

Francesca Lolicato (PhD) is a biologist with a strong background in developmental biology and biology of reproduction.

During her bachelor, she investigated pathways related with oogenesis and early embryogenesis in mouse and during her PhD, she focused on the study of molecular mechanisms that regulate proliferation and differentiation of mouse germ line stem cells. In 2008 she moved for a postdoctoral fellowship to Utrecht University, she firstly joined a project investigating the effects of altered lipid metabolism on mammalian oocytes quality, characterizing in vivo and in vitro the cellular lipid composition of these cells. Secondly, she focused on lipotoxicity, apoptosis and mitochondrial alterations related to elevated free fatty acid exposure in cumulus cells and oocyte. Subsequently she worked on a project aimed to elucidate the involvement of autophagy in the degradation of paternal mitochondria in developing porcine embryos.

Her current research interests include assisted reproduction and the development of in vitro maturation systems targeting human oocytes retrieved from small ovarian follicles. Francesca Lolicato currently works as Postdoctoral fellow in the ovarian follicle biology research group (FOBI ; dir. Johan Smits ( MD PhD)) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in Belgium.