The central tenet of the Institute, created in 2003, is that high quality research is contingent on knowledge being collectively created, discussed and shared, and on the development and availability of a platform of technical and scientific expertise. The aim of the Institute is to foster interdisciplinary research at an individual as well as at a group level to improve the population’s health. Health and society is a crossroad where multiple aspects intersect: individuals and population, analyses and interventions, evidence and ethics. The interdisciplinary IRSS community is building an integrative framework to better address these complexities.

The main objectives of the Institute are to:
- Develop an interdisciplinary environment conducive for the generation of top level academic output,
- Achieve relevant and societal useful results,
- Encourage scientific excellence.

The ambition of the Institute is to become a centre of excellence in its field, through:
- Encourage scientific excellence.
- Achieve relevant and societally useful results;
- Develop an interdisciplinary environment conducive for the generation of top level academic output;
- Achieve relevant and societal useful results;
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Research topics at IRSS include health behaviors, prevention and health promotion, disability and ageing, well-being of health professionals, promotion of mental and medical psychology, medical education, health services and management of health care institutions, ethics and health law, epidemiology, biostatistics and information systems, health and development, etc.

Projects cluster around 8 research axes:
1. Biomedical law and ethics;
2. Health Promotion & Therapeutic Education: patient empowerment;
3. Epidemiology, socio-epidemiology, biostatistics: advanced methods;
4. Health services research:
   a. Mental Health System Research and Psychiatry;
   b. Primary Health Care and General Medicine;
   c. Health systems and social networks;
   d. Pedagogy / Medical Education;
   e. International Health;
   f. Aging: functional decline and frailty;
   g. Health economics.

Researchers of the Institute have also developed strong links between their research, teaching and service activities. They contribute to the wider community by sharing expertise and collaborating with stakeholders outside the university setting. Finally, there is a close link between the Institute and the Public health, Health and Society Postgraduate School providing support and education to PhD students at various stages of their programme.

The Institute comprises about 114 members including 35 academic, 54 researchers (including 26 PhD candidates) and 17 administrative staff. 64 thesis defended since 2010 from which 12 in the last two years. During the last two years (2017-2018), the Institute has published 293 publications, from which 72% were in international peer reviewed journals. The Institute has published 293 publications, from which 72% were in international peer reviewed journals. Since the creation of the Institute in 2010, it represents 1048 articles published in scientific journals from which 650 have an impact factor.