CV ALFRED CORTÉS CLOSAS

Birth: 10 November 1971, Barcelona.
Languages: Catalan, Spanish, English, Melanesian Pidgin.

ICREA Research Professor at ISGlobal
Head of the Malaria Epigenetics Lab
Parc Científic de Barcelona (PCB), Cluster II, 4th floor
C./ Baldiri Reixac 4-8 or Av./ Doctor Marañón, 8
08028 BARCELONA, Catalonia, Spain
Tel.: +34 93 8828485 ext. 301; e-mail: alfred.cortes@isglobal.org
www.icrea.cat/Web/ScientificStaff/Alfred-Cortes-Closas-375
https://www.isglobal.org/en/researchers/-/profiles/2000
https://www.isglobal.org/en/malaria-epigenetics
Orcid ID: 0000-0003-0730-6582

EDUCATION

1999- PhD in Biology, University of Barcelona, Spain.
1994- BSc in Biochemistry, University of Barcelona, Spain. Average grade: 3.36 (0-4) (Extraordinary prize of the Biochemistry degree).

CURRENT POST

Since September 2012. **ICREA Research Professor** at Barcelona Institute for Global Health (**ISGlobal**), Catalonia, Spain. Head of the Malaria Epigenetics lab. Main topics: regulation of gene expression and sexual conversion in malaria parasites.

PREVIOUS POSTS HELD

July 2011 - September 2012. **Assistant Research Professor** at **CRESIB**. Topics: epigenetic regulation of gene expression in the malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum* and adaptation of the parasite to changes in its environment.

July 2006 - July 2011. **ICREA Researcher** at the Ribas de Pouplana lab, Barcelona Institute for Research in Biomedicine (**IRB Barcelona**), Catalonia, Spain. Topics: epigenetic regulation of gene expression and invasion of red blood cells by malaria parasites.

February 2004 - July 2006. **Investigator Scientist** at Anthony Holder's laboratory, Division of Parasitology, MRC National Institute for Medical Research (**NIMR**), London, UK. Topic: regulation of gene expression and invasion of red blood cells in malaria.

February 2000 - October 2003. **Head of the Molecular Parasitology Laboratory** at the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research (**PNGIMR**), Madang, Papua New Guinea. Topics: malaria vaccine development; mechanisms of malaria protection by red blood cell polymorphisms; *var*-genes expression; invasion of erythrocytes by *P. falciparum*.

December 1999 - February 2000. **Visiting scientist** at Robin Anders' laboratory, Department of Infection and Immunity, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (**WEHI**), Melbourne, Australia. Topic: malaria vaccine development.

September - November 1999. Short-term **Research Fellow** at Hans-Peter Beck's laboratory, Department of Medical Parasitology and Infection Biology, Swiss Tropical Institute (**STI**), Basel, Switzerland. Topic: *var* genes expression in *P. falciparum*.

January 1995 - July 1999. **PhD Student** at Ferran Azorín's laboratory, Centre d'Investigació i Desenvolupament (**CID**) - CSIC, Barcelona, Spain. Topic: *Drosophila* single-stranded DNA binding proteins.

HONOURS and AWARDS

2024. Ramon Margalef prize (5,000€) to Elisabet Tintó-Font, doing her PhD under my supervision, for the best scientific article derived from a PhD thesis at Universitat de Barcelona (UB).

2022- Finalist (3 finalists) of the "Article of the year" award from the Catalan Society for Biology for the article Tintó-Font et al., & Cortés, *Nat. Microbiol.* 6:1163-74, 2021.

2021. Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) PhD Programme in Biomedicine Special Award to Oriol Llorà-Batlle for his PhD thesis (defended in academic year 2019-20), conducted under my supervision.

2020- Finalist (3 finalists) of the "Article of the year" award from the Catalan Society for Biology for the article Bancells et al., & Cortés, *Nat. Microbiol.* 4:144-54, 2019.

July 2012- ICREA Research Professor contract. Highly competitive contract awarded by ICREA, an independent agency funded by the Catalan Government aiming to promote excellence in science in Catalonia.

2011- EVIMalaR Affiliated member, competitive call.

2009- Competitive travel award from AGAUR (Catalan Research Funding Agency) for a research stay at NTU, Singapore.

2005- ICREA junior contract. Highly competitive five-year contract awarded by ICREA.

2005- *Ramón y Cajal* contract. Highly competitive five-year contract awarded by the Spanish Government. I renounced in favour of an ICREA junior contract.

2003- Travel award and "Young Investigator Honorable Mention" at the annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH). Philadelphia, USA.

1998- Extraordinary prize of the Biochemistry degree, Universitat de Barcelona.

RESEARCH STAYS and main COLLABORATIONS (selection)

2025. ongoing. Institut Pasteur (France), J. Bryant lab. Purpose: optimization of Micro-C to investigate chromatin contacts during the heat-shock response. A Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds travel grant was awarded to a member of my team (Anna Oncins) for a research stay at the Bryant lab.

2024. University of Heidelberg (Germany), Julien Guizzetti lab. Purpose: advanced microscopy to visualize an extremely low-abundance malarial protein.

2020. INSERM (France), C. Lavazec lab. Purpose: Functional characterization of infected erythrocytes.

2020. Leiden University (The Netherlands), C.J. Janse lab. Purpose: mosquito infection studies.

2019. Imperial College (London, UK), J. Baum lab. Purpose: mosquito infection studies.

2017. The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute (UK), O. Billker lab. Purpose: experiments in the mouse malaria model.

2016-2018. CSIC (Spain), E. Gómez-Díaz lab. Purpose: develop comparative ATAC-seq for malaria research.

2014-ongoing. Institute for Tropical Medicine (Antwerp, Belgium), A. Rosanas-Urgell lab. Purpose: molecular epidemiology studies. Two PhD students co-supervised.

2012. Co-host for a 6-months sabbatical stay at ISGlobal of Prof. M. Llinás (Princeton University, USA).

2010-ongoing. Princeton University /Pennsylvania State Unversity (USA), M. Llinás lab. Purpose: functional characterization of *P. falciparum* ApiAP2 transcription factors.

2008-2013. Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), Z. Bozdech's lab. Purpose: custom glass microarray experiments. I did two research stays at this laboratory.

2008-2011. Ikerlan (Arrasate, Spain), Microsystems department (private non-profit Technology research company). Purpose: development of a micro-fluidic closed circuit for blood.

2007-2014. IRB (Barcelona, Spain), L. Ribas de Pouplana group. Purpose: development of antibiotics targeting the *P. falciparum* translation system.

2008-2011. IBEC (Barcelona, Spain), X. Fernàndez-Busquets group. Purpose: targeted drug delivery to *Plasmodium*-infected erythrocytes.

2004-2006. Sanger Center (UK), A. Ivens' lab. Purpose: Affymetrix microarray experiments.

2002-2003. Monash University (Australia), B. Cooke's lab. Purpose: to characterise cytoadherence of *P. falciparum* infected mutant erythrocytes under flow conditions.

2000-2003. La Trobe University (Australia), Robin Anders lab. Purpose: characterisation of the vaccine candidate AMA1.

2000-2003. Swiss Tropical Institute (Switzerland), H.P. Beck lab. Purpose: analysis of *var*-gene expression in *P. falciparum* field isolates.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES, PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP and OTHER

2024. Chair of the working group to redefine the career track at ISGlobal.

2021-25. Chair (together with Dr. M. Guixens) of the Mentoring program and the Postdoctoral committee at ISGlobal.

2020. Organizer (together with Samuel Wassmer at LSHTM, UK, and Silvia Portugal at University of Heidelberg, Germany) of BioMalPar XVI (2020), an EMBL conference. Held virtually (instead of in Heidelberg, Germany) because of the COVID-19 situation.

2017. Organizer (together with Elisabeth Cardis) of the ISGlobal Scientific Retreat

2016-18. Co-coordinator of the Malaria Programme at ISGlobal (with Q. Bassat).

2016-17. Coordinator of the ISGlobal Research Support commission.

2015-18. Member of the Core Scientific Committee of the ISGlobal Alliance (integrated scientific committee including three scientists from ISGlobal and three from CREAL).

2014-18. Vice-chair of the CRESIB-ISGlobal Internal Scientific Committee (ISC).

From 2011. Affiliated member of the EVIMalaR Network of Excellence.

Member of the Spanish Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SEBBM).

Member of the Catalan Society for Biology (SCB), part of *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*.

2013. Programming in R language (Coursera online course).

2010. Supervisor licence for radioactive facilities.

INVITED CONFERENCES and ORAL PRESENTATIONS (selection)

University of Munich, invited conference, Munich, Germany, 2025.

IRB Barcelona, invited conference, Barcelona, Spain, 2025.

BioMalPar XX (an EMBL conference), invited speaker, Heidelberg, Germany, 2024.

Spanish blood banks meeting, invited conference, Sevilla, Spain, 2024.

Event linked to ISBT blood banks meeting, invited conference, Barcelona, Spain, 2024.

University of Montpellier, invited conference, Montpellier, France, 2023.

3rd Virtual Symposium on Advances in Malaria Research, United Scientific Group (USA), invited speaker, virtual, 2023.

“Chromatin and epigenetics symposium”, invited speaker, Catalan Society for Biology, Barcelona, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2020, 2023.

KAUST, invited conference, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 2022.

Ramon Areces foundation symposium “Malaria: Research for impact in the covid-19 era”, invited conference, Madrid, Spain, 2022.

Swiss TPH, invited conference, Basel, Switzerland, 2022.

JITMM, invited speaker, University of Mahidol, Thailand (virtual because of the COVID situation), 2021.

London Molecular Parasitology Club meeting, Crick Institute/LSTMH symposium in honour of Tony Holder’s scientific career, invited speaker, London, UK, 2021.

University of Heidelberg, invited conference, Heidelberg, Germany, 2019.

University of Glasgow, invited conference, Glasgow, UK, 2019.

Universitat de Girona, invited conference, Girona, 2018.

Keystone symposia “Malaria: From Innovation to Eradication”, invited speaker, Uganda, 2017.

Wellcome Genome Campus, “CRISPR Approaches for Apicomplexans” retreat, invited participant, Hinxton, UK, 2016.

LSHTM, invited conference, London, UK, 2016.

Annual meeting of the Spanish Society for Biochemistry (molecular parasitology session), invited speaker, Salamanca, Spain, 2016.

NIAID-NIH, invited seminar, Rockville, USA, 2015.

Swiss TPH, invited seminar, Basel, Switzerland, 2015.

EVIMalaR clusters 2&4 meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 2014.

2nd DCEXS Symposium (UPF): “Perspectives in Evolutionary Biology”, Spain, 2013.

EMBO conference “Comparative Genomics of Eukaryotic Microorganisms”, invited speaker, Spain, 2013.

EVIMalaR clusters 2&3 meeting, Montpellier, France, 2013.

EVIMalaR clusters 1&2 meeting, Berlin, Germany, 2012.

Institut Pasteur, Parasitology and Mycology Departmental Seminar, invited seminar, Paris, France, 2012.

Molecular Approches to Malaria (MAM), Melbourne, Australia, 2012.

EVIMalaR cluster 2 meeting, Rome, Italy, 2011.

BioMalPar meeting, Heidelberg, Germany, 2011.

Annual meeting of the ASTMH, Washington DC, USA, 2009. Invited Speaker at the Satellite Symposium “Immune Evasion in Malaria”.

Pan-African MIM meeting, Nairoby, 2009.

BioMalPar meeting, Heidelberg, Germany, 2007.

Oxford University (Peter Medawar building for Pathogens Research), invited conference, UK, 2003.

Annual meeting of the ASTMH, Philadelphia, USA, 2003.

Malaria in Melbourne meeting (MIM), Melbourne, Australia, 2003.

Papua New Guinea Medical Symposium, Alotau, Papua New Guinea, 2002.

EVALUATION and SUPERVISION

Member of the Wellcome Trust evaluation panel Pathogen Biology and Disease Transmission Discovery Advisory Group (DSV02). Three meetings per year in London (UK). Three-year appointment starting in 2025.

External advisor for the DELGEME African training network, focusing on capacity building (predoctoral and postdoctoral) in the field of high-throughput (omics) malaria research. Participation in the Project development workshop (Bamako, Mali) in 2017.

Member of the SAF (Biomedicine)-SP5 (Infection and Immunity) **evaluation panel** (Spanish Government) for projects follow up (2014), grant proposal evaluation (2014, 2015 and 2019 calls), and Juan de la Cierva contracts evaluations (2018).

Ad hoc **grant evaluator** for the European Research Council (ERC), the Spanish Evaluation Agency (ANEP), the Catalan Agency for Research and Universities (AGAUR), the Wellcome Trust, Swiss National Science Foundation, the UK Medical Research Council (MRC), the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the FCT (Portugal), Agence Nationale de la Recherche (France), KAUST competitive research grants (Saudi Arabia), Institut Pasteur internal call (France), Fondation pour la Recherche Médicale (France), the Poland National Academy of Sciences, the Israel Science Foundation, and the United States-Israel Binational Science Foundation.

Regular *ad hoc* **peer-reviewer** for several scientific journals, including *Nature*, *Nat. Microbiol.*, *Nat. Commun.*, *PNAS*, *eLife*, *Cell Reports*, *Cell Reports Methods*, *Genome Res.*, *Genome Biol.*, *Mol. Syst. Biol.*, *Genome Med.*, *Nucleic Acids Res.*, *Blood*, *PLoS Biol.*, *PLoS Pathog.*, *PLoS One*, *Commun. Biol.*, *mBio*, *mSphere*, *Cell. Microbiol.*, *Mol. Microbiol.*, *Brief. Funct. Genomics*, *Sci. Rep.*, *J. Proteome Res.*, *Trends Parasitol.*, *Infect. Immun.*, *Drug. Resist. Updat.*, *Int. J. Parasitol.*, *Epigenetics*, *RNA Biol.*, *Front. Cell. Dev. Biol.*, *Am. J. Trop. Med. Hyg.*, *PLoS One*, *BMC biol.*, *BMC Genomics*, *Malar. J.*, *Paras. Vect.*, etc.

Regular member of **PhD and MSc evaluating committees** (25 PhD thesis since 2010, including local and international Universities in France, Australia, South Africa, Belgium, Pakistan).

MSc thesis/internship supervision: 1) Sofía Mira, University of Barcelona (2012); 2) Luis M. Molinos, University of Barcelona (2012); 3) Elisabet Tintó, University of Barcelona (2014); 4) Oriol Llorà, Pompeu Fabra University (2015); 5) Evi van Schuppen, Radboud University (2015); 6) Júlia Romero, Pompeu Fabra University (2016); 7) Carla Sánchez, University of Barcelona (2017); 8) Rafael de Andres, Wageningen University (2019); 9) Rosa Herrera, University of Barcelona (2021); 10) Íngrid Peláez, University of Barcelona, (2022); 11) Marc Chillarón, Universitat de Barcelona (2023).

PhD Thesis Supervision: 1) Valerie M. Crowley, 2011, IRB Barcelona fellowship. Thesis title: “Epigenetic regulation of clonally variant gene expression in *Plasmodium falciparum*”. Pompeu Fabra University, best qualification (“excellent cum laude”). 2) Sofía Mira-Martínez, 2018, *TransGlobalHealth/Erasmus mundus* fellowship (EU). Thesis title: “A new mechanism of antimalarial drug resistance regulated at the epigenetic level”. Joint PhD ISGlobal / ITM (Antwerp, Belgium), co-supervisor: A. Rosanas. Universitat de Barcelona, best qualification (“excellent cum laude”). 3) Elisabet Tintó Font, 2019, MINECO pre-doctoral fellowship (former FPI). Thesis title: “Identification of PfAP2-HS as the master regulator of the heat shock response in the human malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum*”. University of Barcelona, best qualification (“excellent cum laude”). 4) Oriol Llorà Batlle, 2019, FPU fellowship (MECD, Spain). Thesis title: “Characterization of sexual commitment and the early steps of sexual development in the human malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum*”. University Pompeu Fabra, best qualification (“excellent cum laude”) and Special PhD award. 5) Harvie Portugaliza, 2020, *TransGlobalHealth/Erasmus mundus* fellowship (EU). Joint PhD ISGlobal / ITM (Antwerp, Belgium) / University of

Amsterdam, co-supervisors: A. Rosanas, C. Pell. Thesis title: “Targeting Malaria Transmission: A Transdisciplinary Approach”. University of Barcelona, best qualification (“excellent cum laude”). 6) Anastasia Pickford, 2021, FI fellowship (AGAUR, Catalan Government). Thesis title: “Characterization of the role of epigenetic variation in the adaptation of malaria parasites to changes in the conditions of the human host”. University of Barcelona, best qualification (“excellent cum laude”). 7) Lucas Michel-Todó, 2023, MINECO pre-doctoral fellowship (former FPI). Thesis title: “Interplay of genetic, epigenetic and transcription factors in the regulation of transcriptional variation in *Plasmodium falciparum*”. University of Barcelona, best qualification (“excellent cum laude”). **Ongoing PhD thesis:** Neus Ràfols Rodríguez (UPF), César Martínez Guardiola (UB).

GRANTS AWARDED (selection)

2025-2028. **Principal Investigator** of a Pilot research project, part of the ISGlobal Severo Ochoa grant CEX2023-0001290-S, MCIN/AEI, to promote use of single-cell approaches at ISGlobal. Title: “Dissecting *Plasmodium falciparum* sexual conversion at the single-cell level”. Total grant amount: €25,000.

2025. **Principal Investigator** (with M. Chiodin, specialized technician in my team) of a Singleron-Diagnostica Longwood competitive grant to test the Singleron system for single-cell transcriptomics in malaria research. The grant covered all reagents, materials and sequencing costs for two single-cell RNA-seq experiments.

2025-2027. **Unfunded collaborator** (co-promoter) on a grant from the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO, Belgium). Title: “Structure-function relationship and epigenetic regulation of *Plasmodium vivax* tryptophan-rich antigens during host cell invasion”. Principal Investigator: Prof. Anna Rosanas-Urgell (ITM, Antwerp, Belgium).

2024-2028. **Supervisor** for a predoctoral contract/scholarship (FPI, Spanish Government, associated with grant PID2022-137863OB-I00) awarded to C. Martínez.

2023-2026. **Principal investigator** of a “Proyectos de Generación de Conocimiento” grant (PID2022-137863OB-I00), Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN). Title: “Mechanisms of the transcriptional responses to changes in the environment in the malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum* (RESPONSE)”. Total grant amount: €475,000. In addition, the grant was awarded with an associated 4-year pre-doctoral contract (€111,758).

2023-2025. **Unfunded Collaborator** on an “Opportunity Fund Program” (OFP) 2023 pilot grant (Saudi Arabia). Principal Investigator: Prof. Arnab Pain (KAUST). Title: “Characterization of PfAP2-R (Ring): an essential AP2-DNA binding protein required for ring stage development during *Plasmodium falciparum* intra-erythrocytic developmental cycle”.

2023-2026. **Co-Promoter (co-PI)** on a Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO, Belgium) grant (IMMETASEX, G067823N). Principal Investigator: Prof. Anna Rosanas-Urgell. Title: “Host immune and metabolic determinants of sexual conversion in *Plasmodium* parasites”. Total grant amount: €598,000 (of which €38,160 are assigned to my team).

2023-2024. **Supervisor** for a Juan de la Cierva postdoctoral contract to Alba Pérez Cantero.

2022-2024. **Supervisor** for a Juan de la Cierva postdoctoral contract to Núria Casas Vila.

2021-2025. **Supervisor** for a predoctoral contract/scholarship (FPI, Spanish Government, associated with grant PID2019-107232RB-I00) awarded to N. Ràfols to work in the Malaria Epigenetics Lab.

2020-2023. **Principal investigator** of a "Programa Estatal de I+D+i Orientada a los Retos de la Sociedad (Retos)" grant (PID2019-107232RB-I00), Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN). Title: "Transcriptional regulation of adaptation and developmental decisions in malaria parasites: from epigenetic variation to directed transcriptional responses". Total grant amount: €278,300. In addition, the grant includes an associated 4-year pre-doctoral contract.

2019-2023. **Principal investigator** of a "La Caixa Health Research" grant (HR18-00267). Title: "Dissecting the initial molecular events that trigger sexual conversion and transmission in malaria parasites". Total grant amount: €499,400.

2018-2021. **Supervisor** for a predoctoral contract/scholarship (FPI, Spanish Government, associated with grant SAF2016-76190-R) awarded to L. Michel.

2017-2020. **Supervisor** for a predoctoral contract/scholarship (FI, Catalan Government) awarded to A. Pickford.

2017-2019. **Principal investigator** of a "Programa Estatal de I+D+i Orientada a los Retos de la Sociedad (Retos)" grant (SAF2016-76190-R), Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO). Title: "Investigating new aspects of the mechanisms and biological functions of epigenetic variation in malaria parasites". Grant total: €302,500. In addition, the grant includes an associated 4-year pre-doctoral contract.

2017-2019. **Principal investigator** of a "Explora - Ciencia" grant (SAF2015-72117-EXP), Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO). Title: "Sex determination in malaria parasites: a role for epigenetics?". Total grant amount: €45,000.

2017-2019. **Supervisor** for a predoctoral ***Erasmus mundus*** (EU) contract/fellowship (Transglobalhealth) awarded to H. Portugaliza to work at the Malaria Epigenetics Lab (main host) in collaboration with ITM (Antwerp, Belgium) and UvA (Amsterdam, Netherlands). Total fellowship amount: €122,400.

2015-2019. **Supervisor** for a predoctoral contract/scholarship (FPU, Spanish Government) awarded to O. Llorà.

2015-2019. **Supervisor** for a predoctoral contract/scholarship (FPI, Spanish Government, associated with grant SAF2013-43601-R) awarded to E. Tintó.

2014-2016. **Principal investigator** of a "Programa Estatal de I+D+i Orientada a los Retos de la Sociedad (Retos)" grant (SAF2013-43601-R), Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO). Title: "Epigenetic variation in malaria parasites: from regulatory mechanisms to parasite adaptation". Total grant amount: €242,000. In addition, the grant includes an associated 4-year pre-doctoral contract.

2014-2016. **Principal investigator** of the “Malaria Epigenetics Lab”: Emerging Research Group (2014 SGR 485) recognized and funded by the Catalan Government (SGR-AGAUR). Total grant amount: €11,000.

2014-2015. **Principal Investigator** of a SUMA / ACCIS-Global Alliance pilot project grant (CREAL-CRESIB-Catalan Government). Title: “Molecular Basis of Variation in the Sexual Conversion Rates of Malaria Parasites”. Total fellowship amount: €50,000.

2013-2015. **Supervisor** for a postdoctoral contract/scholarship (**Beatriu de Pinós**, AGAUR, Catalan Government) awarded to C. Bancells. Total amount: €77,136.

2013-2016. Pre-doctoral ***Erasmus mundus*** (EU) contract/fellowship (Transglobalhealth) to S. Mira-Martínez for a joint PhD between ISGlobal (under my supervision), ITM (Antwerp, Belgium) and VU (Amsterdam, Netherlands). Total fellowship amount: €122,400.

2011-2015. **Affiliated member** of EVIMalaR, an FP7-funded (European Commission) Network of Excellence. Funding covers networking activities, conference attendance, etc. Total grant amount: €12,000,000 (between all partners).

2011-2013. **Principal investigator** of a “Plan Nacional I+D+I” grant (SAF2010-20111), Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation (MICINN). Title: “Molecular basis of the epigenetic regulation of clonal variant gene expression in *Plasmodium falciparum*”. Total grant amount: €116,160.

2009-2011. **Collaborator** (PI: Lluís Ribas de Pouplana) on a FP7 (HEALTH) Collaborative Research Project (European Commission). Title: “MEPHITIS: Targeting protein synthesis in the apicoplast and cytoplasm of *Plasmodium*”. Total grant amount: €2,145,151 (between all partners).

2008-2010. **Principal investigator** of a FIS grant (PI070891), Spanish Ministry of Health. Title: “Mechanisms involved in silencing *Plasmodium falciparum* genes encoding ligands for erythrocyte invasion and phenotypes associated to the silencing or activation of these genes”. Total grant amount: €144.595.

2001-2003. **Principal investigator** of a WHO/TDR Collaborative Research Project grant, from the Pathogenesis and Functional Genomics Committee. Title: “Molecular Mechanisms Involved in the Protection of Ovalocytic Individuals Against Cerebral Malaria”. Total grant amount: $62.200.

PATENTS

15 April 2011. European Patent application num. EP11382112.8, “Núcleo de impulsión para microbomba de fluidos”. Applicants: Ikerlan S. Coop., IRB Barcelona, ICREA. We have developed a blood microcirculation prototype, based on a diaphragm pump with cantilever valves, with potential applications in *Plasmodium* research.

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Articles under review, posted as preprints or in press:

Y. Drissi-El Boukili, V. Kühne, H. M. Natama, P. Moris, E. Tintó-Font, O. Goovaerts, P. Guetens, A. Moreno-Murillo, Y. Valgaerts, T. E. Traoré, D. F. Ouedraogo, H. Tinto, A. Van de Velde, **A. Cortés**, G. Caljon & A. Rosanas-Urgell, **2025**, "Elevated *Plasmodium falciparum* sexual conversion in HbAC and HbAS red blood cells without altered IgG/IgM levels to trophozoite and stage I gametocyte-specific antigens", ***bioRxiv***, doi: https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.11.15.688532.

N. Ràfols, M. Chillarón-Adán, E. Tintó-Font & **A. Cortés**, **2025**, "Thermal and non-thermal stress conditions activate the *Plasmodium falciparum* AP2-HS-dependent heat-shock response", ***bioRxiv***, doi: https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.11.24.690237.

E. Tintó-Font, N. Casas-Vila, C. Martínez-Guardiola, A. Pérez-Cantero, N. Ràfols, P. B. Nyarko & **A. Cortés**, "Molecular mechanism for environmental induction of sexual conversion in *Plasmodium falciparum*", **under review**. Preparing resubmission to *Nat. Microbiol.* after a positive first review.

Published articles:

A. Pérez-Cantero, O. Llorà-Batlle, I. Pelaez-Conde, C. Martínez-Guardiola & **A. Cortés**, **2025**, "Heterochromatin *de novo* formation and maintenance in *Plasmodium falciparum*", ***PLoS Pathog.*** 21:e1013137.

S. Nhim, E. Tintó-Font, N. Casas-Vila, L. Michel-Todó & **A. Cortés**, **2024**, "Heterochromatin dynamics during the initial stages of sexual development in *Plasmodium falciparum*", ***Sci. Rep.*** 14:23180.

A. Ayllon-Hermida, M. Nicolau-Fernandez, A.M. Larrinaga, I. Aparici-Herraiz, E. Tintó-Font, O. Llorà-Batlle, A. Orban, M.F. Yasnot, M. Graupera, M. Esteller, J. Popovici, **A. Cortés**, H.A. Del Portillo & C. Fernandez-Becerra, **2024**, "*Plasmodium vivax* spleen-dependent protein 1 and its role in extracellular vesicles-mediated intrasplenic infections", ***Front. Cell. Infect. Microbiol.*** 14:1408451.

A. Freville, L.B. Stewart, K.K.A. Tetteh, M. Treeck, **A. Cortes**, T.S. Voss, S.J. Tarr, D.A. Baker & D.J. Conway., **2024**, "Expression of the MSPDBL2 antigen in a discrete subset of *Plasmodium falciparum* schizonts is regulated by GDV1 but may not be linked to sexual commitment", ***mBio*** 15(5):e0314023.

L. Michel-Todó, C. Bancells, N. Casas-Vila, N. Rovira-Graells, C. Hernández-Ferrer, J.R. González & **A. Cortés**, **2023**, "Patterns of Heterochromatin Transitions Linked to Changes in the Expression of *Plasmodium falciparum* Clonally Variant Genes", ***Microbiol Spectr.*** 11:e0304922.

In this manuscript, we characterised the heterochromatin transitions associated with spontaneous activation or silencing of clonally variant genes at a genome-wide level. We also identified a variable heterochromatin domain at the *gdv1* locus in which higher heterochromatin coverage was associated with higher sexual conversion rates.

E. Tintó-Font & **Cortés A.**, **2022**, REVIEW (News & Views): "How a malaria parasite becomes a male", ***Nature*** 612:408-409.

H.P. Portugaliza, H.M. Natama, P. Guetens, E. Rovira-Vallbona, A.M. Somé, A. Millogo, D.F. Ouédraogo, I. Valéa, H. Sorgho, T. Halidou, N. van Hong, A. Sitoe, R. Varo, Q. Bassat, **A. Cortés*** & A. Rosanas-Urgell*, **2022**, "*Plasmodium falciparum* sexual conversion rates can be affected by artemisinin-based treatment in naturally infected malaria patients", ***EBioMedicine*** 83:104198.

*equal contribution, co-corresponding authors

In this manuscript, we characterised in naturally-infected humans how treatment with the frontline antimalarial drug affects sexual conversion rates, which determine the parasite investment in transmission. By studying samples from three different cohorts, we described a complex scenario in which sexual conversion rates are differentially affected between drug resistant or sensitive parasites. This is the first demonstration of enhanced sexual conversion rates after drug treatment in natural malaria infections.

E. Tintó-Font & **A. Cortés**, **2022**, REVIEW: "Malaria parasites do respond to heat", ***Trends Parasitol.*** 38:435-49.

Cover image.

E. Tintó-Font, L. Michel-Todó, T.J. Russell, N. Casas-Vila, D.J. Conway, Z. Bozdech, M. Llinás & **A. Cortés**, **2021**, "A heat-shock response regulated by the PfAP2-HS transcription factor protects human malaria parasites from febrile temperatures", ***Nat. Microbiol.*** 6:1163-74.

In this manuscript, we identified the transcription factor that regulates the protective heat-shock response in malaria parasites. Fever is the most characteristic symptom of clinical malaria; therefore, the heat-shock response plays a fundamental role in parasite survival. This is the first malarial transcription factor shown to drive a directed transcriptional response to an environmental condition.

This manuscript was highlighted in the News & Views: Thathy & Fidock, "Malaria parasite beats the heat", ***Nat. Microbiol.*** 6:1105-7.

A.K. Pickford, L. Michel-Todó, F. Dupuy, A. Mayor, P.L. Alonso, C. Lavazec & **A. Cortés**, **2021**, "Expression patterns of *Plasmodium falciparum* clonally variant genes at the onset of a blood infection in malaria-naive humans", ***mBio*** 12:e01636-21.

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*equal contribution

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In this article, we describe a novel pathway for sexual conversion of malaria parasites. Using the recently identified *pfap2-g* gene as a marker of sexual commitment, we identified the stages at which commitment can take place and demonstrate that sexual conversion can proceed with or without an additional cycle of replication after commitment.

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N. Rovira-Graells, V.M. Crowley, C. Bancells, S. Mira-Martínez, L. Ribas de Pouplana & **A. Cortés**, **2015**, "Deciphering the principles that govern mutually exclusive expression of *Plasmodium falciparum clag3* genes", ***Nucleic Acids Res.*** 43:8243-57.
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In this article, we identify a *P. falciparum* transcription factor termed PfAP2-G that is the master regulator of sexual conversion, the process that determines the balance between persistence and transmission. The expression of PfAP2-G is regulated by heterochromatin-based epigenetic mechanisms, which links the fields of transmission biology and epigenetics in malaria research.

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In this article, we demonstrate that malaria parasites can acquire resistance to toxic compounds, including antimalarial drugs, by transcriptional switches in the *clag3* genes controlled at the epigenetic level. These findings provide strong evidence for the adaptive role of clonally variant gene expression in malaria.

R. Hoen, E.M. Novoa, A. López, N. Camacho, L. Cubells, P. Vieira, M. Santos, P. Marin-Garcia, J.M. Bautista, **A. Cortés**, L. Ribas de Pouplana & M. Royo, **2013**, "Selective inhibition of an apicoplastic aminoacyl-tRNA synthetase from *Plasmodium falciparum*", ***Chembiochem.*** 14:499-509.

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Cover highlight. This manuscript was selected as one of the May 2012 highlights (in full) in Nature Reviews Genetics (T. Casci, 2012, "Adaptation: Malarial bet hedging", ***Nat. Rev. Genet.*** 13:298-9).

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In this article, we demonstrate that a large number of genes encoding ligands for erythrocyte invasion can be switched on or off epigenetically. We also demonstrate mutually exclusive expression for two of these genes.

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M. Ortiz-Lombardía, **A. Cortés**, D. Huertas, R. Eritja & F. Azorín, **1998**, "Tandem 5'-GA:GA-3' Missmatches Account for the High Stability of the Fold-back Structures Formed by the Centromeric *Drosophila* Dodeca-satellite". ***J. Mol. Biol.*** 277:757-62.

OTHER SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS and OUTREACH ACTIVITIES (selection)

2025- Lecture at the ISGlobal Severo Ochoa Spring School in Host-Parasite Interactions, entitled: "*Plasmodium falciparum*: from the biology to the disease". Online activity addressed to a general international audience.

2022- Participation at the European Researcher's Night with a talk addressed to a general audience, entitled: "Malària wars: el retorn del paràsit (cap al mosquit)". Cosmo Caixa, Barcelona.

2018- Posts at the ISGlobal 'Health is global' (https://www.isglobal.org/en/healthisglobal) and Nature Microbiology Community (https://naturemicrobiologycommunity.nature.com) blogs.

2016- Conference addressed to the general public as part of the "Pint of Science" international initiative (https://pintofscience.com/). Barcelona.

2013, 2014, 2015, 2017- Participation in the “Dia de la Ciència a les Escoles -Setmana de la Ciència” (Science Day at Schools, part of the Science Week organized by the Catalan Government): scientific conferences at secondary schools.

2015- Conference addressed to a non-scientific audience as part of the initiative “Ciència oberta al barri” (Science Opened to the Neighborhood), organized by Universitat de Barcelona.

2013- “Tight synchronization of *P. falciparum* asexual blood stages for transcriptional analysis”, N. Rovira-Graells, V.M. Crowley and A. Cortés (in ***Methods in Malaria Research*** 6th Edition, 31-34, www.mr4.org/Publications/MethodsinMalariaResearch).

2012- Translation of the EVIMalaR Malaria Comic (“Malaria: the Battle against a Microscopic Killer”) to Catalan Language (http://www.malariacomic.com).

MEDIA COVERAGE

The work from my group has attracted important attention from the media, including interviews for the main Spanish public TV channel (*TVE1*) and *COM* radio, among others, and articles or interviews in newspapers *Avui*, *El País*, *La Vanguardia*, *La Razón*, *ABC*, *El Mundo*, and *Ara* (“*Ara Sí*” recognition on 24th February 2014). At the international level, I was interviewed at several media including “*Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos*” (*OEI*) and *NTN24* (USA).