

PRESS RELEASE

International acute respiratory virus experts gather for the 10th ESWI Conference in Valencia despite global pressures on health systems

- Close to 700 leading scientists, public health experts, policymakers and industry representatives gathered for four days to discuss the latest advances in influenza, RSV, COVID-19 and hMPV. A red thread through all the conversations was the question of how to increase vaccination uptake.
- The Spanish Minister of Health underlined the need for spaces where science and policy listen to each other to build trust and make evidence-based policies: “Europe is built on knowledge, evidence and cooperation.”
- Pressures stemming from the US Government shutdown and the depletion of the US Centres for Disease Control and a lapse in Government funding for National Institutes of Health (NIH) set a sombre tone for continued international scientific collaboration.
- Maintaining research capacity amid budget constraints is more vital than ever to sustain progress and confidence in science and public health security.

Valencia, 24 October 2025 – The 10th European Scientific Working Group on Influenza (ESWI) Conference concluded in Valencia, bringing together close to 700 leading scientists, public health experts, policymakers and industry representatives from across Europe and beyond for four days to discuss the latest advances in acute respiratory virus infections. The international scientific community shared state-of-the-art data across 41 scientific and policy sessions and presented over 190 posters on influenza, RSV, COVID-19, COVID-19 and hMPV.

In the opening ceremony on Monday 20 October, **Spanish Minister for Health Mónica García** underlined: “*In a time when science is challenged, Europe should lead a world where **science builds bridges**, puts people at the centre, and strengthens trust through evidence.*” “*Trust is fragile,*” she added. “*For that reason, there is a strong need for **spaces where science and policy listen to each other.***”

Trust in science, risk communication and public funding were at the core of discussions by the international community in several sessions. “*Effective communication of benefits and risks is a key factor in building trust. The three pillars of trust are fairness, competence and efficiency,*” explained **Frederic Boudier from the University of Stavanger** in Norway.

Scientists from Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and Norway raised concerns about the **current global research landscape** and the challenge of maintaining research capacity in the middle of budget constraints.

Across all regions, one message was clear: **collaboration and mutual support** are more vital than ever to sustain progress in science and public health.

Supporting promising scientists in their careers and research through the ESWI Early Career Scientists (ECaS) Community was a major highlight of this 10th edition. The programme included a workshop on communications and public speaking, as well as the “Life After PhD” session which offered inspiring lessons from experienced scientists.

In addition, the ESWI Influenza Diabetes Community (IDC) unveiled its new name and broader scope: the **Interdisciplinary Disease Collaboration (IDC) on Respiratory Infections and Noncommunicable Diseases**. This change reflects an effort to achieve a better understanding of the bidirectional link between respiratory viruses and non-communicable diseases. Among the NCDs to be tackled as co-morbidities for respiratory infections are diseases resulting in compromised immunity, such as cancers, but also chronic conditions notably metabolic, cardio-vascular and neurological disorders.

The 11th ESWI Conference will take place in Valencia from 26 to 29 September 2027; and the next ESWI Acute Respiratory Virus Summit will be held in Brussels on 21 May 2026.

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About ESWI

The European Scientific Working Group on Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses (ESWI) is a scientific organisation that aims to reduce the burden of influenza and other acute respiratory viruses in Europe. At the core of the group are twelve leading scientific experts from different disciplines: virology, immunology, microbiology, epidemiology, mathematical modelling, geriatrics, paediatrics, and family medicine.

Founded in 1993, ESWI is a partnership of these scientific experts, working in close collaboration with organisations of public health officials, healthcare professionals, and high-risk groups. The collective aim is to reduce the number of casualties caused by respiratory viruses (which include influenza, RSV, COVID-19 and hMPV), by fostering cross-disciplinary research and by focusing on stakeholder communication to raise awareness and cooperation, particularly in the fight against epidemics and pandemics caused by viruses.

Related links

- [10th ESWI Influenza Conference 2025](#)
- [ESWI Early Career Scientists \(ECaS\) Community](#)
- [9th ESWI Influenza Conference 2023](#)
- [ESWI Science Policy Interface Roundtable 2025](#)
- [ESWI Science Policy Interface Roundtable 2024](#)
- [ESWI Airborne podcast series](#)
- [ESWI Respiratory Virus Summit](#)
- [ESWI Education Hub](#)

Contact for media

- Goretti Cortina, ESWI Secretariat, goretti.cortina@eswi.org