.app/>

What we do

- Unite researchers across disciplines and institutions to tackle cardiometabolic disease — a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the UAE
- Coordinate eight focused research subgroups spanning the full spectrum from basic science to clinical trials
- Match investigators with complementary expertise for stronger grant applications and publications
- Provide mentorship and research training for early-career faculty and graduate students
- Organise an annual CME-accredited Cardio-Metabolic Research Symposium
- Maintain a shared research infrastructure and output dashboard

Why CMD-RPG?

- Structured governance with a formal Charter, elected leadership, and transparent processes
- Dual institutional representation — every leadership role pairs CMHS and SEHA colleagues
- Aligned with CMHS strategic research priorities and UAE national health agendas
- Access to grant-pairing support, study-design consultation, and regulatory guidance
- A single, coordinated voice for cardiometabolic research in Al Ain

Partner institutions

- College of Medicine and Health Sciences, UAE University
- Tawam Hospital – SEHA, Abu Dhabi Health Services
- Sheikh Tahnoon Medical City (Al Ain) – SEHA, Abu Dhabi Health Services

About the CMD-RPG

Background

The College of Medicine and Health Sciences has a longstanding tradition of collaborative research in cardiometabolic medicine. Building on the legacy of the former Diabetes and Cardiovascular Research Priority Group, the CMD-RPG was formally re-established in 2026 to provide a structured, sustainable platform for advancing multi-disciplinary research across CMHS and its SEHA clinical partners in Al Ain.

Leadership

- **Patron:** Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, CMHS
- **Chair:** to be appointed / elected
- **Co-Chair:** to be appointed / elected — alternates between CMHS and Adjunct / SEHA faculty
- **Secretary:** to be appointed / elected

Research subgroups

The Group encompasses eight focused subgroups, each led by two Co-Leads — one from CMHS Core Faculty and one from Adjunct / SEHA Clinical Faculty:

1. MASLD (Metabolic-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease)

Scope: NASH, hepatic-fibrosis biomarkers, non-invasive diagnostics, steatosis phenotyping, liver–metabolic crosstalk.

2. Diabetes Mellitus

Scope: Type 1, Type 2, and gestational diabetes; DKA prevention; diabetes technology; continuous glucose monitoring; insulin-delivery systems.

3. Endocrinology

Scope: Thyroid disorders, adrenal disease, pituitary conditions, calcium metabolism, rare endocrine conditions.

4. Obesity

Scope: GLP-1 receptor agonists, bariatric outcomes, metabolic phenotyping, lifestyle interventions, body-composition analysis.

5. Renal / Nephrology

Scope: Diabetic kidney disease, CKD progression markers, cardiorenal syndrome, dialysis outcomes.

6. Cardiovascular

Scope: Premature ACS, heart failure, lipoprotein(a), hypertension management, vascular biology, cardiac-imaging biomarkers.

7. Translational & Laboratory-Based Research

Scope: Ceramide biology, pharmacogenomics, biomarker discovery, omics-based research, bench-to-bedside translation.

8. Drug Discovery

Scope: Novel therapeutics, drug-repurposing studies, clinical pharmacology, PK/PD modelling.

Additional subgroups may be proposed by any three voting members and approved by the Executive Committee.

Governance

- Formal Charter and Governance Framework adopted at the inaugural meeting

- Four-tier structure: Patron → Executive Committee → General Assembly → Research Subgroups
- Elections held every two years, with term limits
- Monthly General Meetings (September–June)
- Annual Research Symposium with CME accreditation

Pre-Clinical and Adjunct Faculty Involvement

Bridging the bench and the bedside

CMD-RPG is built on the principle that meaningful cardiometabolic research requires the integration of basic-science discovery with clinical application. We actively seek involvement from pre-clinical scientists and adjunct clinical faculty to create research teams that span the full translational pipeline.

Roles for pre-clinical faculty

- Lead or co-lead the Translational & Laboratory-Based Research and Drug Discovery subgroups
- Provide mechanistic expertise (molecular biology, pharmacology, genomics, metabolomics) to clinically driven research questions
- Collaborate on grant applications that require both a basic-science and a clinical component
- Supervise PhD and MD-PhD students on joint translational projects
- Contribute biomarker discovery and validation to clinical studies

Roles for adjunct and SEHA clinical faculty

- Co-lead subgroups alongside CMHS Core Faculty to ensure clinical relevance and patient access
- Provide access to clinical cohorts, patient registries, and biobank samples at Tawam Hospital and STMC–SEHA
- Identify unmet clinical needs that can be translated into research questions
- Serve as site principal investigators for multi-site and industry-sponsored studies
- Mentor medical residents and fellows in clinical-research methodology

The dual co-lead model

Every subgroup is jointly led by one CMHS Core Faculty member and one Adjunct / SEHA Clinical Faculty member. This ensures:

- Research questions are clinically grounded and scientifically rigorous
- Access to both laboratory infrastructure (CMHS) and patient populations (SEHA hospitals)
- Grant applications demonstrate institutional collaboration across the academic–clinical interface
- Balanced representation in governance and decision-making

How to get involved

- Complete the CMD-RPG registration form, indicating your research interests and preferred subgroup(s)
- Indicate whether you are interested in a Co-Lead or Deputy role
- Attend the monthly General Meetings — open to all CMHS and Adjunct / SEHA faculty
- Contact the CMD-RPG Secretary to discuss specific collaboration opportunities

Register your interest

Complete the CMD-RPG registration and matchmaker form: <https://cmd-rpg-matchmaker.netlify.app/>

How CMHS Faculty Can Submit a Study

CMD-RPG welcomes research proposals from all CMHS faculty and adjunct colleagues. Whether you have a fully developed protocol or an early-stage idea, we can help you refine it, find collaborators, and navigate the approvals process.

Step 1 — Submit your research idea

- Complete the CMD-RPG Study Proposal Form
- Provide a brief summary: research question, study design, target population, and anticipated outcomes
- Indicate which subgroup(s) your study aligns with
- Note any specific support you need (co-investigators, statistical design, data management, funding)

Step 2 — Subgroup review

- Your proposal is reviewed at the next relevant subgroup meeting
- The Subgroup Co-Leads assess alignment with the subgroup's research agenda
- Feedback is provided within two weeks, including suggestions for methodology, collaborators, and funding sources

Step 3 — Investigator matching

- CMD-RPG matches you with co-investigators who have complementary expertise
- Matches may include basic scientists, biostatisticians, clinical specialists, or data scientists across CMHS and SEHA
- Joint meetings are arranged to develop the study protocol

Step 4 — Support services

Once your study team is formed, CMD-RPG can facilitate access to:

- Study-design and methodology consultation
- Biostatistics and sample-size calculation
- Data management and REDCap / database setup
- Research-ethics application support (UAEU and SEHA IRBs)
- Grant-writing and budget-development assistance
- AI and computational research support

Step 5 — Ongoing support

- Present progress updates at monthly subgroup and General Meetings
- Access peer review and feedback from fellow CMD-RPG members
- Report outputs (manuscripts, grants, presentations) for inclusion in the Group's Research Output Dashboard

Faculty Matching and Research Support Services

CMD-RPG offers a comprehensive suite of research-support services to help CMHS and SEHA faculty move from idea to publication. All services are available to registered CMD-RPG members.

Faculty matching service

- Systematic matching of investigators with complementary expertise across CMHS departments and SEHA hospitals
- Pairing of basic scientists with clinical investigators for translational projects
- Cross-subgroup matching for multi-disciplinary research questions
- Early-career faculty paired with senior mentors for grant development

Study design and methodology

- Consultation on study design: observational, interventional, mixed-methods, and systematic reviews
- Protocol development and refinement
- Feasibility assessment and pilot-study planning
- PICO / SPIDER framework development for research questions

Biostatistics and data analysis

- Sample-size and power calculations
- Statistical Analysis Plan (SAP) development
- Data-analysis support using SPSS, R, Stata, or Python
- Guidance on appropriate statistical methods for different study types

Data management

- REDCap database design, setup, and management
- Data-collection-instrument development
- Data cleaning and quality-assurance protocols
- Secure data storage and sharing in compliance with UAEU and SEHA policies

Regulatory and ethics support

- Guidance on UAEU Social Sciences and CMHS Research Ethics Committee applications
- SEHA / Abu Dhabi Research Ethics Committee (DOH-REC) submission support
- Clinical-trial registration (ClinicalTrials.gov, ISRCTN)
- Informed-consent-document preparation
- Data-protection and patient-privacy compliance

AI and computational research

- Machine-learning model development for clinical prediction and diagnostics
- Natural-language processing for clinical-text mining
- Bioinformatics and omics data analysis
- AI-assisted literature review and evidence synthesis
- Computational pharmacology and drug-repurposing analysis

Grant writing and funding

- Identification of appropriate funding streams (UPAR, DOH Ma'an, Hamdan, ASPIRE, CETL, and international)
- Grant-application review and feedback
- Budget development and justification
- Letters of support from CMD-RPG leadership

For Industry and CRO Partners

CMD-RPG offers a unique platform for pharmaceutical companies, medical-device manufacturers, and contract research organisations (CROs) seeking clinical-research partnerships in the UAE. Our integrated academic–clinical network provides access to diverse patient populations, experienced investigators, and world-class research infrastructure.

Site capabilities

- Integrated academic–clinical network across three institutions: CMHS (UAE University), Tawam Hospital, and Sheikh Tahnoon Medical City – SEHA Al Ain
- Access to diverse, multi-ethnic patient populations representative of the Gulf region
- Experienced principal investigators across all major cardiometabolic therapeutic areas
- Research-ethics approval infrastructure (UAEU REC, SEHA / DOH-REC) with established timelines
- GCP-trained clinical-research teams
- Biobank and biospecimen storage facilities
- Advanced imaging, genomics, and laboratory infrastructure at CMHS

Therapeutic areas

CMD-RPG investigators have active expertise across:

- Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes mellitus (including diabetes technology and GLP-1 receptor agonists)
- Obesity and metabolic syndrome
- Non-alcoholic / metabolic-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD / NASH)
- Cardiovascular disease (premature ACS, heart failure, hypertension, lipoprotein(a))
- Chronic kidney disease and cardiorenal syndrome
- Thyroid and endocrine disorders
- Pharmacogenomics and precision medicine

How to place a trial

- **Initial enquiry.** Contact the CMD-RPG Chair or Secretary with a brief study synopsis, including therapeutic area, study phase, target population, and estimated enrolment.
- **Feasibility assessment.** The relevant subgroup Co-Leads assess site feasibility, including patient availability, investigator interest, and infrastructure requirements. A feasibility report is provided within four weeks.
- **Site selection and contracting.** If feasible, CMD-RPG identifies and nominates a Principal Investigator and study team. Contract and budget negotiations proceed through UAEU's Research and Sponsored Projects Office and/or SEHA's research-contracts unit.
- **Regulatory approvals.** CMD-RPG coordinates ethics submissions to the UAEU and/or SEHA research-ethics committees, with experience of DOH-REC requirements.
- **Study conduct and monitoring.** The PI and study team conduct the trial with support from CMD-RPG's data-management and biostatistics services, with regular updates to the sponsor.

Partnership models

- **Investigator-Initiated Studies (IIS)** — CMD-RPG investigators propose and lead the study with industry funding support
- **Industry-Sponsored Clinical Trials** — sponsor-designed protocols placed at CMD-RPG network sites

- **Collaborative Research Agreements** — joint study design and data sharing between CMD-RPG and industry / CRO partners
- **Real-World Evidence (RWE) Partnerships** — retrospective and prospective observational studies using SEHA electronic health records and registries
- **Biomarker and Companion-Diagnostic Studies** — leveraging CMHS laboratory and genomics infrastructure

Why partner with CMD-RPG?

- Single point of contact for multi-site research across the CMHS–SEHA network in Al Ain
- Coordinated regulatory and ethics pathway across academic and hospital IRBs
- Access to a UAE-based patient population with a high cardiometabolic disease burden
- Academic rigour combined with clinical operational efficiency
- Institutional backing from UAE University and SEHA / PureHealth

Contact

General enquiries	cmd-rpg@uaeu.ac.ae
Phone	+971-3-713-7275
Location	Cardio-Metabolic Disorders Research Priority Group, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, United Arab Emirates University, P.O. Box 15551, Al Ain, UAE
Registration & matchmaker	https://cmd-rpg-matchmaker.netlify.app/
Industry & CRO enquiries	cmd-rpg@uaeu.ac.ae (subject line: “Industry Partnership Enquiry”)

Chair / coordinator

Dr. Adnan Agha — Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Endocrinology, CMHS; Consultant Endocrinologist, Tawam Hospital.

Named leadership contacts (Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary) will be published following the inaugural meeting and elections.