ULSM Institutional Profile

Integrated Healthcare Living Lab for Innovation

The Unidade Local de Saúde de Matosinhos (ULSM) is an integrated public healthcare organization within the Portuguese National Health Service, bringing together hospital care, primary healthcare, community-based services and public health under a single organizational model. Centered around Hospital Pedro Hispano and a comprehensive primary care network, ULSM delivers healthcare across the full continuum of care, from prevention and early diagnosis to specialized treatment, rehabilitation and long-term follow-up.

ULSM has a strong interest in advancing integrated, person-centred models of care, strengthening coordination between primary and secondary healthcare, and promoting innovative approaches to address complex healthcare needs. organizational structure allows innovation projects to be deployed simultaneously across primary care, hospital services and community settings, generating evidence on clinical outcomes, healthcare professional adoption, patient experience and organizational performance.

By combining healthcare delivery, research, innovation and transformation within a single ecosystem, ULSM provides an exceptional environment for translating innovation into routine clinical practice and evaluating solutions with demonstrable potential for scale-up across European healthcare systems.

KEY MESSAGE ULSM enables the co-design, implementation and validation of innovative solutions across the entire continuum of care, from prevention and primary care to specialized hospital treatment and community follow-up.

Institutional Highlights

- Integrated healthcare organization combining hospital, primary care, community care and public health services.
- Home to Hospital Pedro Hispano and an extensive primary healthcare network.
- Dedicated Clinical Trials Centre supporting national and international clinical research activities.
- Real-world environment for piloting and validating digital health, Artificial Intelligence and innovative care models.
- Strong institutional commitment to research, innovation, digital transformation, and organizational improvement.
- Ability to implement and evaluate solutions across the full continuum of care, from prevention to long-term follow-up.

Why ULSM Is Different

Unlike many healthcare organizations operating within a single care setting, ULSM offers direct access to the entire patient journey within the same organizational framework.

This enables:

- Validation of innovations across complete care pathways;
- Simultaneous deployment in primary, hospital and community care settings;
- Longitudinal assessment of patient outcomes;
- Evaluation of clinical, organizational and societal impact;
- Rapid implementation and testing of innovative models of care;
- Active engagement of healthcare professionals and patients throughout the innovation lifecycle.

- **For European consortia, ULSM offers more than access to patients and clinical facilities: it provides an integrated healthcare environment in which innovative solutions can be developed, implemented and evaluated across different levels of care.**

Research, Innovation and Clinical Validation Capacity

ULSM has experience in developing and participating in research and innovation initiatives addressing relevant healthcare challenges, including chronic disease management, early diagnosis, rehabilitation, mental health promotion and healthcare service improvement.

Selected examples include:

Breathlessness Diagnostics in a Box (BiaB)

Participation in an international multicentre research initiative evaluating an innovative multidomain diagnostic approach to breathlessness in primary healthcare, contributing to the assessment of cardiorespiratory conditions and the generation of evidence to support diagnostic pathways.

Integrated Chronic Respiratory Disease Management

Development and evaluation of a structured programme for patients with chronic respiratory conditions, addressing disease management, continuity of care and healthcare utilisation.

Nurse-Led Asthma Management

Evaluation of a structured intervention in primary healthcare through a randomised controlled study, incorporating clinical outcomes, health-related quality of life and patient-reported measures.

Mais Por Ti – Mental Health Promotion

Implementation and longitudinal evaluation of a mental health promotion intervention, incorporating validated outcome measures to assess changes in mental health and participant-reported outcomes.

Rehab2Life

Participation in international collaborative research evaluating rehabilitation approaches and their effects on physical activity and functional capacity.

Together, these initiatives illustrate ULSM's experience in developing and evaluating healthcare interventions, participating in international research collaborations and generating evidence to support improvements in clinical practice and healthcare delivery.

ULSM combines clinical research capabilities with opportunities to conduct applied research across an integrated healthcare system. ULSM is particularly interested in health services research, implementation science and the evaluation of innovative models of care.

Its multidisciplinary environment creates opportunities to involve clinicians, researchers, healthcare managers, patients and external partners throughout the research and innovation process.

ULSM can contribute to the identification of clinical needs, study design, patient recruitment, intervention implementation, outcome assessment and generation of real-world evidence.

Particular areas of interest include evaluating not only whether interventions are effective, but also how they can be successfully integrated into routine healthcare practice.

The institution actively promotes collaboration between clinicians, researchers, healthcare managers, patients, academic organizations and technology partners, creating favorable conditions for implementation science, health services research and real-world evidence generation.

Through its Clinical Trials Center, the organization supports national and international clinical studies across multiple therapeutic areas, and contributes to the development and implementation of national and international clinical research activities, such as:

- Cardiology
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Hematology
- Immunoallergology
- Internal Medicine
- Nephrology
- Neonatology
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Otorhinolaryngology
- Pulmonology

The Clinical Trials Center at ULSM is responsible for the conduct of clinical trials initiated by sponsors and pharmaceutical industry, promoting participation in studies that contribute to therapeutic innovation and the development of new treatments, while ensuring compliance with all legal and ethical regulations, emphasizing their role in safeguarding participant rigths, safety and welfare and ensuring the reliability of generated data.

Additionally, the research process in ULSM is aligned with the principles of GCP and international recommendations to promote research that adheres to ethical and methodological standards, taking as a reference the ICH GCP E6(R3) Guideline of the International Council for Harmonisation (ICH)1, that sets a quality and ethical standard for conducting Clinical Trials reinforcing compliance with fundamental ethical principles, such as those outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

The Clinical Trial Center collaborates with clinical teams and other stakeholders and develops its activities in cooperation with a *CRO* company that supports ULSM in promoting and conducting clinical trials through signed protocols. The turnover from Clinical Trials at ULSM, for the year 2023, amounted to €419,240 and the revenue for 2024 has doubled to €875,750. By the end of 2025, a total of 53 CT were active at ULSM, and 2 observational studies, with a turnover in the amount of €659.204.

During the year 2025, there were 33 selections for new studies; 18 studies started and 29 contracts were approved. Phase III studies are the most prevalent at ULSM (79%). The Oncology and Neurology specialties account for 34% and 32% of ongoing studies at ULSM, respectively. Additionally, in 2025, 57 patients were included in clinical studies. Of the ongoing patients, 42 completed their participation in the study, there were 24 selection failures and 1225 study visits were conducted. For the year 2026, 206 patients from clinical trial contexts carried over.

The concepts of efficiency and sustainability in the healthcare sector are increasingly recognized as critical vectors for ULSM. The role of Clinical Research is fundamental to create value and attract investment, in addition to being considered an essential activity for improving patient´s life quality through the implementation of better clinical practices, while simultaneously providing skills development to healthcare professionals.

Key institutional strengths include:

- Clinical research and clinical trials;
- Digital health implementation;
- Artificial Intelligence in healthcare;
- Data-driven healthcare transformation;
- Integrated care pathway redesign;
- Patient-centered innovation;
- Real-world validation studies;
- Evaluation of organizational and patient-reported outcomes.

Institutional Metrics

To be completed with validated institutional data.

Indicator	Validated data
Population served	318000
Healthcare professionals	2895
Active clinical trials	53
Active observational studies	2
Professionals involved in research activities	Not determined
Scientific publications per year	139

Strategic Areas for European Collaboration

ULSM is interested in strengthening its participation in Horizon Europe Cluster 1 – Health and other European collaborative research and innovation initiatives.

Priority areas include:

1. Integrated and Person-Centred Healthcare

Integrated care models, chronic disease management, multimorbidity, care transitions, continuity of care, coordinated care pathways and innovative healthcare delivery models.

2. Digital Health and Healthcare Transformation

Digital health technologies, remote monitoring, artificial intelligence, clinical decision support, digital care pathways and technology-supported integrated care.

3. Population Health, Prevention and Rehabilitation

Disease prevention, health promotion, healthy ageing, rehabilitation, mental health, population-based interventions and community-oriented healthcare.

4. Clinical Research and Real-World Evidence

Clinical trials, pragmatic research, implementation science, health services research, patient-reported outcomes and evaluation of healthcare interventions in real-world settings.

5. Healthcare Quality, Value and Sustainability

Value-based healthcare, quality improvement, patient experience, healthcare resource optimisation, organisational innovation and sustainable healthcare models.

What ULSM Brings to a Consortium

ULSM can participate in European collaborative projects as a healthcare provider, clinical research partner, pilot and demonstration site, end-user representative, and real-world implementation and evaluation partner.

Its potential contributions extend across different stages of the research and innovation lifecycle.

Identification of unmet clinical and organisational needs, definition of use cases, and engagement of healthcare professionals and patients in the development of innovative solutions.

Support for study design, participant recruitment, clinical research implementation and assessment of clinical and patient-reported outcomes.

Piloting and evaluation of interventions across primary healthcare, hospital services and community-based care.

Assessment of healthcare utilisation, patient experience, organisational outcomes, implementation processes and potential sustainability.

Contribution to scientific dissemination, professional engagement, knowledge translation and strategies supporting the adoption of evidence-based innovations.

Networks and Partnerships

ULSM promotes collaboration with academic institutions, healthcare organisations, research networks, technology developers and innovation partners.

Its participation in collaborative research initiatives provides opportunities to strengthen multidisciplinary partnerships and contribute to the development and evaluation of innovative healthcare solutions.

Specific national and international research networks, European project participation and academic partnerships should be included following institutional validation.

ULSM actively collaborates with healthcare providers, universities, research centers, technology developers, public institutions and innovation ecosystems to accelerate the development, implementation and evaluation of innovative healthcare solutions.

- National and international research networks;
- European Digital Innovation Hub participation;
- Horizon Europe project participation;
- University and academic partnerships;
- National and European collaborative platforms;
- Innovation and technology transfer ecosystems.

Value Proposition

ULSM combines integrated healthcare delivery, clinical research capabilities and experience in healthcare innovation to support the development, implementation and evaluation of solutions addressing real healthcare needs.

Its integration of primary healthcare, hospital services and community-based care provides an opportunity to investigate innovative approaches across the entire patient pathway, generating evidence on clinical effectiveness, patient experience, implementation and organisational impact.

ULSM seeks to collaborate with European partners interested in advancing integrated, person-centred, evidence-based and sustainable healthcare.

From clinical needs to real-world implementation: ULSM connects research, innovation and healthcare delivery across the continuum of care.

ULSM offers European consortia a unique integrated healthcare ecosystem where innovative solutions can be co-designed, implemented, tested and evaluated across the entire continuum of care.

Its combination of clinical excellence, integrated care delivery, research capacity and commitment to innovation provides partners with access to a real-world environment capable of generating evidence on effectiveness, adoption, patient experience and organizational impact.

ULSM is not the only place to test innovation.
It is a healthcare ecosystem where innovation can be implemented, evaluated, and prepared for large-scale adoption.