

# MARCELLA BELLANI

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**MARCELLA BELLANI**

**Associate Professor of Psychiatry at University of Verona, Section of Psychiatry**

**Department of Neurosciences, Biomedicine and Movement Science**

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## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Sex: Female | Date of birth: 2 January 1975 | Nationality: Italian

## ACADEMIC AND CLINICAL PROFILE

Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Verona, with clinical duties at the Integrated University Hospital of Verona (AOUI). She graduated in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Bologna, completed specialist training in Psychiatry in 2007, and obtained a PhD in Psychological and Psychiatric Sciences from the University of Verona in 2012. In the United States, she undertook advanced research on the treatment and study of bipolar disorders and on the application of neuroimaging techniques to the investigation of brain and mind in affective and psychotic disorders at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Texas at Houston.

Her hospital- and outpatient-based clinical work focuses on the psychopharmacological management of mental health problems in young people and adults, including anxiety, affective and psychotic disorders, with an emphasis on early treatment and rehabilitation. She leads the Verona Sud Community Mental Health Centre, co-lead for the Rosa outpatient clinic dedicated to perinatal mental health, and is consultant psychiatrist for the Verona Dafne Network, which provides assistance to victims of crime.

She is Scientific Chair of the Brain Imaging and Neuropsychology Research Unit at the University of Verona. This multidisciplinary team of psychiatrists, psychiatry residents, psychologists, computer scientists, physicists and engineers investigates morpho-functional brain alterations in adults with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, with the aim of identifying early biomarkers that may support diagnosis and more targeted interventions. The translational research approach integrates brain MRI, neuropsychological profiling and psychiatric rehabilitation strategies to improve prognosis, early diagnosis, treatment and, ultimately, the well-being of people with mental disorders.

She currently leads the multicentre PNRR clinical study SOLITAIRE, which addresses distress associated with severe social withdrawal in young people (Hikikomori) through a combined approach of psychotherapy and digital cognitive rehabilitation. In addition, through a two-year grant from the Fondazione Manni per le Neuroscienze, she is responsible for the project "Intermittent Theta-Burst Stimulation (iTBS) in treatment-resistant depression: clinical and immunological profile and prediction of treatment response using Artificial Intelligence", which translates clinical evidence on the efficacy of Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation into routine practice within UOC Psychiatry B. She collaborates with several international journals and is author or co-author of more than 160 international scientific publications, as well as books and book chapters.

SCOPUS H-index: 35 (January 2026)

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2026 | <b>Italian National Scientific Qualification (ANVUR), Full Professor of Psychiatry</b>                                                                                                                       |
| 2014 | <b>Italian National Scientific Qualification (ANVUR), Associate Professor of Psychiatry</b>                                                                                                                  |
| 2012 | <b>PhD in Psychological and Psychiatric Sciences</b><br>Doctoral School in Engineering and Medicine, University of Verona, Verona, Italy                                                                     |
| 2009 | <b>Visiting Researcher</b><br>Center of Excellence in Research and Treatment for Bipolar Disorder (CERT-BD), Department of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA (Prof. J. C. Soares) |
| 2009 | <b>Visiting Researcher</b><br>Bipolar Center, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, Texas, USA (Prof. J. C. Soares)                           |
| 2007 | <b>Specialist Training in Psychiatry (50/50 cum laude)</b><br>University of Verona, Verona, Italy                                                                                                            |
| 2003 | <b>Master's Degree in Medicine and Surgery (105/110)</b><br>Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy                                                                                     |

## MATERNITY LEAVE (Italian Law 1204/1971)

27 July 2013 – 1 February 2015

31 May 2016 – 3 January 2017

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

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|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2021–present | <b>Associate Professor of Psychiatry</b><br>University of Verona, Department of Neurosciences, Biomedicine and Movement, under agreement with AOUI Verona, with medical management duties at UOC Psychiatry B (Director Professor C. Barbui)                                                                                      |
| 2018–2021    | <b>Fixed-term Researcher – Type B</b><br>Department of Neurosciences, Biomedicine and Movement, University of Verona, Verona, Italy, under agreement with AOUI Verona, with medical management duties at UOC Psychiatry B.                                                                                                        |
| 2011–2018    | <b>Consultant Psychiatrist / Medical Manager (permanent contract under University/AOUI agreement)</b><br>UO Psychiatry B, G.B. Rossi University Hospital, Integrated University Hospital (AOUI) Verona, Verona, Italy. Coordinator, Brain Imaging and Neuropsychology Research Unit, Section of Psychiatry, University of Verona. |
| 2012–present | <b>Head, Brain Imaging and Neuropsychology Research Unit</b><br>University of Verona, Department of Neurosciences, Biomedicine and Movement.                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## CLINICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

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| 2009–present | <b>Hospital and outpatient clinical activity</b><br>Psychopharmacological management of psychiatric disorders in young people and adults, including anxiety disorders, affective disorders (including depression and bipolar disorders), and |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

psychotic-spectrum disorders, with a focus on early treatment and multimodal rehabilitation.

### Current clinical and scientific responsibilities

- Head of the outpatient Clinical Team, Verona Sud Territorial Psychiatric Service, serving the Verona areas of Ca' di David, Castel d'Azzano.
- Head of the Verona Sud Community Mental Health Centre.
- Co-lead of the Rosa outpatient clinic for perinatal mental health.
- AOUI consultant for the Verona Dafne Network, providing assistance to victims of crime.
- On-call psychiatric duties at the AOUI Psychiatric Diagnosis and Treatment Service (SPDC).
- Coordinator of the Brain Imaging and Neuropsychology Unit, Section of Psychiatry, University of Verona; active member since 2004, with responsibility for management of ongoing clinical research projects.

Within the Brain Imaging and Neuropsychology Laboratory, multimodal neuroimaging techniques are used to investigate the location, extent and timing of morpho-functional brain changes in adults with psychiatric disorders and to identify disease biomarkers that may support early diagnosis and more targeted interventions. Expertise includes brain neuroimaging analysis in psychiatric disorders using sMRI, PWI, DWI, fMRI, DTI and fibre tracking. Research is conducted within national and international networks using FreeSurfer, resting-state methods, fMRI, DTI and TBSS, spectroscopy, neuroimmunology, imaging genetics, pattern recognition and machine learning.

### Research mission

- Integration of neuroscientific research with psychiatric clinical practice, with attention not only to biological correlates but also to prediction, early diagnosis and early rehabilitative intervention.

In 2011, a competitive Italian Ministry of Health Young Researchers grant ("Immune gene expression and white matter pathology in first manic patients before and after treatment. A multimodal imaging genetic study"), conducted at AOUI Verona in collaboration with the Veneto Region, investigated first-episode hypomanic/manic states in bipolar disorder from radiological, functional, neuropsychological and immunological perspectives. The project enabled profiling of neuroimmunological features using resting-state and functional MRI with an emotional interference task in collaboration with Prof. V. Diwadkar (Wayne State University).

The principal clinical research projects are consistently oriented toward identifying the neurobiological components of psychiatric disorders and toward intervention, telemedicine, psychiatric rehabilitation and, more recently, neuromodulation. She is currently Principal Investigator of the multicentre PNRR telepsychiatry project SOLITAIRE for socially isolated young adults ("Hikikomori"), which includes online psychotherapy and cognitive rehabilitation for patients and family members. A two-year Fondazione Manni per le Neuroscienze grant supports the project on iTBS in treatment-resistant depression, enabling development of the TMS research and clinical programme within the Section, also through recently acquired TMS and neuronavigation equipment funded by the Department of Excellence.

### RESEARCH KEYWORDS

BRAIN MRI; MACHINE LEARNING; NEUROPSYCHOLOGY; PSYCHIATRY; PATHOPHYSIOLOGY; NEUROPLASTICITY; PSYCHOSIS; MOOD DISORDERS; ANXIETY DISORDERS; COGNITION; NEUROIMMUNOLOGY; TREATMENT; TRANSLATIONAL NEUROIMAGING; COGNITIVE REMEDIATION; PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION.

### SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Professor Marcella Bellani has published more than 150 articles in international journals to date.

## CLINICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS AT AOUI VERONA AND THE UNIVERSITY OF VERONA

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ongoing – 2025 | <p><b>Principal Investigator, clinical trial – AOUI Verona / University of Verona</b></p> <p>“Intermittent Theta-Burst Stimulation (iTBS) in treatment-resistant depression: clinical and immunological profile and prediction of treatment response using Artificial Intelligence.” Competitive call for project ideas in neuroscience research, Fondazione Giuseppe Manni per la Ricerca nelle Neuroscienze.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Ongoing – 2023 | <p><b>Member, SPOKE 5 UNIVR, WP1, MNESYS Project – University of Verona / AOUI Verona</b></p> <p>“A multiscale integrated approach to the study of the nervous system in health and disease (MNESYS)”, intervention area “12. Neuroscience and Neuropharmacology”, within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR). Activities include identification of biomarkers for early diagnosis, disease prognosis and response to treatment; identification of molecular and cellular targets for the development of new pharmacological tools; and development of computational models.</p>                                                                                   |
| 2024           | <p><b>Head of AOUI Verona Clinical Unit, multicentre Ministry-funded project</b></p> <p>“PHLAMES – Autoantibodies against synaptic neuronal antigens and psychosis: prognostic factors for the diagnosis of autoimmune encephalitis” (PI: Matteo Gastaldi, IRCCS Mondino). Overall objective: to identify prognostic elements for the diagnosis of autoimmune encephalitis in individuals with acute/subacute-onset psychosis admitted to or assessed in a psychiatric service.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Ongoing – 2022 | <p><b>Principal Investigator, multicentre SOLITAIRE project – AOUI Verona</b></p> <p>“SOLITAIRE – Digital interventions for Social Isolation in Youths and their families.” Funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU – PNRR M6C2, Investment 2.1, enhancement and strengthening of biomedical research within the Italian National Health Service; PNRR-MAD-2022-12376834. Overall objective: to test the feasibility and preliminary efficacy of two remotely delivered digital interventions for adolescents and young adults with severe social isolation. Conducted in collaboration with IRCCS Eugenio Medea, Brindisi; the University of Milan; and CNR Milan.</p> |
| 2020           | <p><b>Principal Investigator, multicentre TELECOVID project – University of Verona / AOUI Verona</b></p> <p>“TELECOVID – a digital platform for the delivery of mental health services to patients who have had COVID-19+.” Funded through the 2020 Special Supplementary Fund for Research (FISR) by the Italian Ministry of University and Research, FISR2020IP_05157. Overall objective: to assess the feasibility and preliminary efficacy of a telemedicine-based psychological care model for patients who had COVID-19. Conducted in collaboration with Policlinico di Milano.</p>                                                                                       |
| 2017           | <p><b>Member, AOUI Verona Clinical Unit, multicentre CR project</b></p> <p>“The impact of cognitive remediation on social functioning and neural plasticity in early psychosis: a randomized clinical trial.” Ricerca Sanitaria Finalizzata 2016 – Young Researchers Call, Italian Ministry of Health (GR-2016-15-02361283).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2013           | <p><b>Local Principal Investigator, multicentre GECOBIP project – AOUI Verona</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| 2011 | <p>“Genetic modulation of neuropsychology and psychopathology in the bipolar spectrum” from clinical, cognitive and genetic perspectives. Clinical data collection and analysis; centralisation of clinical data from participating centres; Italian standardisation of the Brief Assessment of Cognition for Affective Disorders (BAC-A).</p> <p><b>Principal Investigator, MANDRAKE project – AOUI Verona</b></p> <p>“White matter pathology and immune gene expression in bipolar disorder: a multimodal brain imaging study.” Funded by the Italian Ministry of Health through a competitive call (Ricerca Sanitaria Finalizzata 2010; approved by the AOUI Verona Ethics Committee, no. 2290).</p> |
| 2010 | <p><b>Member, CONTRABASS module, national multicentre GET UP trial – AOUI Verona</b></p> <p>“Genetics, Endophenotypes and Treatment: Understanding early Psychosis.” Funded by the Italian Ministry of Health through a competitive call (Ricerca Sanitaria Finalizzata H61J08000200001). Aim: to evaluate the effectiveness of a multicomponent intervention combining cognitive behavioural psychotherapy, family intervention and case management in first-episode psychosis.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2007 | <p><b>Local member, Coordinating Centre, regional multicentre PICOS project</b></p> <p>“Psychosis Incidence Cohort Outcome Study.” Funded by the Italian Ministry of Health through a competitive call (Ricerca Sanitaria Finalizzata 2004, 2005; PIs: Prof. Antonio Lasalvia and Mirella Ruggeri), AOUI Verona and University of Verona; approved by the AOUI Verona Ethics Committee, no. 1103. Aim: clinical, social and biological characterisation of psychosis onset in the Veneto Region, involving 80% of the Region’s public mental health services.</p>                                                                                                                                       |

## LANGUAGES

Mother tongue: Italian

| Language | Listening | Reading | Spoken interaction | Spoken production | Writing |
|----------|-----------|---------|--------------------|-------------------|---------|
| English  | C1        | C1      | C1                 | C1                | C1      |
| French   | C1        | C1      | C1                 | C1                | C1      |
| German   | B2        | B2      | B2                 | B2                | B2      |

## PERSONAL DATA PROCESSING CONSENT

I, the undersigned Marcella Bellani, authorise the processing of my personal data in compliance with the applicable legislation on personal data protection, in particular Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Italian Legislative Decree no. 196 of 30 June 2003, as subsequently amended and supplemented, most recently by Italian Legislative Decree no. 101 of 10 August 2018.

Verona, August 19, 2026



