



Personalised Phage Therapy

From Evidence to Implementation in Estonia

Scientific Conference



23 October 2026



Tartu, Estonia

Antimicrobial resistance represents a growing clinical challenge in Estonia and globally. Personalised phage therapy offers a promising approach for treating complex bacterial infections where conventional therapies fail. This conference convenes clinicians, scientists, and regulators to discuss the current state of phage therapy and its evidence-based implementation in Estonia.

Preliminary program

09:30-10:00 Registration & coffee

10:00-10:15 Opening remarks

Prof. Joel Starkopf, MD, Ph.D
Prof. Tanel Tenson, PhD

10:15-10:40 New Antibiotics and Bacteriophages: Do We Need Both?

Prof. Irja Lutsar, MD, Ph.D

10:40-11:30 Phage Therapy in 2026: Evidence and Clinical Readiness

Prof. Jean-Paul Pirnay, PhD

11:30-11:50 Coffee break

Session 1 Clinical Fundamentals

11:50-12:20 Phage Therapy in Italy: Clinical Applications and Regulatory Challenges

Dr. Novella Cesta, MD, PhD

12:20-12:50 Phage Therapy in Latvia: Clinical Experience and Future Perspectives

Dr. Kārlis Rācenis, MD

12:50-13:20 Phage Therapy in Orthopedic Infections: Clinical Perspectives

Dr. Kaspar Tootsi, MD, PhD

13:20-14:30 Lunch

Session 2 Regulation & Implementation

14:30-15:00 Regulatory and Quality Frameworks for Phage Therapy

Helerin Eiche, Ph.D

15:00-15:30 Building Clinical Phage Collections for Rapid Access

Karin Ernits, Ph.D

15:30-16:20 Panel discussion: Translating Phage Therapy into Clinical Practice in Estonia

16:20-16:30 Closing remarks

Prof. Tanel Tenson, Ph.D

17:00-19:30 Networking dinner (*optional*)

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Invited speakers

Prof. Jean-Paul Pirnay, PhD

Queen Astrid Military Hospital, Belgium

Head of the Laboratory for Molecular and Cellular Technology, Queen Astrid Military Hospital. Focuses on antimicrobial resistance, personalised phage therapy, and its clinical implementation models.

Dr. Novella Cesta, MD, PhD

University Hospital Tor Vergata, Rome, Italy

Infectious diseases specialist focused on the clinical application of phage therapy in difficult-to-treat infections, including prosthetic joint infections.

Dr. Kārlis Rācenis, MD

Rīga Stradiņš University & Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital, Latvia

Clinician-researcher in infectious diseases and nephrology with experience in phage therapy and phage-antibiotic combination treatments for multidrug-resistant infections.

Dr. Kaspar Tootsi, MD, PhD

Tartu University Hospital & University of Tartu, Estonia

Orthopaedic surgeon and associate professor specialising in implant-related infections. Led the first clinical use of phage therapy in Estonia for prosthetic joint infection.

Prof. Irja Lutsar, MD, PhD

University of Tartu, Estonia

Professor of medical microbiology and internationally recognised expert in infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance.

Karin Ernits, PhD

Lund University, Sweden

Researcher in microbiology and molecular biology working on phage biology, phage-host interactions, and development of phage collections.

Helerin Eiche, Ph.D

State Agency of Medicines (Estonia)

Quality assessor for biological medicinal products. Contributes to the development of regulatory and legislative frameworks supporting clinical implementation of phage therapy.

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Practical information



Organisers

University of Tartu and Tartu University Hospital



Venue

Vspa Conference centre

Riia 2, Tartu, Estonia



Date and time

23 October 2026

09:30-16:30

Coffee breaks included

Networking dinner: 17:30-19:30 (*optional*)



Lunch break

Participants are kindly asked to arrange their own lunch. There are several dining options available within walking distance of the venue.



Networking dinner

The networking dinner will take place after the conference (optional). Participation is at own expense. Please indicate your interest during registration to support planning.



Registration

Participation is free of charge upon registration.

For registration scan the QR code below or use the following link: [Registration - Personalised Phage Therapy: From Evidence to Implementation in Estonia](#)

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