Letter from the President
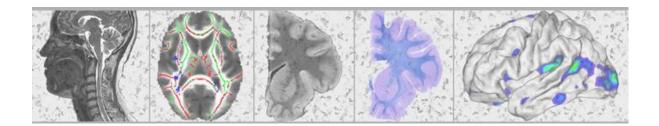
Dear colleagues,

Half a year has passed since the 34th Annual Congress in Berlin, where almost 10,000 delegates from around the world came together to exchange their knowledge on Multiple Sclerosis. We would like to thank the Local Organising Committee for their commitment on organising another successful event.

With only 5 more months to go until the 35th congress of the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis, plans are now well advanced. The meeting will be held in Stockholm on September 11 – 13, so please mark the dates in your agenda.

This year's scientific programme has been put together under the lead of Jan Hillert (Local Organising Committee Chair) and Maria Pia Amato (Scientific Programme Committee Chair). We cover a wide range of topics that will ensure another Congress with cutting edge developments in MS research and care. If you aim to present your own research at the meeting keep in mind that April 24th, the deadline for abstract submission, is approaching soon.

As in previous years, there will also be a comprehensive programme of teaching courses, which is being prepared under the leadership of Tobias Derfuss and Sandra Vukusic.

ECTRIMS is proud to support the exchange of young physicians through the ECTRIMS Fellowship Programme. This year 5 new ECTRIMS MS Clinical Training Fellowships as well as 2 ECTRIMS MS Nurse Training Fellowships have been funded.

2019 also offers a wide range of educational events organised by ECTRIMS. The 2019 focused workshop on "MOG-antibody associated disease" took place in Athens on March 7st and 8th – thanks to Sandra Vukusic, Tobias Derfuss and Romain Marignier for helping to organise this successful event. The Regional Teaching Course 2019 will be held in Tyumen, Russia on May 31 – June 1 and the Summer School 2019 on "Methodology of study design and statistical analysis" will take place in Dublin, Ireland on June 18-20th.

I hope to welcome you all at the 35th ECTRIMS Congress in Stockholm September 11 – 13.

Best regards,

Bernhard Hemmer

ECTRIMS 2019: 11 – 13 September 2019 in Stockholm, Sweden

Dear Colleagues,

Winter is over in the northern hemisphere and we are once again looking forward to spring, which is well on its way in continental Europe. Up here in Stockholm, the site of the upcoming ECTRIMS2019, we may well have snow once more in the coming days, hopefully for the last time this season.

A promising sign of spring is the approaching deadline to submit abstracts to ECTRIMS, and around the MS world, scientists are busy finalizing studies and writing up reports that will hopefully be accepted for a poster or even an oral presentation in September. The deadline for submission this year is 24 April.

These are indeed exciting times to be in MS research – seemingly, MS reports improve in quality and relevance with each year and probably also in numbers. Frankly, it's too much and too fast to be able to keep up with the news in a consistent way. New treatments, new biomarkers, improved imaging, and news of improved prospects for those with MS. Many things patients are likely to ask a poor doctor about. So, there's another argument for attending ECTRIMS2019, to stay abreast with a challenging rate of development!

So, please write up your abstract in the coming weeks and make sure to register for this year's ECTRIMS in Stockholm before 3 July 2019 to benefit from a reduced registration fee.

Wishing you all a wonderful spring and a beautiful summer and feel most welcome to Stockholm in September!

Jan Hillert
Chair ECTRIMS 2019

Report of the ECTRIMS Focused Workshop 2019 in Athens, Greece

The 2019 ECTRIMS Focused workshop on "MOG-antibody associated disease" was held in Athens/Greece in March. It gathered more than 40 experts in the field, covering a wide range of topics, from immunology and pathology, through clinical description, prognostic evaluation, MRI/OCT/CSF biomarkers, to treatment issues. It successfully reached its objective of better defining the clinical spectrum of MOG-Ab associated disease, distinguishing it from MS and NMOSD. It provided some guidance for relapse and disease-modifying treatments, although not yet supported by high level of evidence. It finally reached a unanimous consensus on the need of structured international collaboration to answer unsolved questions in the future.

A publication summarising the state-of-the-art and the key consensus messages of the meeting should follow very soon.

Group Photo taken during the Focused Workshop in Athens on 8 May 2019

Update on ECTRIMS Regional Teaching Course 2019 in Tyumen, Russia

The next regional teaching course event will take place from 31 May until 01 June 2019 in Tyumen, Russia. The programme of this teaching course was developed together with the local neurology community and RUCTRIMS. The detailed program can be seen on the ECTRIMS webpage. With the idea to promote education on the treatment of MS the

programme focuses on several practical aspects such as differential diagnosis, treatment in early MS and in highly active MS, pregnancy in MS and symptomatic treatment of MS. Lectures will be complemented with "meet the expert" sessions and workshops dedicated to specific topics. Our goal is to make this meeting as interactive as possible. The teaching course faculty is looking forward to this educational event.

Update on ECTRIMS Summer School 2019 in Dublin, Ireland

The next ECTRIMS Summer School on "Methodology of study design and statistical analysis" will be held in Dublin, Ireland on 18 – 20 June 2019. The school will focus on research methodology, design and plan in the field of etiology, prognosis and treatment of MS. Experimental designs of clinical trials and innovative trial designs as well as post-marketing, observational studies will be discussed together with the methodology to develop and implement clinical guidelines. In parallel, the fundamentals of statistical methodology and innovative statistical techniques for data processing and analysis will be addressed in the school. Beyond a theory-led course, participants will be given opportunities to apply the concepts via practical sessions and interactive activities integrated throughout the course.

This year, 52 young researchers from different European and non-European countries will take part in the programme.

ECTRIMS Online Library

The ECTRIMS Online Library includes webcasts, abstracts and ePosters from past congresses and other scientific and educational meetings held by ECTRIMS.

Check out the three webcasts from ECTRIMS 2018 in Berlin with the most views:

[Immune reconstitution therapy: pressing the reset button](#) – Gavin Giovannoni, London, UK

[Serum neurofilament light (NfL) for disease prognosis and treatment monitoring in multiple sclerosis patients: is it ready for implementation into clinical care?](#) - Peter Calabresi, Baltimore, US

[MS medication in people with MS planning a pregnancy: an update](#). - Kerstin Hellwig, Bochum, DE

Explore the ECTRIMS Online Library [here](#).

ECTRIMS Fellowships 2019

ECTRIMS offers a comprehensive range of fellowship programmes for different target groups.

In 2019 7 new fellowships were awarded:

[ECTRIMS Multiple Sclerosis Clinical Training Fellowship Programme](#)

- Simon Cardenas Robledo

- Stefania Kaninia

- Madiha Shatila

- Ide Smets

- Paula Tagliani

[ECTRIMS Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Nurse Training Programme](#)

- Daymet Grass Fernandez

- Francesco Pastore

MSIF-ECTRIMS McDonald Fellowship

We are happy to announce that the application is now open for the

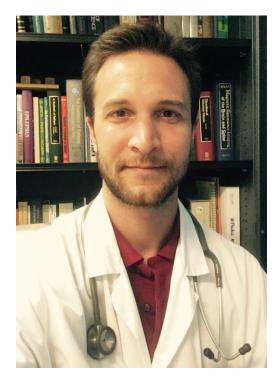**MSIF-ECTRIMS McDonald Fellowship**

The McDonald Fellowship enables young researchers from **emerging countries** to work with the world's leading researchers in MS, with a view to returning to their own countries to establish a programme of MS research that involves the application of newly learned techniques. This is a **two-year fellowship**, with an award of **£30,000 per annum** to the candidate and an additional sum of £2000 awarded to the host institute.

Further information may be found at: https://www.msif.org/mcdonald

Deadline for nominations is **30 June 2019.**

Report of ECTRIMS Fellows

ECTRIMS MS CLINICAL TRAINING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Fellow: Pietro Maggi, M.D. PhD – 2017 Awardee

Research Topic: High field gradient echo MRI enhances the differentiation between multiple sclerosis and other inflammatory disorders: a further step beyond the concept of "no better explanation"

Fellowship Institution: Lausanne University Hospital

Mentor: Prof. Renaud Du Pasquier

Fellowship Duration: 1 year

Summary as ECTRIMS Clinical Training Fellowship Programme Fellow 2018

During my whole ECTRIMS fellowship I participated with enthusiasm to the outpatient and day hospital activity of the Neuroimmunology Unit at the Lausanne University Hospital, gaining experience in the diagnostic-therapeutic work-up of patients with a suspected MS diagnosis, patients with an established MS diagnosis as well as patients with other neuroimmunological and neuro-infectious diseases. This clinical activity represented a unique opportunity for me to gain a more robust understanding of the unmet clinical needs in MS and thus to facilitate the translation from "bed to bench side".

The goal of my clinical research project during the fellowship was to evaluate if the "central vein sign" (CVS) provided by gradient echo (GRE) MRI can differentiate Multiple Sclerosis (MS) from vasculitic white matter lesions, helping in the differential diagnosis between the two diseases. A first paper published during my ECTRIMS fellowship (*Maggi et al. Annals of Neurology 2018*), has shown how the central vein sign it is a useful tool to differentiate MS from central nervous system vasculitis. Although this *retrospective* multicenter study suggests that this marker can help meaningfully in the differential diagnosis between the two diseases, *prospective*, multicenter studies starting from the time of initial work-up are needed to assess the true diagnostic value of the central vein sign, especially in difficult cases. In order to answer this critical question we prospectively recruited patients suspected to have MS who have clinical, imaging, or laboratory "red flags" (i.e., features atypical for MS) to undergo a single standardized 3T imaging protocol including a GRE 3DEPI sequence in Lausanne (Switzerland), in Brussels (Belgium) and in Milan (Italy). Our results are extremely encouraging, showing that the central vein sign can accurately predict an MS diagnosis in patients suspected to have MS, but with atypical clinical, laboratory, and imaging features (Maggi, et al. *The "central vein sign" in patients with diagnostic "red flags" for multiple sclerosis: a prospective multicenter 3T study*; abstract presented at the ECTRIMS 2018 annual congress; manuscript submitted)

Moreover, in order to allow the applicability of this imaging marker into the everyday clinical practice, we developed a novel deep-learning approach to automatically detect the central vein sign in white matter lesions (Maggi, et al. *CVSnet: a machine learning approach for automated central vein assessment in multiple sclerosis*; manuscript under review).

In another still ongoing project, started during my ECTRIMS fellowship, we evaluated the potential of phase imaging and serum neurofilaments (sNfL) for a combined laboratory-neuroimaging marker of chronic inflammation. Our preliminary results are encouraging, and suggest that the combination of paramagnetic phases rim and serum NfL assessment may help in the selection of "chronically" active MS patients who may benefit from disease-modifying treatments (Maggi, et al. *Phase imaging and serum neurofilaments: a combined laboratory-imaging marker of multiple sclerosis chronic inflammation*; abstract accepted to the ISMRM 2019 annual congress; manuscript in preparation).

At present, I was entitled a research grant (Bourse de réleve academique) from the University of Lausanne and I am pursuing his research projects at the Neuroimmunology Unit of the Lausanne University Hospital.

I would like to sincerely thank the ECTRIMS Fellowship program for offering me this opportunity. I truly believe that this ECTRIMS fellowship at the Lausanne University Hospital will be

decisive in my career.

ECTRIMS Job Platform

The ECTRIMS Job Platform on the ECTRIMS Website offers a great possibility to search for training, research and job opportunities in Multiple Sclerosis within Europe. The quickest way to find the right candidate in MS is to post a job advert on the ECTRIMS Job Platform.

Meeting Dates

ECTRIMS Regional Teaching Course 2019
Tyumen / Russia: 31 May – 01 June 2019

IMSCOGS
Amsterdam / Netherlands: 06 – 07 June 2019
Explore the Scientific Programme on the congress website to discover outstanding Key Note Lectures, lively Panel Discussions and interesting Scientific Sessions. Find out which experts are part of this year's conference faculty.

ECTRIMS Summer School 2019
Dublin / Ireland: 18 – 20 June 2019

RIMS Annual Conference
Ljubljana / Slovenia: 20 – 22 June 2019

ECTRIMS 2019
Stockholm / Sweden: 11 – 13 September 2019

ECTRIMS 2020 (with ACTRIMS)
Washington DC, US: 09 – 12 September 2020

We are looking forward to seeing you in Stockholm!

Please be aware of fraudulent organisations!

WARNING

There are an increasing number of fraudulent websites that impersonate ECTRIMS2019. We would like to alert all participants to be aware of possible scams and to strongly advise you to only use the official ECTRIMS2019 registration and ECTRIMS accommodation agency Congrex Travel.