

Strategic Priorities in Paediatric Research: Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition

Research Priorities

Paediatric digestive and liver diseases affect **up to one in four** children in Europe. **Early intervention** offers a unique opportunity to prevent lifelong disease and reduce pressure on health systems.



Priority 1: Tackle the Obesity Challenge

- Rising metabolic disease, including metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (**MASLD**), is driving long-term healthcare costs
- **Early nutrition** is the most effective lever for prevention



Priority 2: Nutrition and Child Development

- The **first 1,000 days** shape growth, brain development, and future health
- Diet influences the **gut microbiome** and epigenetic programming



Priority 3: Chronic Immune-Mediated Disease and Nutritional Prevention

- Increasing childhood cases of coeliac disease, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE) require **nutritional prevention strategies**
- Focus on **early biological pathways** rather than lifelong treatment



Priority 4: Improve Equity in Europe for Treatment of Paediatric Digestive and Liver Diseases

- **Unequal access** to specialised care across Europe drives poorer outcomes
- **Harmonised care models** can improve efficiency and reduce costs



Priority 5: Strengthening Data Infrastructure for Paediatric Rare Digestive Diseases

- Rare conditions affect thousands but **lack standardised data**
- **Better datasets** enable research, innovation, and equitable care

From Treatment to Prevention

- Earlier **risk detection**
- Nutrition-first interventions
- Reduced long-term **disease burden**

The EU Opportunity

- Shift from reactive care to **proactive prevention**
- Reduce **chronic disease** and **long-term costs**
- Build more **sustainable, equitable health systems**