The Istituto Superiore di Sanità is the leading technical and scientific body of the Italian National Health Service. Its activities include research, clinical trials, control and training in public health; it also serves as a major national clearing-house for technical and scientific information on public health issues.

The Institute is involved in collaboration and consultation with other institutions responsible for public health, including the Ministry of Health, regional health authorities, local health agencies and hospitals. It cooperates with those responsible for the design and implementation of health and scientific programmes at local and national level and also plays a leading role in several major international research projects.
Research and Trial

The Institute conducts scientific research in a wide variety of fields, from cutting-edge molecular and genetic research to population-based studies of risk factors for disease and disability. Research priorities are based on those set forth in the National Health Plan. The Institute is also involved in several major clinical trials, which are frequently conducted in cooperation with the Scientific Institutes for Research and Care (IRCCS) network and Hospitals.

Technical Service

Data Management, Documentation, Library and Publishing Activities

Director: Claudio Di Benedetto
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Mission
To support institutional activities through:
- collection, processing and automation of health and technical-scientific data;
- management of database consultation systems;
- provision of library and information services;
- editing, printing, and dissemination of the Institute’s publications

Sectors
- Data management
- Documentation service
- Library
- Publishing activities
Technical Service

Service for Biotechnology and Animal Welfare

Director: Rodolfo Lorenzini
Tel: +39 064990 2844
E-mail: rodolfo.lorenzini@iss.it

Mission
To produce, manage and preserve microbiological cultures for experimental purposes.
To monitor the housing, health and welfare of the animals used by the Institute for research purposes.

Sectors
Biotechnology
Quality and safety of animal testing

Inspection, Monitoring and Certification
An important activity of the Institute, which is mandated by the Minister of Health or the Regions, is certification of the chemical and biological purity of drugs and vaccines, as well as the inspection and quality control of medical and diagnostic devices and equipment, food products and packaging.
The Institute monitors trends in disease, mortality and other health factors and provides technical support for health-related environmental surveys and for investigations of epidemics and other public health problems at national, regional and local level.
It also supervises the laboratories engaged in the testing of prohibited substances in sport and the national veterinary institutes.
Finally, it has an important role in monitoring and coordinating blood transfusion services and plasma production in Italy.
Documentation, Information and Publications

The Institute serves as a major source of information relating to public health and biomedicine in Italy through online connections to national and international scientific databases and data banks. It also serves as the national reference centre for MEDLARS (MEDical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System), a comprehensive international data bank coordinated by the US National Library of Medicine (NLM).

The Institute produces numerous publications, including a quarterly peer-reviewed journal (Annali), a monthly newsletter describing major research activities and services (Notiziario), and different series of technical reports.
National Centre

National Centre for Food Quality and Risk Assessment

Director: Paolo Aureli
Tel: +39 064990 3420-3419
E-mail: paolo.aureli@iss.it

Mission
To ensure food safety and nutritional value.
To evaluate the risk of adverse health effects due to contaminated food and to provide information to the public on food, food safety and nutrition

Units
- Additives, flavouring, dyes and food quality
- Chemical contaminants
- Dietetics
- GMOs and mycotoxins
- Microbiological foodborne hazards
- Nutrition
- Relations with the European Community and public health

Training and Scientific Meetings
The Institute plans, develops and organises courses on health education and training activities in the field of public health for the personnel of the National Health Service (NHS), with particular respect to the educational objectives set by the Ministry of Health through the Continuing Medical Education (CEM) project.
It develops and tests innovative training methods particularly in the area of web-based distance learning. The topics addressed include:
- health service management and evaluation of health services, epidemiology and biostatistics, health economics, management of human resources, instructional methods for training of trainers; health promotion.
The Institute also organises congresses, conferences, workshops and seminars on important public health issues addressed to a wide national and international audience.
International Activities

The Institute plans, implements and evaluates international public health projects, ranging from collaborations on research and development projects to humanitarian assistance. It actively promotes cooperation at three different levels: scientific partnerships with industrialised countries, scientific and development projects in partnership with economies in transition, development partnerships in Africa and with countries suffering natural emergencies or war situations.

Current projects relate to the following fields:
- HIV/AIDS control and poverty-related diseases;
- capacity-building for central health administrations;
- technology transfer in public health management;
- technical support for national public health authorities, particularly within the context of health care reform;
- application of telematics to health issues.

National Centre for Epidemiology, Surveillance and Health Promotion

Director: Stefania Salmaso
Tel: +39 064990 4010
E-mail: stefania.salmaso@iss.it

Mission
To develop and apply epidemiological and biostatistical methods to monitor and protect human health and to evaluate health services

Units
- Bureau of statistics
- Cancer epidemiology
- Clinical epidemiology and guidelines
- Communicable disease epidemiology
- Epidemiology of cerebro and cardiovascular disease
- Genetic epidemiology
- Mental health
- Pharmacoepidemiology
- Population health and health determinants
- Woman, child and adolescent health
National Centre

National AIDS Centre

Director: Barbara Ensoli
Tel: +39 064990 3207-3209
E-mail: barbara.ensoli@iss.it

Mission
Fight against HIV/AIDS and associated syndromes through the development of vaccines and innovative therapeutic approaches

Units
- Clinical trials (immunology and virology core-lab)
- Experimental retrovirology and non-human primate models (virology core-lab)
- Pathogenesis and retroviruses
- Retrovirus infections in developing countries
- Virus-host interaction (immunology core-lab)

Department

Cell Biology and Neurosciences

Director: Filippo Belardelli
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Mission
To study genetic, endocrine-metabolic and neurological diseases - with a special focus on rare diseases - and new immunotherapies

Units
- Behavioural neurosciences
- Biochemistry
- Degenerative and inflammatory neurological diseases
- Experimental immunotherapy
- Free radical pathophysiology
- Gene and cell therapy
- Immunoregulation
- Metabolism and molecular and cellular endocrinology
- Molecular and cellular imaging
- Molecular neurobiology
- Rare diseases
Department

**Environment and Primary Prevention**

Director: **Luciana Gramiccioni**  
Tel: +39 064990 3340-1  
E-mail: luciana.gramiccioni@iss.it

**Mission**
To protect the human population through the definition and control of types and sources of chemical and biological risks, especially of environmental origin (water, air, soil)

**Units**
- Air hygiene
- Bioelements and health
- Dangerous substances and preparations
- Environmental epidemiology
- Experimental and computational carcinogenesis
- Exposure and risk from materials
- Fish farm and environmental quality
- Genetic toxicology
- Indoor environmental hygiene
- Inland water hygiene
- Mechanisms of favicinity
- Molecular epidemiology
- Pesticide
- Quality of aquatic environments and bathing waters
- Soil and waste
- Toxicological chemistry

Department

**Therapeutic Research and Medicines Evaluation**

Director: **Stefano Vella**  
Tel: +39 064990 3229-3230  
E-mail: stefano.vella@iss.it

**Mission**
To contribute to public health by controlling the quality, efficacy and safety of drugs and through research into new drugs and treatments for human diseases

**Units**
- Biochemical pharmacology and technical-scientific advice coordination unit
- Cell aging and degeneration
- Central nervous system pharmacology
- Clinic research
- Complementary, natural and traditional medicine. Cosmetic products safety
- Drug dependence and doping
- Drugs and health for the child and the woman
- Molecular and cellular pharmacology
- Pharmacogenetics, drug resistance and experimental therapeutics
- Pharmacology and therapy of viral diseases
- Pharmacopeia and drug quality
- Pre-clinical pharmacology
- Quality of chemical drugs
Department Technology and Health

Director: Velio Macellari
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Mission
To develop and assess new biomedical techniques and to apply procedures, methods and tools for the improvement of public health

Units
Biomaterials and biosystems
Biomechanics and rehabilitation technologies
Biomedical technology assessment and quality
Cardiovascular bioengineering
Complex systems
Ionsing radiation biophysics and biomedical physics
Non-ionsing radiation
Nuclear physics and technology for health
Radiation dosimetry and radiation induced defects
Radioactivity and its health effects
Ultrastructural infectious pathology
Ultrastructural methods for innovative anticancer therapies
Ultrastructure of pollutants and materials

Department Food Safety and Veterinary Public Health

Director: Agostino Macri
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Mission
To protect human health and welfare through the development of knowledge, tools and strategies for preventing and controlling animal diseases and improving food safety

Units
Chemical risk in the chain of production and control quality
Control of bacterial zoonoses and animal hygiene
Food science human nutrition and health
Foodborne zoonoses and veterinary epidemiology
Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and emerging infectious diseases of animals
Department

Haematology, Oncology and Molecular Medicine

Director: Cesare Peschle
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E-mail: cesare.peschle@iss.it

Mission
To study the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying diseases in the haematological, oncological, cardiovascular and genetic areas. To develop new therapies for haematological, oncological and other molecular-based diseases with particular focus on conditions of significant public health impact. To evaluate the safety and efficacy of innovative drugs for clinical use in the aforementioned areas.

Units
- Clinical biochemistry and molecular biology
- Hemoglobinopathies and hematopoiesis
- Lipids and arteriosclerosis
- Medical oncology
- Molecular oncology
- Oncological and hematological biotechnologies
- Physiopathology of genetic diseases
- Physiopathology of renal diseases and correlated pathologies
- Stem cells and endothelium
- Transfusion methodologies

Department

Infectious, Parasitic and Immune-Mediated Diseases

Director: Antonio Cassone
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E-mail: antonio.cassone@iss.it

Mission
To protect the human population from diseases caused by pathogenic micro-organisms, viruses and parasites, and to study the mechanisms of immune-mediated diseases.

Units
- Anti-infectious immunity
- Bacterial vaccines
- Biologicals
- Epidemiology
- Gastroenteric and neurologic bacterial diseases
- Gastroenteric and tissue parasitic diseases
- Immune-mediated diseases
- Molecular pathogenesis
- Respiratory and systemic bacterial diseases
- Superficial and systemic mycoses
- Vector-borne diseases and international health
- Viral diseases and inactivated viral vaccines
- Viral diseases and live attenuated viral vaccines
- Viral hepatitis