Valentina Comunanza is an Assistant Professor with a specific interest in the study of tumor microenvironment and its role in tumor progression and response to therapy. She obtained her master’s degree in Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Technologies at the University of Torino and a PhD in Neuroscience at the same university.

She currently works at the Department of Oncology and her research interests are mainly focused on the relationship between oncogenic transformation and tumor microenvironment in melanoma.

The introduction of targeted therapies and immunotherapy represented the most significant advances in the treatment of melanoma. However, the onset of resistance remains a challenge to overcome, highlighting the need to further elucidate mechanisms underlying melanoma growth and progression. Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor A (VEGFA) is a key promoter of both tumor angiogenesis and immunosuppression and, for this reason, is an attractive target for combinatorial cancer therapy. In the last years she focused her scientific efforts on the study VEGF with the aim to identify cellular and molecular changes that regulate the interplay between endothelial (ECs) and immune cells. She demonstrated that VEGFA/BRAF targeting in melanoma induces the activation of innate and adaptive immunity and sensitize tumors to receive immunotherapy, improving the understanding tumor biology of BRAFV600E melanoma and suggesting VEGFA as therapeutic target.