
EMPA Newsletter February issue

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EUROPEAN MD / Ph D ASSOCIATION

Check out successful publications by EMPA members



**Yakir Guri, Dr.
med. et Dr. phil.
nat. University of
Basel Biozentrum**

[mTORC2 Promotes
Tumorigenesis via Lipid
Synthesis:](#)

- mTORC2 is oncogenic via fatty acid and lipid synthesis
- The sphingolipid [glucosylceramide](#) is required for tumorigenesis
- Cardiolipin enhances OxPhos to satisfy the increased energy needs of tumor cells
- Inhibition of mTORC2 is a potential strategy in the treatment of NAFLD or HCC



**Marc Scherlinger,
MD PhD
candidate in
rheumatology,
Bordeaux, France**

[Clinical research: Switching
from originator to biosimilar
drugs: the weight of patient
acceptance](#)

Biologic therapies (eg, monoclonal antibodies) targeting inflammation have changed the prognosis of inflammatory rheumatic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis. However, this improvement in care has come with important costs, leading to our health systems having difficulties to cope with. Biosimilars are biologic therapies presenting high similarities to the originator biologic with only subtle structural differences (eg, glycosylation). They usually come with a 20% lower price than the originator biologic. To be marketed, a biosimilar must provide scientific evidence that its structure and pharmacokinetics are highly similar to the originator (pharmacological equivalence) as well as a similar clinical efficacy (clinical equivalence). Our study concludes that even if initially well accepted, the switch to a biosimilar can induce a placebo effect that physicians should be aware of. Further research is needed to better understand patient acceptance and to better address the switch to a biosimilar.

Interview with EMPA Board Member

Your Name and position at EMPA: David Kijlstra, Chair of Internal Affairs & Treasurer

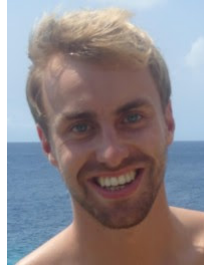
First started at EMPA in... I first joined the EMPA Executive Board in 2016, taking over the Treasurer Position from Myrthe de Koning.

How old do you feel? Forever young ;)

In which country have you lived for >50% of your life? I have lived almost my entire life in Groningen, the Netherlands. During my MD-PhD program I was lucky enough to spend one year on the Caribbean island Curacao for clinical internships and 2.5 years in Boston for a research fellowship.

Who is your favorite scientist (adding his/her achievement)? I don't know if we can count Elon Musk as a scientist, but I think he's an inspiration for

anyone looking to tackle important problems and work on progress. In my own field of stem cell biology and cardiology, Charles Murry is one of my favorite scientists. He's really pushing the boundaries when it comes to regenerating the heart, but despite his success he's still a very accessible and friendly guy.



What song more precisely describes EMPA? After the party at last year's conference in Basel, I think it has been unofficially decided that Barbra Streisand from Duck Sauce is the EMPA song.

What do you think MD/PhDs dream about (in one word): Publications

How do you see EMPA after 10 years? A lot bigger than now, having a big impact to advance the MD-PhD education system all across Europe.

Tell us something crazy and funny that happened (or is happening right now) during your PhD studies? I have my fair share of lab horror stories, like everyone doing lab work. From melting things in the autoclave to dropping important cells or filling up two incubators on Friday evening top to bottom with 60 large plates of cells after 6 weeks of work and coming back Monday morning thinking: "what's that smell?!" and finding out everything is contaminated. Somehow, I still managed to be very close to getting my PhD now!

After finishing the interview you step outside and find a lottery ticket winning \$10 million. What would you do? I would rent out a big castle and invite all my friends and family for a big party! After that, I don't think I would live very differently. Maybe I'd donate some money for medical research as well :)

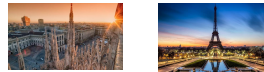


David Mehler MD-PhD student
Cardiff University
Brain Research Imaging Centre (CUBRIC)
College of Biomedical and Life Sciences

[Minimizing endpoint variability through reinforcement learning during reaching movements involving shoulder, elbow and wrist](#)

Reaching movements are comprised of the coordinated action across multiple joints. The human skeleton is redundant for this task because different joint configurations can lead to the same endpoint in space. How do people learn to use combinations of joints that maximize success in goal-directed motor tasks? To answer this question, we used a 3-degree-of-freedom manipulandum to measure shoulder, elbow and wrist joint movements during reaching in a plane. We tested whether a shift in the relative contribution of the wrist and elbow joints to a reaching movement could be learned by an implicit reinforcement regime.

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Upcoming EMPA Conference
London, Paris OR Milan?

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