

Challenging times



Dear CABMM members and friends,

Dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the last one and a half years have been very challenging and were associated with various changes, also for the CABMM. We decided to make the best out of the situation and will inform you about the major achievements and changes in this newsletter.

CABMM Scientific Seminar

As everywhere else, the format of our lecture series, the CABMM Scientific Seminar, had to be changed. After starting in a hybrid format, we finally changed to a completely virtual setting. This format offered the possibility for CABMM members outside of Zurich to easily join the presentations. The feedback was positive throughout, and several CABMM member groups took advantage of the situation and used the opportunity to participate in the lectures or even to present their own research in a mini-series. Due to the success of the digital format, we are currently evaluating different options and will most likely continue with our lecture series in a way, which would allow us to reach CABMM member groups located elsewhere in Switzerland or abroad and thus, to strengthen the interaction within our global network.

The CABMM seminar series, past and upcoming, are now also listed on our website, showcasing the wide range of topics presented.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all presenters as well as Marina and Salim as main organizers and host of the CABMM Scientific Seminar for their flexibility and support! Without their commitment, it would not have been possible to smoothly continue with the lecture series, despite various obstacles.

CABMM events

Contrary to the CABMM Scientific Seminar, unfortunately, we have had to cancel all major CABMM events since the beginning of 2020. We decided against holding our symposia in a digital format, as the CABMM events primarily thrive on personal interactions and discussions and real-life meetings make them what they are and cannot be adequately replaced by a virtual setting.

Furthermore, just before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the CABMM Steering Committee decided to reschedule the main CABMM events to the semester breaks in January and June, in order to avoid scheduling conflicts associated with teaching obligations. As a consequence, there will be no CABMM event later this year either, independent on the pandemic situation.

Hence, we are all the more delighted to announce the following dates for the CABMM events in 2022:

CABMM Seminar: Thursday, February 3rd, 2022
CABMM Symposium: Thursday, June 16th, 2022

Please reserve the dates in your calendars! We are confident that we can re-start our events in their normal, in-person format in 2022 and very much looking forward to welcoming and meeting you in person again!

CABMM Plenary Meeting

Like our events, we could not hold the yearly CABMM Plenary Meeting in its normal format in 2020. To allow for the most important decisions to be made, we set up an online voting as replacement. The new format was well received and we decided to hold this year's CABMM Plenary Meeting again in that way. All CABMM members already received the respective invitation, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all CABMM members in advance for their participation. Next year, hopefully, we will be able to meet in person again.

CABMM Steering Committee

Last but not least, we have very good news to share with you: Prof. Dr. Marcy Zenobi-Wong from the Tissue Engineering and Biofabrication Lab of ETHZ was elected as new CABMM Steering Committee member by the plenum at the end of last year.

Since the resignation of Prof. Dr. Brigitte von Rechenberg, we had been looking for new CABMM Steering Committee members to strengthen our board and we are glad that Marcy joined the CABMM Steering Committee now. Marcy adds great value to our committee, not only due to her knowledge and expertise but also because of her personality. Furthermore, we are convinced that her research field and her affiliation to the ETHZ are beneficial, as both were not represented in the Steering Committee so far and offer a different view on many things. Marcy herself describes her motivation as follows:

"I am interested in serving on the CABMM Steering Committee because I strongly support its mission to foster collaborative research in regenerative medicine, surgery, molecular medicine and biotechnology. CABMM also provides an invaluable resource to the Swiss research community with its platforms including GLP accreditation and sample processing. Finally, several of my lab members have benefited from CABMM start-up funding and I am happy to give something back to the center by serving on this Steering Committee."



Welcome to the CABMM Steering Committee, Marcy! We would like to thank you for your commitment and looking forward to working with you!

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your continuous support despite these difficult times. Let's look to the future with confidence and keep our fingers crossed that the time of confinement will be over very soon and we can return to normality – or perhaps even to an improved normality, keeping all good things that we learnt during the past months.

With my best regards,

Silke Kalchofner-Mark, PhD
Managing Director of the CABMM



Member presentations

Dr. med. vet. Katja Nuss

Musculoskeletal Research Unit, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich

The MSRU provides veterinary expertise in the development and use of animal models in musculoskeletal systems (bone, cartilage, tendon, muscle, spine). Soft tissue research includes wound healing and animal models for intracranial aneurysms. The MSRU is a GLP accredited facility for preclinical studies. Dr. Nuss is a specialist in veterinary surgery and anesthesiology experienced in clinical and experimental surgery.



Dr. med. vet. Vincent Wavreille

Clinic for Small Animal Surgery, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich

My primary research interest is surgical oncology with focus on animal models for cancer research. The similarities between veterinary and human patients provide naturally occurring models for human cancer. Our research aims at the development of novel cancer treatments: minimally invasive approaches, new multimodal protocols combining radiation therapy and surgery to treat bone cancer, and novel surgical reconstructive techniques.



Prof. Dr. Andrea Barbero (PhD)

Department of Biomedicine, University and University Hospital Basel

Prof. Barbero's research is related to the establishment of 3D culture systems, combining cell biology, engineered technologies, and materials science. These systems are used to investigate fundamental aspects of cartilage development and as grafts to induce tissue regeneration. A special focus lies in the use of nasal cartilage grafts for the treatment of nasal and articular cartilage and their potential use for intervertebral disc repair.



PD Dr. med. Christoph E. Albers

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology, University Hospital Bern

Christoph Albers is a spine surgeon at the Orthopaedic Department, University Hospital Bern. His scientific background includes bone metabolism, osteogenesis, and bone healing. Current research projects aim at improving and augmenting spinal fusion. As a clinician, he is interested in translating knowledge from basic science directly to clinical application.



Dr. Markus Rottmar (PhD)

Lab for Biointerfaces, Empa – Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology, St. Gallen

The team of Dr. Rottmar is interested in gaining a better understanding of how cells and tissues interact with biomaterials. The research focus is to elucidate the role of blood-material interaction and immune cell responses on downstream cell fate decisions and how this knowledge can be exploited to steer a desired cellular response (i.e. facilitating or preventing hard/soft tissue integration, enhance wound healing) by materials design.



Publications

Corneal Cross-linking at the Slit Lamp. Hafezi F, Richo O, Torres-Netto EA, Hillen M, Hafezi NL. *J Refract Surg*. 2021 Feb 1;37(2):78-82

Individualized corneal cross-linking with riboflavin and UV-A in ultra-thin corneas: the sub400 protocol. Hafezi F, Kling S, Gilardoni F, Hafezi N, Hillen M, Abrishamchi R, Gomes JAP, Mazzotta C, Randleman JB, Torres-Netto EA. *Am J Ophthalmol*, 2021 Jan 30;224:133-142

Combination of a Collagen Scaffold and an Adhesive Hyaluronan-Based Hydrogel for Cartilage Regeneration: A Proof of Concept in an Ovine Model. Levinson C, Cavalli E, von Rechenberg B, Zenobi-Wong M, Darwiche SE. *Cartilage*, 2021 Jan 29;1947603521989417 [Epub ahead of print]

Re: Prajna et al.: Cross-Linking-Assisted Infection Reduction: a randomized clinical trial evaluating the effect of adjuvant cross-linking on outcomes in fungal keratitis (Ophthalmology. 2020;127:159-166). Hafezi F, Torres-Netto EA, Hillen MJP. *Ophthalmology*, 2021 Jan;128(1):e6

Progenitor Biological Bandages: An Authentic Swiss Tool for Safe Therapeutic Management of Burns, Ulcers, and Donor Site Grafts. Laurent A, Scaletta C, Michetti M, Hirt-Burri N, Flahaut M, Raffoul W, de Buys Roessingh AS, Applegate LA. *Methods Mol Biol*, 2021;2286:49-65

Congratulations

CABMM member **Benedikt Weber** from the Medical University of Vienna was appointed ap professor (ausserplanmässiger Professor) in the field of dermatology. Congratulations!

We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to **Serge Marbacher** on his appointment as professor. Prof. Marbacher is leading physician at the Department of Neurosurgery of the Kantonsspital Aarau.

Caroline Ospelt was appointed professor ad personam in the field of experimental rheumatology by the Board of the University of Zurich. Her research interest lies in the analysis of synovial fibroblasts in rheumatoid arthritis. We congratulate!

The Swiss National Science Foundation extended the professorship of CABMM member **Matthias Altmeyer** for another two years. The group works on the project "Uncovering concealed regulators and unexpected pathway connections guarding against genome instability". Congratulations!

We congratulate CABMM member **Oliver Hausmann** from the Hirslanden Klinik St. Anna in Lucerne on his appointment as professor of medicine.

Our sincere congratulations to **Raffaella Santoro** on her appointment as professor ad personam in the field of stem cell and chromatin biology at the University of Zurich.

CABMM member **Sufian S. Ahmad** was given the *venia legendi* from the Eberhard Karl University of Tübingen, Germany. We congratulate on his appointment as senior lecturer (Privatdozent)!

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