

The European Society of Cardiology premiere postgraduate course

The Zurich postgraduate course in heart failure now in its fifth edition

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Heart failure is an emerging epidemic owing to the growing and ageing population. As such, novel educational programmes for physicians to develop professional competence in all aspects of care for patients with acute and/or chronic heart failure are needed. Therefore, in 2014, our team at the University Hospital Zurich developed the postgraduate course in heart failure (PCHF) to train cardiologists in modern heart failure management. The PCHF programme is based on the curriculum for heart failure published by the Heart Failure Association (HFA) of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and organised by our team at the University of Zurich in close collaboration with the HFA, the European Society of Cardiology and its European Heart Academy (EHA) [1]. Upon successful completion a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Heart Failure of the University of Zurich (CAS UZH in Heart Failure) and a certificate of attendance of the ESC is awarded.

Course structure

PCHF is a two-year programme consisting of eight modules of 2.5 days each. All relevant aspects of modern heart failure management, such as diagnostic procedures, imaging, pharmacotherapy, devices, mechanical circulatory support systems and interventions are covered. The PCHF lays a particular emphasis on “hands-on” and “how-to-do” sessions, imaging, device programming, ward rounds, case-based learning and interventions, such as implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) / cardiac resynchronisation therapy (CRT) implantation- and programming (fig. 1).

Faculty

The international nature of the course is reflected by top-class international and national speakers and experts, as well as the highly motivated local team of the University Hospital Zurich (fig. 2A).

Participants

To qualify for the course, candidates must be board-certified in cardiology and/or have completed at least two years of successful clinical training in cardiology. Their primary interest should be in the modern management of heart failure.

An international selection committee evaluates the applications. Because of focus of the course on hands-on and interactive how-to-do sessions, the number of participants is limited to 60 per course. The average age of participants is 36.6 years with women and men participants being equally represented.

To date, 260 young cardiologists from 61 countries (90% from Europe, 7% from Africa, Asia, Middle East and Oceania, 3% from North America and from South America) have successfully completed the course. Notably, so far

38 Swiss colleagues are proud alumni of our PCHF (fig. 2B).

Widely recognised as one of the leading educational programmes in all of cardiology, the

PCHF is now running for the fifth time, with the new course already having started in June 2022 with 62 participants from 26 countries (fig. 3).

Modules 1 - 8			
Year 1		Year 2	
Module 1	How to Approach Heart Failure	Module 5	Device Therapy in Heart Failure II
Module 2	HFpEF and Cardiomyopathies	Module 6	Multidisciplinary Procedures
Module 3	Treatment & Follow-up of Heart Failure	Module 7	Acute and Advanced Heart Failure
Module 4	Arrhythmias & Device Therapy in Heart Failure I	Module 8	Mechanical Circulatory Support & Transplantation in Heart Failure

Figure 1: Course programme and structure.

Abraham William T.(US), **Anker** Stefan (DE), **Atar** Dan (NO), **Bauersachs** Johann (DE), **Bax** Jeroen J. (NL), **Bayés-Genis** Antoni (ES), **Ben Gal** Tuvia (IL), **Brugts** Jasper (NL), **Brunner-La Rocca** Hans-Peter (NL), **Celutkienė** Jelena (LT), **Chioncel** Ovidiu (RO), **Cikes** Maja (HR), **Coats** Andrew (AU), **Cosedis Nielsen** Jens (DK), **Crespo Leiro** Maria (ES), **Cuculi** Florim (CH), **Damman** Kevin (NL), **de Boer** Rudolf (NL), **Delgado** Victoria (ES), **Ekman** Inger (SE), **Elliott** Perry (UK), **Eriksson** Urs (CH), **Farmakis** Dimitrios (CY), **Filippatos** Gerasimos (GR), **Gustafsson** Finn (DK), **Heymans** Stephane R. B. (NL), **Hindricks** Gerhard (DE), **Israel** Carsten (DE), **Jankowska** Ewa (PL), **Lainscak** Mitja (SI), **Lam** Carolyn (SG), **Leclercq** Christophe (FR), **Linde** Cecilia (SE), **Ludewig** Burkhard (CH), **Lund** Lars (SE), **Lyon** Alexander (UK), **Marco** Jean (FR), **Masip** Josep (ES), **McDonagh** Theresa (UK), **Mebazaa** Alexandre (FR), **Mehra** Mandeep (US), **Metra** Marco (IT), **Mewton** Nathan (FR), **Miró** Oscar (ES), **Milicic** Davor (HR), **Müller** Christian (CH), **Mullens** Wilfried (BE), **Napp** Christian (DE), **Niemann** Markus (DE), **Parissis** John (GR), **Piepoli** Massimo (IT), **Pözl** Gerhard (AT), **Ponikowski** Piotr (PL), **Richter** Sergio (DE), **Rosano** Giuseppe (UK), **Rosenkranz** Stephan (DE), **Ruhparwar** Arjang (DE), **Seferovic** Petar (RS), **Solomon** Scott (US), **Stämpfli** Simon (CH), **Steffel** Jan (CH), **Swedberg** Karl (SE), **Thiele** Holger (DE), **Tschöpe** Carsten (DE), **Vahanian** Alec (FR), **van der Meer** Peter (NL), **Van de Veire** Nico (BE), **Vardas** Panos (BE), **Vieillard-Baron** Antoine (FR), **Vodovar** Nicolas (FR), **Von Haehling** Stephan (DE), **Voors** Adriaan (NL)

Stefania Aur, **Mattia Arrigo**, **Marc Buser**, **Nicolas Barras**, **Alessandra Chiodini**, **Michelle Frank**, **Federica Guidetti**, **Helene Hammer**, **Pascal Simon Heiniger**, **Tobias Höfllinghaus**, **Niels Holm**, **Roger Hullin**, **Ioannis Kapos**, **Michael Klainiguti**, **Martin Meyer**, **Philippe Meyer**, **Eleni Michou**, **Fran Mikulicic**, **Giorgio Moschovitis**, **Matthias Nägele**, **David Niederseer**, **Matthias Paul**, **Nana Poku**, **Agathe Py**, **Cyril Pellaton**, **Julien Regamey**, **Fabio Rigamonti**, **Frank Scherff**, **Dörthe Schmidt**, **Judith Schwaiger**, **Francesca Scopigni**, **Simon Stämpfli**, **Ariane Testuz**, **Tobias Traupe**, **Jan Vontobel**, **Stephan Winnik**, **Qian Zhou**, **Marzena Zurek**

Figure 2: In the course involved persons. A: International and national speakers and experts. B: Swiss alumni 2014–2021.

PCHF – a 2-year course, a life-long journey

With its more than 400 alumni, participants of the currently ongoing course and national and international faculty, our PCHF provides a unique network offering wonderful opportunities to exchange and share ideas. Alumni meetings in Zurich as well as during the annual HFA and ESC congresses represent an integral part of the life-long commitment to the worldwide PCHF community.

Our PCHF course has already spread from Zurich to other parts of the world. In February 2021, the PCHF South America was initiated by Prof. Clara Saldarriaga from Colombia (alumna of our third PCHF course) and Prof. Jose An-

tonio Magana Serrano from Mexico (alumnus of our first PCHF course). In 2021, the PASCAR Africa Heart Failure Course was started under the leadership of Dr Yagoub Musa from Sudan (alumnus of our first PCHF course), Dr Anders Barasa from Kenya (alumnus of our third PCHF course) and Dr Mahmoud Sani from Nigeria (alumnus of our fourth PCHF course). In addition, multicentre registries have been initiated such as the “Cardiac implantable electronic devices with a defibrillator component and all-cause mortality in left ventricular assist device carriers: results from the PCHF-VAD registry” [2] initiated by Prof. Maja Cikes (alumna of the first PCHF course) and the

“Heart failure in COVID-19: the multicentre, multinational PCHF-COVICAV registry” initiated by Dr Mateusz Sokolski and Dr Sander Trenson (both alumni of our fourth PCHF).

The heart of the PCHF Course

The success of this course is also owing to the dedicated support of Valérie Streichenberg, Kathrin Reber, Esther Willi and Markus Sprenger.

If you wish to become part of the Zurich ESC PCHF flagship course and the PCHF community, do not hesitate to send your interest to www.heartfailurcourse.com and be informed about the latest PCHF activities such as the application for the upcoming sixth postgraduate course in heart failure.



Figure 3: Group picture participants PCHF course, June 2022.

References

The full list of references is included in the online version of the article at <https://cardiovascmed.ch/article/doi/CVM.2022.w10186>.

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