Research @ Department of Neurology

Dear Reader,

With this newsletter, we have the pleasure to give you insights into ongoing research activities at our Department and to portrait the people behind it. In addition, we would like to inform you about upcoming events, recent publications and open calls for proposals.

We hope you will enjoy reading it!

The Research Board of the Department of Neurology

May / June 2021

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What are your main research interest?

My main research interest is treatment and prognosis of cerebrovascular disease focusing on different topics. My interest started when I was a second year resident in Neurology and my mentor highlighted the total absence of any data on thrombolysis in patients taking direct oral anticoagulants (which were new at this time point, available since only 1-2 years). We set-up an international collaboration and published a pilot study that lead to our current stroke guideline recommendations and still continue to spearhead the field. Further interest focused on timing of anticoagulation after a recent stroke, another topic without any meaningful evidence at this time point. Our observational data resulted in the design of currently ongoing randomized controlled trials including the ELAN trial of Prof Urs Fischer. Finally, we were interested how we should treat patients who suffer a stroke despite anticoagulant therapy (patients who fail anticoagulant therapy). Again, no real evidence was available. We were the first to identify those patients as high-risk group with unfortunately no apparently superior treatment strategy at the moment. During my late years as resident, I developed a strong interest in intracerebral haemorrhage, which was further strengthened by a post-doc fellowship at the Queen Square Institute of Neurology at the University College London. We are still somewhere in the middle ages for the treatment of this devastating disease.

In Bern, we have set-up an amazing interdisciplinary research team harbouring highly motivated and excellent PhD, MD and master students! Today, I coordinate (as national coordinator) several (mostly investigator initiated) randomized controlled treatment trials. We will determine the best treatment for acute reversal of direct oral anticoagulants and the use of tranexamic acid in patients with intracerebral haemorrhage. Another randomized controlled trial will tackle the question whether we can (must!?) use anticoagulants to prevent ischaemic stroke in patients with atrial fibrillation who have had a brain bleed. In addition to these randomized controlled trials, we are setting up and running several prospective observational studies including long-term follow up and advanced MRI (including quantitative and 7T MRI).
and hopefully soon also blood biomarkers and genetics. For these projects, we collaborate with a wide range of friends and colleagues in Bern, Switzerland and other countries worldwide.

**What is your motivation to do research?**

My parents were both researchers and I was fascinated by research and international collaborations from the very beginning. During my medical studies, I spent one year in the lab working on a research project involving rodent models of stroke. When I started my residency in Basel, I was somehow frustrated not to be able to continue lab work. I had to switch my focus to clinical stroke research, which turned out to be very interesting and fulfilling! Both types of research are very important and complement each other. Important research questions are usually those that you ask yourself in the emergency department or during ward rounds treating your patients.

*PD Dr. med. David Seiffge is an attending specialist (Oberarzt) at the Department for Neurology, Inselspital, Bern, he is the Head of the Haemorrhagic Stroke Research Group, the Deputy Head of the Neuro Clinical Trial Unit (NCTU) and the Deputy Head of the Stroke Unit. Contact: david.seiffge@insel.ch*
Congratulations

(1) Awarded Grants

Dr. med. Martina Göldlin (Main Applicant/ Stroke)

**Funding Institution:** Young Talents in Clinical Research – Project Grant ([Link](#))

**Title:** What is the role of small vessel disease dynamics in the prognosis of intracerebral haemorrhage? A prospective MRI-cohort study (MRI-PRO SVD)

**Awarded Grant:** CHF 79'450

Dr. med. Bernhard Siepen (Stroke)

**Funding Institution:** Young Talents in Clinical Research – Beginner Grant ([Link](#))

**Title:** Deciphering outcomes in intracerebral haemorrhage associated with different types of oral anticoagulants

**Awarded Grant:** Protected Research Time

Prof. U. Fischer, Prof. M. Arnold, Prof. S. Jung, PD M. Heldner, PD D. Seiffge have been awarded CHF 40’000 by the Weiterbildungskommission of the University of Bern (WBK) for the realization of the new "Master of Advanced Studies in Stroke Medicine" under the lead of Prof. Urs Fischer ([Link](#)).
(2) Awarded Prizes

PD Dr. med. Dr. sc. nat. Frédéric Zubler

Frédéric Zubler has won the 2021 Epilepsy League Research Recognition Award with a prize money of CHF 25'000.

Project: Development of a deep-learning system to evaluate EEG measurements

Link

Dr. med. Dr. sc. nat. Maxime Baud

The Alfred Hauptmann Award for the best experimental or clinical research in the field of epileptology in German-speaking countries goes to Dr. Maxime Baud (Bern) and Dr. Timothée Proix (Geneva) for their article «Forecasting seizure risk in adults with focal epilepsy: a development and validation study», which was published in Lancet Neurology in 2020. The prize money is of EUR 10'000.

Link

(3) Outstanding Publications

Dr. med. Dr. sc. nat. Maxime Baud

His paper on Cycles in Epilepsy made it on the cover of Nature Reviews Neurology.

Link
(4) Appointments

PD A. Salmen  
Prof. S. Jung  

have been appointed members to the Expert Committee III of the «Graduate School for Health Science» (GHS) of the University of Bern (Link).
Call for Grants and Prizes

SNG Scholarship

Focus of the grant: Clinical research; Protected Research Time/ a research stay abroad.

Eligible for: Young researchers (at the end of their education/ before the FMH title)

- Eligible for the Swiss Neurological Society Scholarship are young researchers at the end of their education, but before obtaining their FMH title in Neurology. The awarded scholarship is of CHF 10’000.
- The SNG Scholarship is being awarded for a research project or a research stay abroad.
- The scholarship will be awarded during the annual meeting of the SNG, in November 2021.
- Submission Deadline: 31 July 2021 Link

SNG Prize

Focus of the grant: Basic or clinical research

Eligible for: Young and senior researchers (before the age of 40).

- The Swiss Neurological Society awards a prize for original publications in applied basic or clinical research in Neurosciences. Awarded are original publications, which have been accepted, but not yet published or will be published during the call for proposals and the award ceremony (annual meeting in November 2021).
- At least one co-author needs to be a member of the SNG and has not yet reached the age of 40.
- The prize money is of CHF 5’000 and will be awarded during the annual meeting of the SNG, in November 2021.
- Submission Deadline: 31 July 2021 Link
SNF Postdoc.Mobility

**Focus of the grant:** Basic or clinical research

**Eligible for:** Senior researchers (PhD/ MD-PhD or MD with at least 3 years of clinical activity).

- Postdoc.Mobility fellowships are aimed at researchers who have done a doctorate (PhD, MD-PhD or completed medical studies (MD), or completion of the doctorate within the next 9 months) and who wish to pursue an academic career in Switzerland.

- Submission up to 3 years after the doctoral exam (PhD, MD-PhD) and for MD's a submission up to 8 years after the state examination and at least 3 years of clinical activity after the state examination is possible.

- The fellowships include a grant for subsistence costs, a flat-rate for travel expenses and a possible contribution to research and conference costs.

- The funding period is in principle 24 months (fellowship) and 3 to 12 months (return phase).

- **Submission Deadline:** 1 August 2021 [Link](#)

**Other Open Calls for Proposals**

- **SNG Scholarship 2021**
  Deadline: 31 July 2021 [Link](#)

- **SNG Prize 2021**
  Deadline: 31 July 2021 [Link](#)

- **SNF Postdoc.Mobility**
  Deadline: 1 August 2021 [Link](#)

- **SNF: NFP 79 “Advancing 3R – Animals, Research and Society”**
  Deadline Pre-Proposal: 3 August 2021  Deadline Full-Proposal: 25 January 2022 [Link](#)

- **National Data Streams**
  Deadline Pre-Submission DLF: 9 August 2021  Deadline Full-Proposal: 22 August 2021 [Link](#)

- **UniBE ID Grants**
  Deadline: 29 August 2021 [Link](#)

- **EAN Research Fellowship**
  Deadline: 31 August 2021 [Link](#)
- **ERC Advanced Grants**  
  Deadline: 31 August 2021 [Link](#)

- **UniBE Doc.Mobility**  
  Deadline: 1 September 2021 [Link](#)

- **sitem-insel Support Funds (SISF)**  
  Deadline: 15 September 2021 [Link](#)

- **SNF Project Funding**  
  Deadline: 1 October 2021 [Link](#)
Important Dates

- **SNS Academy**, 9th module, 1-3 July 2021, Inselspital Bern, [Link](#)
- **Sleep Medicine Summer School**, 5-9 July 2021, Grenoble Alpes University, [Link](#)
- **SFCNS Summer School**, 20 August 2021, Hörssaal Langhans, Inselspital Bern, [Link](#)
Support

1) Topic of the Month: Swiss Participation in Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe

The European Union’s (EU) 9th Framework Programme, Horizon Europe, runs from 2021 to 2027. With a budget of EUR 95.5 billion, it is the largest research and innovation funding programme in the world and the most ambitious such programme in the history of the EU so far. Structured into three pillars, excellence in science constitutes pillar I and will continue to be funded and advanced by the European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA). Pillar II tackles questions on Global Challenges, e.g. Health Cluster, and European Industrial Competitiveness, whereas pillar III stands for “Innovative Europe”. Find more details here: Horizon Europe | European Commission (europa.eu)

Update on the Swiss Association to Horizon Europe

The decision of the Federal Council not to sign the Institutional Framework Agreement with the EU has no direct impact on the status of Switzerland regarding Horizon Europe for the time being. The transitory provisions for Horizon Europe are still valid. This means that as coming from a country associated to H2020, CH participants can—and should—still submit to the 2021 HE calls as associated country. For any additional questions regarding the 2021 calls, please have a look at the statement by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) (updated regularly), contact UniBE’s Grants Office or check out the homepage of Euresearch.

Open and Forthcoming Calls

Find here an overview of all open and forthcoming calls of the Horizon Europe framework, i.e. ERC Advanced Grants (open call; deadline: 31 August 2021) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (forthcoming): Search Funding & Tenders (europa.eu)
Upcoming Info Events on Horizon 2020

a) Horizon Europe Info Days 2021

- The first edition of the Horizon Europe Info days will take place between 28 June and 9 July 2021.
- The 10-day online event provides the opportunity to prospective applicants and other stakeholders to receive information and ask questions about the novelties, main funding instruments and processes of Horizon Europe.
- No registration needed.
- [Program and Links to the events](#)

b) ERC Advanced Grants Info Event

- This event is for excellent researchers with at least 10 years of own independent research experience who consider or plan to apply for an ERC Advanced Grant.
- 29 June 2021; 14:00 – 16:15; Virtual Event
- [Program and Registration](#)

2) Other News

New Research Website of the Department of Neurology

With the relaunch of the homepage of the Department of Neurology, the Research Board took the opportunity to re-structure the research website of the Department. You’ll find now information on the research areas, research groups as well as research resources (including open calls), and many more topics. [Link](#)
New DLF Studienportal

- The Direktion Lehre und Forschung (DLF) has digitalized the administrative processes of clinical trials.
- The DLF Studienportal has been launched on 2 June 2021 within the whole Insel Gruppe.
- [Link]

3) Training

CTU Trainings:

Clinical Investigators I: Basic GCP & clinical research training

This is a course split in two parts. The first part consists of self-learning and home-based exercises. For the second part, participants will attend the lectures and workshops. The course is designed to introduce basic concepts of patient-oriented clinical research to health care professionals involved in the recruitment of study participants.

- **Tuesday, 17 + 24 August 2021**  
  2 half days: 8:15-12:25 (on 17 August) and 13:25-17:30 (on 24 August)  
  Date for voluntary exam: 31 August 2021, 14:00 - 15:30 (to get 1.0 ECTS)

- **Tuesday, 12 October 2021**  
  1 full day: 8:15-17:30  
  Date for voluntary exam: 19 October 2021, 14:00 - 15:30 (to get 1.0 ECTS)

[Link and Registration]

Clinical Investigators II: Advanced GCP & clinical research training

This is a course which aims at providing especially sponsor-investigators and principal investigators with the knowledge to set-up their own project.

- **Tuesday, 7 + 14 September 2021**  
  2 half days: 8:15-12:25 (on 7 September) and 13:25-17:30 (on 14 September)  
  Date for voluntary exam: 22 September 2021, 14:00 - 15:30 (to get 0.5 ECTS)
Tuesday, 16 + 23 November 2021
2 half days: 8:15-12:25 (on 16 November) and 13:25-17:30 (on 23 November)
Date for voluntary exam: 30 November 2021, 14:00 - 15:30 (to get 0.5 ECTS)

Link and Registration

GCP Refresher for clinical research

This course is aimed at providing a refresher training to clinical investigators with the essential knowledge of Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and of other regulatory and ethical requirements, and the skills for contributing to clinical trials.

The GCP Refresher course is split in four parts, whereas each part of the course is held as a separate CTU Lecture.

Lecture 1: consists of the basic principles and study project required documentation.
Lecture 2: addresses study preparation and conduct.
Lecture 3: continues on study conduct and project closure.
Lecture 4: is kept flexible and will address additional learning contents such as upcoming regulatory changes or key topics in clinical research.

Evening Round:
• Lecture 1: Wednesday, 29th September 2021, 17.00-17.45, online via zoom
• Lecture 2: Wednesday, 27th October 2021, 17.00-17.45, online via zoom
• Lecture 3: Wednesday, 24th November 2021, 17.00-17.45, online via zoom
• Lecture 4: Wednesday, 8th December 2021, 17.00-17.45, online via zoom

Link and Registration

REDCap Database Implementation

The course will give an introduction to the Clinical Data Management System REDCap and is designed for persons who plan to set up their own study in REDCap. After the course researchers will be able to set up their own database in REDCap. Target audience: Clinical Researchers, Study Nurses and all persons who would like to set up their own study in REDCap.

Next Training Dates
• Thu, 01. JUL 2021, 15.00-17.00, Online – Deutsch
• Thu, 05. AUG 2021, 15.00-17.00, Online – English
• Thu, 09. SEPT 2021, 15.00-17.00, Online – Deutsch
Additional dates will follow. Until further notice, all REDCap courses will be offered online. The course participants will receive a personal e-mail with specific instructions on how to login to the digital class room before the course is held.

Link and Registration
Gender Equality and Diversity

If you come across interesting news and/or would like to read about a specific topic related to gender equality and diversity, please let us know (chantal.kottler@insel.ch).

Let’s Talk! Dr. med. Martina Göldlin

*What do you enjoy about being a clinical researcher?*

Being a clinical researcher means taking two perspectives interchangeably. While as clinicians, we **treat** individuals, as scientists, we try to **find** systematic **answers** to the many questions coming up in daily clinical practice. I particularly enjoy the discourse on such daily-practice-problems with like-minded team members. This often helps to find individualized solutions in clinical practice or design a more feasible research project. Although combining clinics and research can be challenging, the stimulating environment and additional variety are more than worth it!

Women in Neurology, WIN

The **Women in Neurology, WIN**, are an integral part of the Swiss Neurological Society (SNG). It is the goal of WIN to create and foster career opportunities for female physicians by launching mentoring programs and promoting the effectiveness of networking among women in Neurology. [Link](#)

**Read also:**

Work – Life – Balance in Medicine

The University of Bern is aware that the professional and academic paths of its students and staff are influenced by family, private and job-related circumstances. A variety of services, advice and support are available to employees and their families. Link

For physicians the separation between work and life is not always straightforward. Typical physician duties include patient contact, administrative tasks, charting, teaching, meetings, etc. The addition of mobile technology and research work that can be done remotely also means that work time can easily stretch into life time. The COVID-19 pandemic has even increased the workload, both in the clinical work as well as regarding care duties at home.

On that topic, read also:


Recent Publications

Research on COVID-19


Stroke


**ZfPB**


**SWEZ**


Headache


Neuroimmunology


Neurorehabilitation


ZEN


Contact

For any comments on the newsletter as well as all research related questions, please contact:

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