



UPDATE FROM MATRIX

Welcome to the March 2026 newsletter

MATRIX, the Norwegian Centre for Clinical Cancer Research, officially opened in August 2022. News and events are published on the [MATRIX website](#) regularly. In addition, we send out quarterly newsletters. If you would like to share any updates, such as publications or funding news, or would like to be added to the subscriber list, please contact [Nina Ånensen](#).

AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO CLINICAL STUDIES



This year saw the first award ceremony for “Award for Outstanding Contributions to Clinical Studies”. In a celebration of clinical trials, six awards and an honorary award were presented by NorTrials, LMI, Melanor, Inven2, NorCRIN and CONNECT.

Åslaug Helland was awarded the prize for “Årets ildsjel” (Enthusiast of the year). MATRIX was also nominated as centre of the year.

[Learn more >](#)

ERNST KNOBIL DISTINGUISHED LECTURE AND AWARD



Kjetil Taskén received the Ernst Knobil Distinguished Lecture and Award from McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston. The Knobil Distinguished Lecture represents the McGovern Medical School’s premier scientific presentation of the year.

Taskén delivered his lecture “Advancing precision cancer medicine by building national initiatives and via international collaboration” in Houston, TX, in March.

[Learn more >](#)

FUNDING FROM EP PERMED



Åsmund Flobak, NTNU, coordinates the project ERKetype that received funding from the European Partnership for Personalised Medicine (EP PerMed).

The project aims to develop personalised digital twins of patients' tumours to better match treatments for cancers driven by overactive ERK signalling. The digital twins integrate multi-omics data with mechanistic models of ERK and related signalling pathways to model how each cancer behaves and predict which targeted drugs or combinations are most likely to benefit each patient.

The project has five partners from four countries. Partners in Norway include the coordinator at NTNU, and OUS.

[**Learn more >**](#)

FUNDING FROM EU



**Funded by
the European Union**

The project ENACT-65 received funding from the European Union. The project is coordinated by Barry Laird, OUS, and includes several researchers from MyPath-MATRIX.

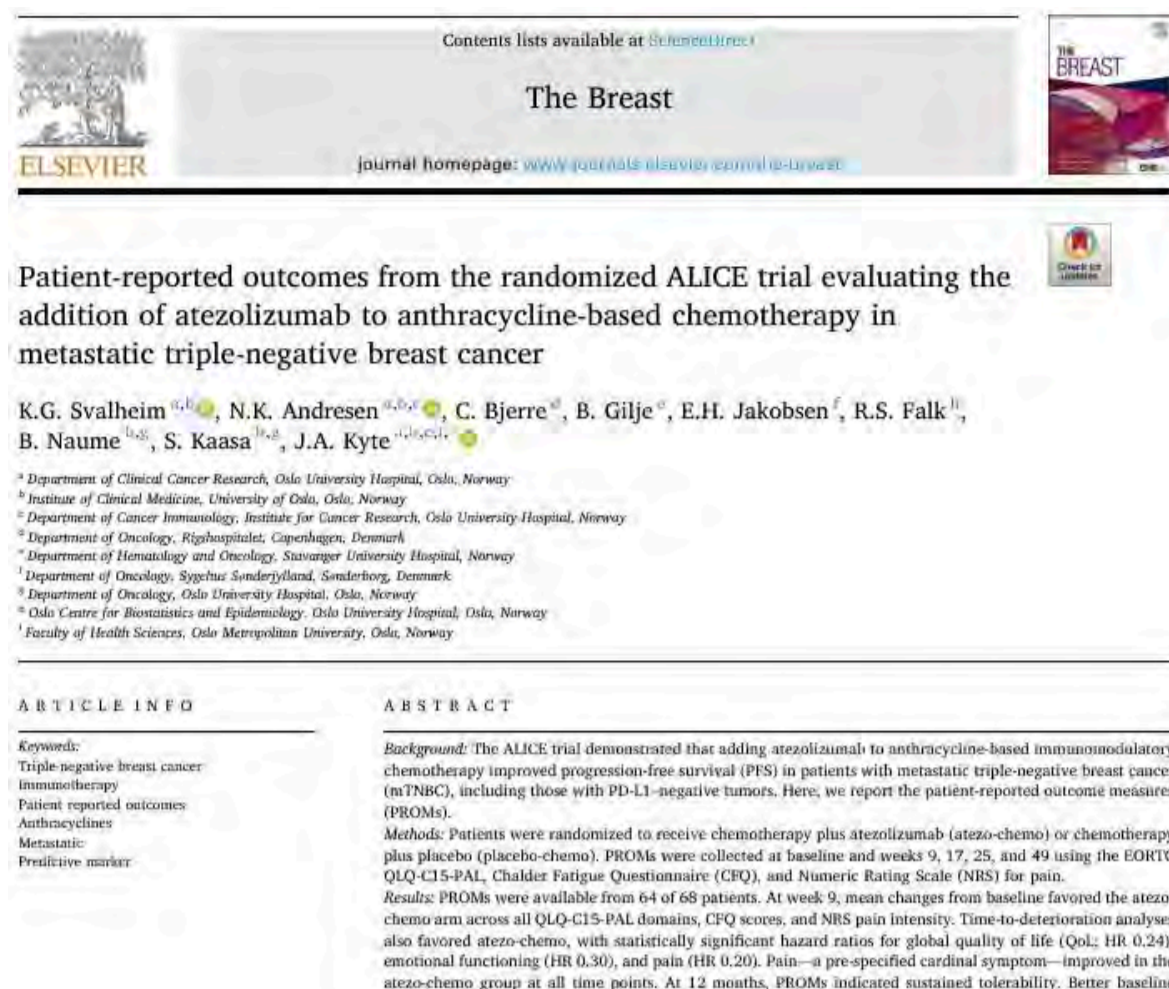
The mission of the project is to transform cancer care for older adults by embedding nutrition and exercise into routine oncology. As a pragmatic, multicentre randomised controlled trial in five European countries, ENACT-65 will evaluate whether our digitally supported nutritional care pathway with an integrated live-remote structured exercise programme improves quality of life and survival in older adults with metastatic non-small cell lung cancer or colorectal cancer receiving systemic therapy, compared to standard cancer care.

The project includes partners from five countries. Partners in Norway include the coordinator at OUS, and Helse Møre og Romsdal, Ålesund, and St. Olavs Hospital.

[**Learn more >**](#)



NEW PUBLICATION IN THE BREAST



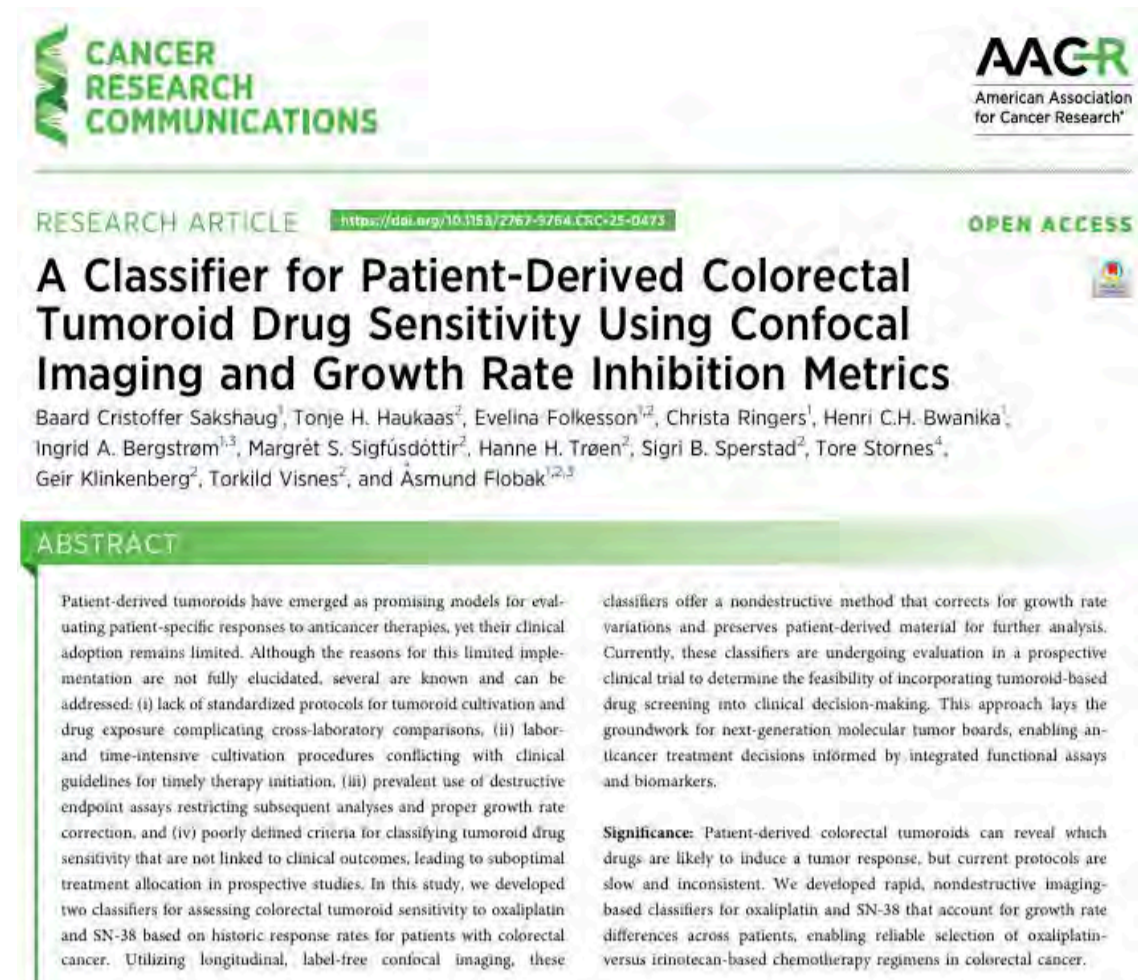
The ALICE trial demonstrated that adding atezolizumab to chemotherapy improved progression-free survival (PFS) in patients with metastatic triple-negative breast cancer (mTNBC). A new publication from Jon Amund Kyte and colleagues now reports patient-reported outcome measures from the trial.

They find that adding atezolizumab to the study-chemotherapy in mTNBC improves both PFS and patient-reported quality of life, emotional well-being and symptom control. These findings support continued development of this combination regimen and suggest that baseline quality of life may serve as a useful predictor of immunotherapy benefit.

The paper “Patient-reported outcomes from the randomized ALICE trial evaluating the addition of atezolizumab to anthracycline-based chemotherapy in metastatic triple-negative breast cancer” was published in *The Breast*.

[Learn more >](#)

NEW PUBLICATION IN CANCER RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS



Patient-derived colorectal tumoroids can reveal which drugs are likely to induce a tumor response, but current protocols are slow and inconsistent.

In a new publication from Åsmund Flobak's lab, they describe the development of rapid, nondestructive imaging-based classifiers for oxaliplatin and SN-38 that account for growth rate differences across patients, enabling reliable selection of oxaliplatin-versus irinotecan-based chemotherapy regimens in colorectal cancer.

The paper “A classifier for patient-derived colorectal tumoroid drug sensitivity using confocal imaging and growth rate inhibition metrics” was published in *Cancer Research Communications*.

[Learn more >](#)

TWO NEW DRUGS AVAILABLE IN MATRIX-RARE



The in house developed clinical trial MATRIX-Rare has entered into a new agreement with the pharmaceutical company Servier to get access to two new study drugs.

Servier will provide the isocitrate dehydrogenase (IDH)-1 inhibitor Ivosidenib (Tibsovo) and the dual IDH1 and IDH2-inhibitor Vorasidenib (Vorango).

[Learn more >](#)

THE NORCUP TRIAL IS OPENING



The NorCUP trial is ready to start inclusion.

NorCUP is a trial investigating Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP). The trial aims to improve diagnostics of CUP through molecular profiling, report historical CUP data in Norway, and enable more personalized treatment of CUP. The project will evaluate whether an extended diagnostic work-up can improve survival in these patients and will also compare different diagnostic methods with respect to their ability to identify a possible site of origin. NorCUP will also investigate whether the use of a study-specific CUP multidisciplinary team (MDT) influences treatment decisions.

The trial is sponsored by Haukeland University Hospital, and is led by Eli Sihn Samdal Steinskog.

[Learn more >](#)



COLLABORATION WITH UIO GROWTH HOUSE



MATRIX is strengthening its collaboration with UiO Growth House and the School of Health Innovation through a new Professor II position. Professor Jon Amund Kyte, who assumed the role in 2025, will help build national expertise in clinical studies and health innovation by contributing to training, mentoring, and research in clinical trials.

The partnership will connect clinical researchers more closely with innovation environments, helping more ideas in precision medicine and cancer treatment mature into practical solutions.

[Learn more >](#)

UNDERWAY ASSESSMENT OF MATRIX



The Research Council is currently conducting an underway assessment of MATRIX. The purpose is to assess the centre's activities in relation to our objectives and the success criteria for the centre scheme as established by the Research Council.

MATRIX has prepared several documents as documentation on centre activity. These will be assessed by an international panel of experts. Representatives from both the host institution and partners will also meet with the expert panel in a digital meeting as part of the assessment process.

The Research Council Portfolio Board for Health will consider the result of the underway assessment in September.

We look forward to the feedback!

MATRIX ANNUAL REPORT 2025



The MATRIX annual report for 2025 is now available from our website.

The report includes updates on work taking place in the Centre, information about clinical trials supported by MATRIX, as well as highlights from the past year.

[Learn more >](#)