Department of Dermatology,
Zurich University Hospital

Biennial Report
2011 – 2012
## Biennial Report 2011 – 2012

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Biennial Report 2011 – 2012
Dear Colleagues, referring Physicians, friends of the Department, patients and readers. It is a great pleasure, in the name of my collaborators at the Department of Dermatology of the Zurich University Hospital, to share with you our biennial report for the years 2011 and 2012. The report highlights significant activities of our Department in patient care, research and teaching as well as special accomplishments of our devoted faculty and staff over the past 2 years.

Our department has set itself the aim of providing top quality patient care, research and education in the fields of dermatology, venerology and allergology, with a strong focus on innovation and leadership in dermat-oncology, immuno-dermatology and allergology.

The time frame covered by this biennial report represents my 5th and 6th year chairing a wonderful Department. It reflects a period of consolidation of organizational changes implemented since 2006, the establishment of improved high-level standards of quality management, further growth of clinical and academic activities made possible by strong local support and an increasingly competitive team, the launch of an associated Dermatology Division in the State of Thurgau, the implementation of inpatient care financing according to the new Swiss DRG (Diagnosis Related Groups) in 2012, the attribution of over 6 mio CHF financing over 4 years for a University Research Priority Program “Translational Oncology” in which Dermatology as part of a network which I preside plays a leading role, and the launch in 2011 of the now already successful “Zürcher Fortbildungsstage” as a yearly 4-day continuing medical education (CME) event in dermatology, venereology and allergology.

In the last 2 years our senior medical team was able to significantly strengthen itself at the junior faculty level by securing the financing for 3 additional “Oberarzt” positions in 2011 and an additional one in 2012, reflecting an expansion of our cutaneous oncology, dermatopathology, general outpatient and academic laser/aesthetic dermatology activities, as well as a presence within the new ambulatory Dermatology Division in the Thurgau KantonsSpital as a partnership with our Department. The latter partnership has rapidly established itself as a win-win situation, enabling the State of Thurgau to increase the quality of care in dermatology, and our university hospital to guarantee an increased flow of complex patients to our Department. At an academic level all research groups, scientists, clinician-scientists and clinicians have been extremely productive and innovative again, growing the cumulative impact factor of the Department further to over 800 points, up from 190 in 2006, and this despite unfortunately extremely limited laboratory space. Our drive for innovation, which we hope will ultimately serve patients suffering from skin disease, is supported by the recruitment of Dr. B. Mühleisen a prior resident now returning from a 3-year Postdoc in San Diego as Oberarzt and recipient of an Ambizione Career Development Award of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

So as to assure best possible patient care in times of increasing economic pressure, we set ourselves the objective of achieving internationally recognized standards of quality management. After more than a year of extensive team-work required for improving and standardizing our operating procedures under the direction of our head of quality management (Prof. R. Braun), our whole Department and Skin Cancer Center received ISO 9001 – in 2011 certification of Quality Management. Simultaneously, our Skin Cancer Center was recognized by the German Cancer Society as an Onkozert certified Skin Cancer Center.

Despite the above mentioned challenges of maintaining or increasing the quality of care, simultaneously to training the dermatologists, academics and health personnel of tomorrow, without increasing funding, and within a fixed limited space allocation, the motivation and devotion of our team, the support – where possible – of the university and hospital, the recognition of our trainees and patients, and the prospect of opening a full and an assistant professorship for experimental dermatology as well as an assistant professorship for skin cancer research in 2013 – 2014 make the future look bright. We look forward to reporting on this in our next biennial report 2013 – 2014.
With these snapshots of significant achievements realized in 2011 – 2012, my collaborators and I invite you to find out more in the pages following, and wish you pleasant reading. Enjoy!

Prof. Dr. med. Lars E. French
Chairman Department of Dermatology
University Hospital Zurich
1. Assignement of the Department of Dermatology Zurich University Hospital

The Department of Dermatology of the Zurich University Hospital is devoted to provide sustained leadership in research, patient care and education in the fields of dermatology, venerology and allergology.

Our nationally and internationally recognized Department includes centers of excellence for skin cancer, inflammatory and allergic skin diseases as well as dermatological surgery. With a team of 47 specialized physicians we offer high-level patient care in all areas of dermatology, venerology and allergology in the context of our large out-patient ambulatory care clinic (Dermatologische Poliklinik), our inpatient dermatology service, our day care unit, and tertiary care referral clinics in a large number of specialty areas. These include: melanoma and difficult pigmented lesions, non-melanoma skin cancers, cutaneous lymphoma, bullous and autoimmune skin disease, medical dermatology, psoriasis, hair and scalp disease, occupational and contact dermatitis, dermatologic surgery, dermatopathology, and physical therapies (phototherapy, radiotherapy and laser therapy). Our research activities are focussed on basic and translational research with relevance to skin disease, primarily skin cancer and inflammatory skin disease. The efforts of our research groups are reflected by regular high level publications and a high cumulative yearly impact factor. Collaboration and networking with talented scientists and research groups within the University of Zurich, the ETH, collaborative networks such as the Zurich Cancer network, and other leading European Dermatology Centers considerably strengthens our research activities. Education is the third principle field of activity of our Department. In the past few years, our Department has focussed its resources on pre- and post-graduate training as well as on the development and maintenance of our innovative internetbased pre-graduate learning tool – DOIT (Dermatology Online with Interactive Technology).
2. Mission Statement

The top priorities of the Department of Dermatology USZ – in close collaboration with other Departments and Institutes of the USZ – are:

- to offer high quality individualized diagnosis and therapy of skin disease, as well as patient education in skin care and prevention of skin disease.

- to provide a high level of teaching and training in dermatology at the pre- and post-graduate level.

- to perform innovative basic and clinical research with the ultimate aim of contributing to improved patient-care.

- to foster constructive collaboration and networks with private practitioners as well as primary and secondary institutional care providers.

By fulfilling this mission we aim to position our department among the leading Dermatology Departments in Europe.
3. Team

The department of Dermatology has a staff of 178 people including medical doctors, nursing staff, medical technical staff, laboratory staff, administrative staff and 25 research collaborators. Routinely, our Department hosts fellows and guests from abroad within its clinical and research activities.

Staffing levels in 2011/2012 according to occupation

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Associate Professors (Leitende Ärzte)
- Senior Physicians (Oberärzte)
- Resident physicians
- Other academic specialists
- Research collaborators (paid by external funding)
- Nursing including medical technical radiology staff
- Laboratory technicians
- Administration
4. Patient Care

In the Swiss Health Service, inpatient dermatology is virtually exclusively available at the five university hospitals. In contrast, ambulatory care is offered both in the private sector and the public setting of university and state hospitals. As the largest academic dermatology center in Switzerland, the Department of Dermatology at the University of Zurich offers state of the art in-patient medical care for complex and rare skin problems. The department has very skilled surgeons that can perform complex surgical procedures and also histologically controlled procedures. In addition, our department is able to administer complex chemotherapeutic regimens or intravenous immunotherapy including antibodies and fusion molecules. Moreover, we provide an extensive spectrum of outpatient services including highly specialized consultations. Our department benefits from a large area referral base for these specialized activities as well as its own on-site histopathology laboratory.

Out-patient unit (Policlinic) & specialized ambulatory care clinics

Over 30,000 patients are seen upon referral, with a total of over 80,000 patient consultations per year in our dermatology outpatient clinic (Policlinic) lead by PD Dr. A. Cozzio, and our selection of specialized outpatient clinics lead by international experts in their field of dermatology and venereology. In this setting, second-opinions as well as optimal management for emergency situations and complex or therapy-resistant forms of skin disease are offered to the population of Eastern Switzerland and patients from other parts of Switzerland or abroad.

Certified Skin Tumor Center (Schwerpunkt Hautkrebs)

Our skin cancer center runs under the direction of Prof. Dummer with a team of expert skin cancer specialists (Prof. R. Braun, Prof. Dr. G. Hofbauer, PD Dr. A. Cozzio, Prof. Dr. M. Maiwald and Dr. S. Goldinger), and is comprised of the following clinics. The pigmented lesion & skin cancer prevention clinic: this clinic runs under the direction of Prof. R. Braun and makes use of the most modern high tech equipment (confocal microscopy, skin surface videomicroscopy, dermoscopy, total body imaging) for the early detection of melanoma. The skin cancer clinic runs under the direction of Prof. R. Dummer and offers patients with skin cancer of different types (melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer) highly professionalized treatment and follow-up as well as access to the most innovative clinical trials. The cutaneous lymphoma clinic runs under the direction of PD Dr. A. Cozzio. In the above specialized clinics of our skin cancer center, patients have access to the best standards of diagnosis and care, a multi-disciplinary approach with tumor boards where required, and a broad variety of treatments including: surgical interventions, physical treatment with special light sources or radiotherapy, photopheresis, topical immunomodulatory treatments, targeted cancer therapies and chemotherapy. Patients with certain types of cancer, especially melanoma are offered to have a molecular sub typing of their malignancy that is the basis for the selection of specific targeted therapies, such as Vemurafenib or Imatinib. These molecules have high response rates, even in metastatic melanoma.

The Skin Cancer Center is supported by a world class clinical trial unit. This clinical trial unit is performing phase I, II and III trials. Most of them are international trials sponsored by pharmaceutical companies. The clinical
trial unit plays a central role in the development of the second generation BRAF inhibitors and the second generation smoothened inhibitors. It was also the first clinical trial unit that used immune-modifying antibodies such as ipilimumab and very recently anti-PD I antibodies in the clinic Switzerland. In the context of kinase inhibitors there are very recent data that suggest that MEK kinase inhibitors are powerful therapeutics in NRAS mutated metastatic melanoma. Innovative treatments are also investigating the use of topical substances such as resiquimod.

Investigator-initiated Trials are very important tools to improve the data sets relevant for evidence-based medicine. In close cooperation with the EORTC, there were two investigator-initiated international trials in primary cutaneous T-cell lymphomas (mycosis fungoides), one for early stages comparing PUVA-therapy to a combination of PUVA and bexarotene and one for advanced stages investigating pegylated liposomal doxorubicin in tumor stage mycosis fungoides. Both trials finally have been closed successfully, and the intriguing results are available as decent publications.

Our inflammatory skin disease research group has been involved in several international trials sponsored by pharmaceutical companies too. Among molecules tested in psoriasis are antibodies against IL-17 and IL-17 receptor as well as small molecules targeting S1P1 and phosphodiesterase 4. Several innovative investigator-initiated trials are also being conducted in pyoderma gangraenosum, chronic urticaria and mastocytosis.

The ongoing clinical trials can be found on our webpage (http://www.dermatologie.usz.ch/HealthProfessionals/studien/Seiten/AktuelleStudien.aspx). On this link there are also listed the publications on our clinical research work.

**Allergology Unit**

The allergology unit of our department is a European certified (GALEN) center of excellence specialized in the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic allergic disease. Managed by Prof. P. Schmid and Prof. B. Ballmer-Weber, our allergy unit has developed a special focus on skin allergy, food allergy, drug allergy and desensitization protocols (specific immunotherapy), for example for life-threatening insect sting allergies.

**Surgery Unit**

Our surgical unit and its experienced team of dermatological surgeons (Dr. S. Läuchli and Prof. J. Hafner) have developed a renown activity in general dermatological surgery with a focus on skin cancer surgery and chronic wound surgery. High-end techniques such as micrographic surgery (MOHS) for complex skin cancer cases, ablative laser treatments or fibrotic tissue shaving and skin transplantation for complex wounds are regularly performed with a high level of patient satisfaction in this unit.

**Physical Treatment Unit – including Radiotherapy, Phototherapy & Laser Unit**

This unit lead by Prof. R. Dummer and Prof. Dr. G. Hofbauer is equipped with the latest physical therapy technologies, including UVA1 devices and a full laser and Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) platform. Recently, two modern X ray devices for superficial radiotherapy of skin cancer and selected refractory inflammatory diseases have been installed. Over 3000 treatments are performed per year.
The Department of Dermatology has a long-lasting interest in the application of laser technology. The laser therapy unit has 10 treatment devices that allow to treat the full spectrum of vascular and pigmented skin lesions including several Q-switched lasers for tattoo removal. Currently, there are two master students studying the circumstances of the tattoo and the psychological impact.

In the last years – under the direction of Dr. Bettina Rümmlein – we have also developed the treatment with fractional CO₂-lasers in order to correct scars and actinic elastosis. In the outpatient clinic for aesthetic dermatology hyaluronic acid injections and botox injections are performed in order to provide the full spectrum of medical aesthetic interventions and training in this field.

**Day care clinic and weekday in-patient clinic**

Our day care clinic under the direction of Prof. Dr. G. Hofbauer with a specialized multidisciplinary team of doctors and nurses provides a unique setting for complex ambulatory topical or systemic therapy of refractory skin diseases, including the infusion of biologicals and chemotherapies. The same team also has 10 beds to provide rapid complex in-patient workups and short in-patient therapies in the context of our weekday inpatient clinic. This new concept developed in 2007 to cost efficiently match the medical needs of a significant subset of our patients and referring physicians (intermittent in-patient care, short diagnostic work-ups, short in-patient therapy) has been highly successful and associated with a significant reduction in our overall mean length of in-patient hospital stay.

Autoimmune skin diseases: in this specialized consultation patients with diseases due to an overactive immune response and associated skin symptoms are offered complex dermatological and/or systemic therapy by specialized medical and nursing staff. Sequential treatments regimens under conditions of optimal compliance are frequently performed in this setting for our patients with psoriasis and other autoimmune diseases, eczema and infectious skin diseases for example. Extracorporeal photopheresis, an immunomodulatory treatment for organ transplant recipients suffering organ rejection, and for cutaneous lymphoma patients is performed daily with our three photopheresis units in the day care clinic.

**In-patient clinic**

Our in-patient clinic with 26 beds, 8 of which are available for semi-private and privately insured patients is unique with respect to the medical expertise and the level of integrated medical and dermatological care that the highly specialized but also uniquely caring team of nurses and doctors offers. Under the direction of senior medical staff (Prof. L. French, Prof. R. Dummer, Prof. J. Hafner, Dr. K. Schad) solutions are found for the management of the most severe forms of skin disease including complex autoimmune skin disease, skin cancer,

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**Dermatopathology**

Essential for quality the main focus of our clinical activities

**Dermatooncology**
– Center of Reference for Melanoma
– Center of Reference for Cutaneous Lymphoma
– MOHS (Micrographic Surgery of Skin Tumors)

**Immunodermatology**

**Statistics: Number of biopsies per year since 2010 – 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biopsies</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Δ 2009 %</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Δ 2010 %</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Δ 2011 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biopsies</td>
<td>25,553</td>
<td>+ 10.4 %</td>
<td>28,675</td>
<td>+ 12 %</td>
<td>28,435</td>
<td>+ 0 %</td>
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</table>
therapy resistant atopic dermatitis and complex clinical presentations of skin disease for which an appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic approach needs to be put in place. The concentrated medical expertise and friendly atmosphere makes this in-patient unit unique in its kind and regularly appraised by patients.

Nursing
The care in the Dermatology distinguishes itself through a high level of flexibility and innovative strength. A specialist career model was developed in close collaboration with the Center for Clinical Nursing Science of the university hospital of Zurich, which fulfills the new Swiss education requirements for care. At the same time the future skill and grade mix for Dermatological Care was captured and planned. To meet future challenges, a care portfolio with a 5-year plan was developed and gradually implemented. It is based on the concept of Shared Governance with the sectors care management, care education and professional care. For presenting the impacts of the introduction of Diagnosis Related Groups, the Care Department of the Dermatological Clinic also took part in a national accompanying research.

The oncological care unit was supported further and was characterized by an expansion of the collaboration in the tumor center of the university hospital Zurich. Furthermore, the palliative treatment of a patient with a metastatic melanoma was intensified. Qualified personnel with a specific education in palliative care could be won and the collaboration with the competence center Palliative Care of the university hospital of Zurich was extended. There are weekly multidisciplinary meetings to determine the best possible care and treatment plan for the patient. This development was accompanied by the introduction of the distress thermometers as standardized screening instrument for capturing psychological, physical and spiritual suffering of all stationary oncological patients.

It was possible to further expand the lectures about dermatological care at the University of Applied Sciences in Zurich, in the bachelor as well as the master program. There is a close collaboration with the Swiss professional dermatology care group, among other things, through regular meetings and participation via presentations at the national congress of the group.

Dermatopathology
The first certified dermatology teaching center in Switzerland, Center of Reference for Melanoma, Center of Reference for Cutaneous Lymphoma Dermatopathology is the backbone of dermatology and an indispensable diagnostic facility for a center devoted to the provision of excellent patient care for patients suffering from the most challenging forms of skin disease. Under the direction of Prof. R. Dummer, a team of 2 senior european board-certified dermatopathologists (PD J. Kamarachev & Dr. K. Kerl) and a resident, our dermatopathology provides expert dermatopathological diagnoses in over 28,400 patient samples per year (45 % inhouse & 55 % external referrals). Additionally this team provides specialized diagnostic tests including direct immunofluorescence on skin biopsies for autoimmune skin disease.

Laboratory facilities
The laboratory facilities of the department include labs devoted to routine lab procedures, and labs devoted to research. The department manages fully equipped dermatopathology, allergology, mycology, serology / venerology and 8 competitive skin disease and allergy research laboratories.

Interdisciplinarity within USZ
Several dermatologic disorders are associated with involvement of other vital organs, and this best managed in a collaborative and interdisciplinary manner. Regular tumor boards, collaboration with the plastic surgeons and other departments of the USZ as well as immunology and rheumatology joint rounds contribute to guaranteeing an optimal standard of care.

Key Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenues (medical services)</td>
<td>39 mio CHF (previous year 32 mio CHF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations out-patient setting</td>
<td>75.329 (billed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient entries in in-patient setting</td>
<td>1,251 (thereof 30 % privately insured patients)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Duration of stay</td>
<td>6.9 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation of inpatient beds (percent)</td>
<td>89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees (full-time equivalents)</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plus externally financed persons (Drittmittel)</td>
<td>35</td>
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</table>
New dermatological outpatient clinic
State Cantonal Hospital Frauenfeld

A new dermatological outpatient clinic is being operated at Frauenfeld by the Spital Thurgau AG (STGAG) since March 1st 2011. Prior to this, due to an increased demand for dermatological services, a shortage both for outpatients and inpatients in the canton of Thurgau became apparent. This situation prompted the STGAG management to begin planning for the provision of dermatological services in close collaboration with the dermatology department of the University Hospital Zurich (USZ). The creation of a level 2 centre between primary dermatological care and a university clinic was appealing.

The new dermatological outpatient clinic is organisationally integrated into the medical department of the State Hospital of Frauenfeld (chief physician Prof. Beat Frauchiger). Under the lead of PD Dr. Antonio Cozzio, the USZ dermatologists Dr. Karin Schad, Dr. Katrin Baumann und Dr. Stephan Nobbe incorporated their ideas into the concept. Since the beginning, the department has been run by two senior dermatologists (“Oberärzte”) from the dermatology department USZ, who divide their hours between the USZ and the State Hospital Frauenfeld, working 50% at each. The current senior dermatologists in Frauenfeld are Dr. Stephan Nobbe and Prof. Dr. Mirjana Maiwald (until March 2013)/Dr. Isabel Kolm (from April 2013). In order to manage the increasing number of consultations, a 6-month rotation for senior dermatology-residents from the USZ was introduced in April 2013.

The outpatient clinic has been very popular since opening. The service covers a broad spectrum of outpatient dermatology. The majority of patients are referred by practising physicians, from both primary carers and specialists. In addition the outpatient clinic is responsible for all dermatological in-patient consultations in the whole STGAG. Furthermore special consultation hours are held on a monthly basis with professors from the USZ Dermatology department.

After two years of operation the results are very positive and the outpatient clinics is a valuable addition to the dermatological services of the State of Thurgau.

5. Networking
6. Certification & Accreditation

Main Fields of activity

Our aim is to ensure that our organization and our services are consistent and of best possible quality. Our activities can be divided in the following four main components: quality planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement. Our activities are not only focused on service quality, but also the means to achieve it. Our quality management therefore uses quality assurance and control of processes such as PDCA (plan–do–check–act or plan–do–check–adjust) to achieve more consistent quality.

In order to achieve this goal, we intentionally chose a multidisciplinary approach in order to reach out to all groups of professions and to break barriers between those groups.

Our main focus of interest is the permanent improvement of the quality of care, the safety of our patients, and the satisfaction of our collaborators, referring physicians and most importantly patients. In order to achieve this, we cover topics such as complaint management, Critical Incident Report System (CIRS) and surveys (patients, collaborators and referring physicians) among others.

One of the central activities is the analysis and critical appraisal of all processes in the institution. In order to improve the standard of care we introduced a quality manual which is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

We use quality assurance and process control to achieve, maintain and permanently improve the quality of our care. We formulate annual goals, execute and follow up on them using an interdisciplinary approach breaking down barriers and involving all collaborators in this process.

The department is ISO 9001: 2008 certified by Swiss TS since 2011. This certificate does not only cover the Clinic but has been intentionally extended to research, education and laboratories.

Our skin cancer centre is certified by the Deutsche Krebgesellschaft (DKG) via Onkozert since 2011.

We are in charge of the certifications but consider the real challenge to make the step from simply fulfilling requirement catalogs to real quality management projects where everyone (collaborators, patients and referring physicians) can feel the improvement.
Communication with, and information of the public, political organs, patient organisations and private practitioners is an activity that we view as important and part of our mission. Using several communication channels including interviews/commentaries in local and regional press, radio or television, regularly updated information and news on our website www.dermatologie.usz.ch, and a regular newsletter – in collaboration with the Zurich Dermatology Society – “DermaZH”, we try to provide regular and active information exchange with the public and with the medical community.

In line with our focus on excellence in skin cancers, skin cancer prevention and early detection of skin cancer is a clear priority. High level prevention and early detection of skin cancer requires the transfer of information to the population and a continuous education effort for the population and physicians. In collaboration with the Swiss cancer league, regional cancer leagues, and the Swiss Society for Dermatology and Venerology we regularly distribute printed and electronic information concerning skin cancer, best practices for prevention, and organise public events such as the yearly melanoma Monday (free melanoma screening day). During our 2012 melanoma Monday more than 1000 patients received free skin cancer screening in our department. Our allergy unit also organizes “teaching evenings” for parents of children suffering from atopic eczema (neurodermitis) together with AHA (the Swiss patient organisation for atopic diseases).
8. Research Foundations

Our department has two charitable foundations aimed at ultimately improving patient care by providing support for high quality research on the mechanisms of skin disease. The activities of the foundations are made possible by generous donations from patients and the public as well as industry.

**Bruno Bloch-Stiftung**

- [www.brunoblochstiftung.ch](http://www.brunoblochstiftung.ch) founded in 1935 by the widow of Prof. Bruno Bloch, Chairman of the Zurich Dermatology Department between 1916 and 1933; this foundation supports skin research and education activities specifically at the department of dermatology of the university of Zurich, including research on severe skin diseases such as inflammatory skin disease and skin cancer.

- One of the traditions and highlights of the Bruno Bloch Foundation are the yearly Memorial Lectures which take place in an Auditorium filled with over 200 Faculty Members and Students at the Zurich University Hospital in February. In 2011, the Bruno-Bloch Memorial Lecture was held by Professor Alexander Enk from Heidelberg, Germany, covering in an exceptional manner progress made in the field of autoimmune bullous diseases. In 2012 the Bruno-Bloch Memorial Lecture was devoted to psoriasis and its pathogenesis given by former resident and scientist of the Department of Dermatology in Zurich, now distinguished Chairman of Dermatology in Lausanne, Switzerland, Professor Michel Gilliet.

**Association for Research on Cancer of the Skin (Verein für Hautkrebsforschung)**

- [www.skincancer.ch](http://www.skincancer.ch) – founded in 2004 – aims to coordinate and stimulate skin cancer research in Switzerland by supporting research in rare and severe forms of skin cancer (e.g. melanoma, cutaneous lymphoma). The board consists of Prof. Dr. R. Dummer, Zurich, Prof. Dr. L. French, Zurich, Prof. Dr. D. Hohl, Lausanne, Prof. Dr. R. Hunger, Berne, Prof. Dr. R. Kaufmann, Frankfurt, and Prof. Dr. W. Kempf, Zurich; it is currently chaired by Prof. R. Dummer. The current goal is to generate a substantial contribution to clinical and experimental skin cancer research in the department in Zurich and in other institutions in Switzerland.
9. Research

We aim to continuously improve the quality of our services to patients and are therefore critically dependent on innovation and research. Our department is committed to the highest level of research in dermatology, and our achievement in this field – as judged by the cumulative impact factor for 2011 and 2012 (467 and 860) – positions us amongst the world’s leading Departments in the field.

Our research activities are primarily focussed on basic, patient-oriented translational, and clinical research in:

- dermato-oncology, where we focus on the pathogenesis, early diagnosis and molecular targeted treatment of skin cancer, particularly in melanoma, cutaneous lymphoma, and non-melanoma skin cancers.
- immunodermatology, especially innate immunity and T-cell biology in inflammatory skin diseases, notably psoriasis, neutrophilic dermatoses, cutaneous drug eruptions, and severe allergic adverse drug reactions.
- allergology, emphasizing on drug and food allergies, and specific immunotherapy.

**Aim of our research activities**

- to promote high quality research with clinical relevance in the defined above mentioned fields of focus.
- intensive networking and collaboration with other institutes and departments at the Zurich University and ETH, as well as through active participation in networks such as the “Cancer Network Zurich” and “life sciences Zurich”.
- to support fellowships abroad in excellent research institutions, and maximize competitive research funding including that from the Swiss National Science Foundation (incl. SNF professorships).
- to create two endowed professorships in our Department in inflammatory skin disease and skin cancer research respectively, with the aim of recruiting or retaining leaders in these research fields to our department.

**Key Figures and Highlights**

Approx. 50 ongoing clinical trials on new therapeutic approaches in skin disease – corresponding to around 20% of all studies performed at the USZ.

Aprox. 80 original and 30 review articles published in peer-reviewed journals in 2011 and 2012

Several high impact publications in interdisciplinary Journals, such as:


New intellectual property: in the last five years 6 patent applications have been submitted/registered.

Promotion of academic renewal: 3 young clinician-scientists from our Department are performing fellowships in leading academic centers in the United States.
Group Members
Prof. Dr. med. Barbara Ballmer-Weber (group leader)
Dr. med. N. Gräni
Dr. med. A. Moser
Dr. med. C. Lang
Irène Cuhat

Main Fields of Research
Our research activities are focused on food allergy, in particular pollen related food allergy. We are particularly involved into the identification and molecular characterisation of important cross-reactive allergens, and the development of diagnostic and therapeutic methods based on recombinant allergens. Allergen based or component resolved diagnosis in food allergy is a major topic of our research group. Another important aspect of our research activity is risk assessment in food allergy in regard to genetic modified foods/novel foods but also threshold doses (minimal allergen doses to induce an allergic reaction) of plant and animal food allergens.

Selected References


Group Members
Dr. sc. nat. Philipp P. Bosshard (group leader)
Dr. med. Martin Glatz
Nada Juricevic

Main Fields of Research
Our research activities focus on (i) sexually transmitted diseases (e.g. development and evaluation of molecular methods for etiologic diagnosis, e.g. evaluation of serological tests); (ii) fungal infections (e.g. optimization of diagnostic procedures); (iii) other dermatological infections (i.e. tick-borne diseases).

Selected References


Bosshard PP. Incubation of fungal cultures: how long is long enough? Mycoses. 2011;54(5):e539-545.


Group Leader
Prof. Dr. med. Ralph Braun

Main Fields of Research
Our main interest is non invasive diagnosis of skin cancer especially malignant melanoma. We use established techniques such as dermoscopy as well as new techniques in vivo laser scanning microscopy, dermoscopy. Due to different international research collaborations our patients benefit directly from the latest technological developments. Detecting skin cancer especially melanoma at early stages offers an unique opportunity because if diagnosed early enough skin cancer can be cured.

Selected References

Group Leader
PD Dr. med. Dr. sc. nat. Antonio Cozzio

Main Fields of Research
The focus of our research group is cutaneous lymphoma and Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC). We aim to understand the inflammatory processes in the TH2 driven immunologic setting of cutaneous T cell lymphoma. How do the neoplastic T cells subdue the adaptive immune system, and is there a way to turn this deleterious process around? Another aspect of our research activity is the analysis of the immune response in MCC depending on the polyoma virus status of this highly aggressive skin tumour.

Selected References
Group Members
Prof. Dr. med. Reinhard Dummer (group leader)
Mitch Levesque, Ph.D, group leader melanoma
Simone Goldinger, MD
Sima Rozati, MD
Marieke Raaijmakers, MD
Daniel Widmer, Ph.D
Phil Cheng, Ph.D student
Daniel Hug
Jil Dreier

Main Fields of Research
We have intensively studied the immune biology of cutaneous lymphomas, cutaneous melanoma and epithelial skin cancers. Based on the microenvironment of these tumors, we have established immune interventions in cell cultures and animal models. Translational research applies this new knowledge to our patients in order to provide effective treatment with best quality of life.

Selected References
Dummer R et al. Prospective International Multicenter Phase II Trial of Intravenous Pegylated Liposomal Doxorubicin Monotherapy in Patients With Stage IIB, IVA, or IVB Advanced Mycosis Fungoides: Final Results From EORTC 21012. J Clin Oncol. 2012; 30:865-7

Group Members
Prof. Dr. med. Lars E. French (group leader)
Dr. sc. nat. Emmanuel Contassot (principal investigator)
Dr. med. Dr. sc. nat. Atsushi Jankovic
Dr. sc. nat. Magdalena Kistovska
Samuel Gehrke (PhD student)
Roman Huber (PhD student)
Gabriele Fenini (PhD student)
Tatiana Proust (Lab technician)

Main Fields of Research
Our objective is to identify and elucidate immunological and molecular mechanisms involved in the pathogenesis of skin diseases as a template for the discovery of novel therapeutic approaches. Our research activities are focussed on the mechanisms leading to innate immune responses in the skin upon exposure to pathogen and/or danger signals. We are particularly interested in the molecular events involved in Interleukin-1beta processing and secretion during the course of inflammatory dermatoses.

Selected References

Group Members
Prof. Dr. med. Jürg Hafner (group leader)
Dr. med. Severin Lauchli
Dr. med. Stephan Nobbe
Dr. med. Karin Schad
Dr. med. Laurence Feldmeyer
Dr. med. Claude Luder

Main Fields of Interest
Clinical research in dermatologic oncologic surgery, vascular medicine and wound healing. Ongoing studies concern the fields of non-melanoma skin cancer, hypertrophic scars and keloids, Martorell hypertensive ischemic leg ulcer, medical compression therapy, living skin equivalents and phytotherapy of chronic wounds.

Research is supported by the JH Rahn Foundation (www.jhrahn-foundation.ch) for clinical research and postgraduate training in dermatologic surgery, phlebology and wound healing.
Main Fields of Research

Our research activities are focused on squamous cell carcinoma of the skin. We have a special interest in organ transplant recipients as a high-risk population for the development of squamous cell carcinoma of the skin stemming from the combined effects of immunosuppression and ultraviolet light. Our research is thus focused on inflammation fighting the or contributing to the cutaneous carcinogenesis as well as on the role of UV damage in particular in conjunction with medication.

Selected References


Group Members
PD Dr. med. Dr. sc.nat. Alexander A. Navarini (group leader)
Dr. med. Antonios Kolios
Dr. med. Yasemin Goeksu

Main Fields of Research
Our research activities are focused on the immunology and genetics of psoriasis. In close collaboration with the Boyman group, we are using cytokine-antibody complexes and inflammatory reagents to study the role of T cell subsets in psoriasis. Clinically, we are interested in the mechanisms of biological inhibition of inflammation by monoclonal antibodies in atopic dermatitis, lupus and psoriasis and the concurrent use of topical immuno-modulatory agents. In addition, we are building a focus on bioinformatics and next generation sequencing to identify pathogenic mutations.

Selected References
Topical treatment habits in psoriasis patients receiving adalimumab.

Interrupting IL-6-receptor signaling improves atopic dermatitis but associates with bacterial superinfection.

Group Members
Prof. Dr. med. Peter Schmid-Grendelmeier (group leader)
Dr. med. Meike Distler
Dr. med. Antonios Kolios
Dr. med. Christina Weber
Suzanne Marti-Wyss

Main Fields of Research
Our research activities are focused on epidemiology, pathophysiology and treatment of allergic diseases, namely atopic dermatitis. A special focus is given to the use of molecular allergens for improved diagnosis in a variety of allergic diseases. Such component-resolved diagnosis may help for better risk assessment and selection for specific immunotherapy. We also investigate new regimens and therapeutic options in a variety of diseases, from pollen allergy to rarer ones such as mastocytosis and hereditary angioedema.

Selected References

Interrupting IL-6-receptor signaling improves atopic dermatitis but associates with bacterial superinfection.

A genome-wide meta-analysis of genetic variants associated with allergic rhinitis and grass sensitization and their interaction with birth order.

10. Medical Education / Teaching

Medical education is crucial to guarantee a high level of professionalism of physicians and health care professionals. Our continued implication in education is reflected by

1. Education of students in the medical faculty of the university
2. Specialized training in Dermatology of resident physicians for board-certification in “Dermatology”, and in “Allergology and Immunology” for residents board certifying in allergology and clinical immunology
3. Continuing medical education of private practitioners – mainly dermatologists and allergologists, but also general practitioners and to a lesser extent other health care professions.

Education for students: Senior physicians of our department provide an introductory course for dermatology to 3rd year medical students, a yearly core course in dermatology (8-day Themenblock) to 4th year medical students, repetitory lectures in both, dermatology and allergology in the 6th year, and a practical training course in dermatology in the 6th year of the medical training curriculum at the University of Zurich. In complement to these ex-cathedra and bed-side teaching activities, medical students can benefit from web-based learning using an online platform (DOIT: Dermatology Online with Interactive Technology) developed by our Department under the direction of former Chairman (Prof. Dr. med. Dr. h. c. Günter Burg) in a close collaboration with several other dermatology departments (Basel, Bern, Lausanne, Jena and Stadtspital Triemli in Zurich).

This platform is being continuously improved and currently exists in six languages and two further languages are scheduled. In 2009 the DOIT Platform was elected as the best internet based teaching platform and distinguished with the 50,000 Euro Medida Prize.

Resident physicians
The Department of Dermatology offers 22 residency positions for the 5 years of obligatory training required for obtaining swiss board certification in dermatology. Demand for residency training in our department is extremely high, with more than 150 applications for approximately 4 available positions per year. 2 training positions are also available for part of the board certification in immunology and allergology, as well as that of angiology. During their residency training in our department, residents benefit of the broadest offer in Switzerland, comprised of a rotation plan through 20 units and specialized clinics covering all subspecialties of dermatology and allergology, including dermatooncology, autoimmune skin disease, trichology (hair disease), dermato surgery, dermatopathology, physical skin therapy (radiotherapy, UV-therapy, laser), phlebology and others.

Following interest from the German, Austrian and Swiss dermatological societies, the online platform for students (DOIT) is now being used as the base for the development of a paneuropean post-graduate online continuing medical education (CME) platform to be named DERMOKRATES. Our Department and Faculty are actively participating in this innovative project.

Continuing medical education (CME) / Postgraduate training for private practitioners
Our Department and Faculty offer 12 – 14 CME events and grand rounds per year, comprised in detail of – 6 half-day thematic CME events per year in the University Zurich Irchel (180 – 200 participants), and 6 – 8 grand rounds and interdisciplinary CME sessions, the latter co-organized with other medical disciplines at USZ. In addition to this, and as of 2007, 4 new CME’s per year entitled “Dermatology Update” have been added to our postgraduate teaching program, with the aim of providing a further platform for case presentations, short updates and an overview of important new publications in dermatology (Journal Club).

Zürcher Dermatologische Fortbildungstage
The “Zürcher Dermatologische Fortbildungstage” were launched in 2011 and immediately proved to be very successful as reflected by the feedback and the number of participants – mainly practicing dermatologists – which was 220 in 2011 and 240 in 2012. The four day
Overview 2011 and 2012

Continuing medical education 2011

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11. Partners/Sponsors/Collaborations with Industry and Fund Raising (private industry)

Our continuous efforts in medical education, public relations, marketing, and networking with private practitioners is only possible thanks to external funding. We collaborate with industry for our postgraduate education, giving private practitioners and industry a platform for communication and exchange. Furthermore possibilities are provided by our charitable foundations the Bruno Bloch Stiftung and the Verein für Hautkrebsforschung. We would here like to acknowledge with great respect the support of our industrial partners. Their collaboration supports the quality and nature of our postgraduate teaching offer. The Department of Dermatology USZ is grateful to the following sponsors and donators for their constant precious and generous support.

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Beneficiary: Verein für Hautkrebsforschung
Account CHF: IBAN: CH80 0483 5076 6289 5100 0
Reference: ALO 426
12. Honors and Prizes

Special Honors

- **Leo von Zumbusch Gedächtnisvorlesung – Prof. Lars French 2011**

Since 1951, the annual Leo von Zumbusch Memorial Lecture launched by Professor Alfred Marchionini recognizes leading national and international scientists in the field of dermatology. In July 2011 Prof. French was invited by Prof. Thomas Ruzicka, current Chairman of the Department of Dermatology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich to give the 61st Leo von Zumbusch Memorial Lecture with the title of “Skin and Autoinflammatory Diseases.”

- **Kung Sun Oh Memorial Lecture – Prof. Lars French 2012**

On the 8th of September 2012 Prof. French was invited to give the prestigious 35th Kung Sun Oh Memorial Lecture at Yonsei University in Seoul, as the second Swiss individual in the history of Swiss Dermatology after Prof. Dr. Urs Schnyder in 1978. The Kung Sun Oh Memorial Lecture honors the achievements of Prof. Kung Sun Oh, the first professor of dermatology in Korea, former distinguished chairman of the Department of Dermatology and Dean of the Yonsei University Medical Center.

- **Samitz Lectureship in Cutaneous Medicine – Prof. Lars French 2011**

The 36th annual Samitz Lectureship in Cutaneous Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania was given on November 10th 2011 by Prof. French. Invited by Prof. George Cotsarelis, current Chairman of the Department of Dermatology of the University of Pennsylvania, Prof. French gave a lecture in honor of Morris Samitz – distinguished clinician and longtime Professor at Penn – on “The Inflammasome, autoinflammation and the skin.”

- **Otto Nägeli Prize – Prof. Lars French 2012**

The «Otto Naegeli Prize for Medical Research» is one of the most highly esteemed biomedical awards given in Switzerland. It enjoys significant international attention. The «Otto Naegeli Prize» aims to stimulate and recognize outstanding medical and biomedical research, and is awarded every other year to researchers in Switzerland. On the 24th of April 2012 Prof. French was awarded the distinguished Otto-Nägeli Prize as one of the rare clinician-scientists to receive this award since its creation in 1960. The 2012 Otto-Nägeli Prize of 200,000.– Swiss Francs was shared with Prof. Markus Heim from the University of Basel. The scientific advisory committee selected Prof. French for the 2012 Otto-Nägeli Prize in consideration of his outstanding contributions to the understanding of the molecular mechanisms of skin diseases resulting from defective regulation of inflammation and cell death. Additional information is available at: www.otto-naegeli-preis.ch
Georg Friedrich Götz Preis, 2011

Prof. Dr. Onur Boyman received the Georg Friedrich Götz Prize in 2011 for his contributions to immunology, in particular for his research on modulation of immune responses using cytokine-antibody complexes and the pathogenesis of psoriasis. The Georg Friedrich Götz Prize has been awarded by the University of Zurich since 1969.

SNF Ambizione Career Development Award granted to Dr. Beda Mühleisen

In January 2013 Dr. med. Beda Mühleisen returned to our department with an Ambizione Career Development Grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation. After receiving his Swiss Dermatology board certification in Zurich in 2009, Dr. Mühleisen spent 3.5 years as a postdoctoral research fellow in Prof. Richard Gallo’s lab at the University of California in San Diego to study the regulation and role of the antimicrobial peptide cathelicidin in skin innate immune defence (supported by a Fellowship for Advanced Researchers by the Swiss National Science Foundation). Amongst these findings was the discovery that parathyroid hormone-related peptide (PTHrP) enhances cathelicidin expression in the skin and compensates for low vitamin D in immune function. Functional relevance in vivo was shown in a newly established mouse model of vitamin D deficiency, in which PTHrP-induced cathelicidin expression protected against bacterial skin infection. In his current research project at our department, Dr. Mühleisen’s group aims at defining the exact mechanisms, how PTHrP is regulated in the skin and its potential role in human cutaneous wound healing. Findings from this project might allow to develop novel therapies for chronic non-healing wounds and for cathelicidin-related diseases such as rosacea, psoriasis and atopic dermatitis.

Promotions

The following persons were promoted in the period of 2011/2012, and we extend our congratulations to them

- **Professorship (Titularprofessur)**
  Prof. Dr. med. Günther Hofbauer (mainly “Wochen/Tagesklinik” & UV-therapies)
  Prof. Dr. med. Mirjana Maiwald (-Urosevic) (mainly “Wochen/Tagesklinik”)

- **Venia Legendi (Privat-Dozent)**
  PD Dr. med. Jivko Kamarachev (mainly Dermatopathology)
  PD Dr. med. Alexander Navarini (mainly Research)

- **Oberärzte**
  Dr. med. Sabine Bruckert (mainly Dermatosurgery & Allergology)
  Dr. med. Laurence Imhof

- **Oberärzte i.V.**
  Dr. med. Christian Bull (mainly Dermatopathology)
  Dr. med. Simone Goldinger (mainly Dermatooncology)

Residents having achieved Swiss Board-Certification in Dermatology:

- **in 2011**:
  Dr. med. Sabine Buckert, Dr. med. Christian Bull, Dr. med. Martin Glatz, Dr. med. Martin Keller, Dr. med. Eva Sailer, Dr. med. Bettina Töndury and Dr. med. Sandra Tresch

- **in 2012**:
  Dr. med. Joseph Aschwanden and Dr. med. Peter Bures, Dr. med. Isabel Kolm, Dr. med. Simone Goldinger

Selected references


13. Publications

Publications 2011

Original papers (peer-reviewed)

Antsiferova, M; Huber, M; Meyer, M; Piwko-Czuchra, A; Ramadan, T; MacLeod, A S; Havran, W L; Dummer, R; Hohl, D; Werner, S. Activin enhances skin tumourigenesis and malignant progression by inducing a pro-tumourigenic immune cell response. Nature Communications 2011;2:576

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Bauermeister, K; Wangorsch, A; Garoffo, L P; Reuter, A; Conti, A; Taylor, S L; Lidholm, J; Dewitt, A M; Enrique, E; Vieths, S; Holzhauser, T; Ballmer-Weber, B; Reese, G. Generation of a comprehensive panel of crustacean allergens from the North Sea Shrimp Crangon crangon. Molecular Immunology 2011;48:1983-1992

Blanc, F; Vissers, Y M; Adel-Patient, K; Rigby, N M; Mackie, A R; Gunning, A P; Wellner, N K; Skov, P S; Przybyski-Nicaise, L; Ballmer-Weber, B; Zuidmeer-Jongejan, L; Szépfalusi, Z; Ruinemans-Koerts, J; Jansen, A P H; Bernard, H; Wal, J M; Savelkoul, H F J; Wichers, H; Mills, E N C. Boiling peanut Ara h 1 results in the formation of aggregates with reduced allergenicity. Molecular Nutrition & Food Research 2011;55:1887-1894

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