

Announcement

Albrecht von Haller Awards of the Swiss Heart Foundation 2023

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Albrecht von Haller

The Swiss scientist Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777) was one of the central figures during the Age of Enlightenment with an impressive range of interests and contributions. Indeed, he was a poet, a scholar, a physician, a botanist and a magistrate at his native city of Bern. He studied at the University of Tübingen, Germany, under Professor Elias Camerarius. Afterwards he moved to Leiden in the Netherlands to get further training from Professor Hermann Boerhaave, one of the leading authorities in medicine of his time; visited

England and France and ultimately returned to Bern to become the city's physician and librarian. Based on his seminal contributions to science, botany and medicine, he was nominated as professor of anatomy, botany and surgery at the University of Göttingen in 1736 (fig. 1). In his new position, he published his seminal monograph on Switzerland in 1742 and became one of the leading botanists. As an anatomist, he investigated the vascular system and published his findings in his *Icones Anatomicae* between 1743 and 1756.

The Albrecht von Haller Award

To this day, Albrecht von Haller remains a role model due to his restless inquiry and scientific productivity. Therefore the Swiss Heart Foundation decided to create an award named after him dedicated to young and promising scientists. Unlike other scientific awards, the Albrecht von Haller Award, endowed with 25,000 CHF, is not given to recognise a seminal publication, but rather – thanks to a generous donation from Boehringer Ingelheim Switzerland – to support an interesting and promising project of a young cardiologist or cardiovascular scientist. It should be noted that the selection of candidates is made completely independently by the members of the Swiss Heart Foundation's research committee, without any involvement of the sponsor. In addition, to motivate very young scientists, three awards, each endowed with 2,000 CHF are granted for outstanding dissertations at a Swiss university.

The Awardees of 2022

As in the previous year, the 2022 Albrecht von Haller Awards were handed out to the awardees in a distinguished ceremony at the beautiful Hallersaal of the Burger Library in Bern. After an introduction by the president of the Swiss Heart Foundation, professor Stefan Osswald, a presentation by professor Bea Beck Schimmer, director of medicine of the University of Zurich, professor Thomas F. Lüscher, chairman of the research committee and Rolf Kayser on behalf of the donator and a historical vignette by Dr Claudia Engler, director of



Figure 1: Albrecht von Haller and his career across Europe.

the Burger Library Bern, the awardees presented their work.

This year's awardee of the main research prize endowed with 25,000 CHF, Dr Stefano Ministrini, postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Molecular Cardiology, University of Zurich, presented his project "Endothelial JCAD worsens outcome after acute ischemic stroke". He aims to explore the potential of this novel endothelial protein to become an adjunct therapeutic strategy for the treatment of acute ischaemic stroke. Dr Ministrini started working on this translational project in 2021, when he joined the Centre for Molecular Cardiology in Zurich, after completing his medical education and clinical training at the University of Perugia, Italy. Beyond his clinical background, Dr Ministrini is engaged in translational research in the fields of vascular and endothelial biology, acute thrombosis, ageing and acute ischaemic stroke. In his portfolio, Dr Ministrini is a most promising young scientist who already has 45 publications in indexed peer-reviewed journals and an h-index of 12.

Awards for Dissertations

Motivating the very young is a major goal of the Albrecht von Haller Award. To that end, the Swiss Heart Foundation gives a Dissertation Prize to the best three theses submitted. This year we again received several dissertations from outstanding ap-

plicants, the best three of which (fig. 2) have been selected by the members of the research committee. They all presented their work during the award ceremony.

Dr Gabriel Bronz from the Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale (EOC), specifically the Paediatric Institute of Southern Switzerland in Bellinzona, presented his well-illustrated work "Infections or Vaccines Associated with Finkelstein-Seidlmayer Vasculitis: A Systematic Review". Then Dr Desiree Nadine Wussler from the University Hospital Basel, Department of Cardiology, presented a whole development programme, largely performed at the Albert-Ludwigs-University in Freiburg in Breisgau, with the title "Evaluation of a biocompatible sealant for on-demand repair of vascular defects – a chronic study in a large animal model"; an amazing work ready for clinical translation. Finally, Dr Supitchaya Philippoz from the Faculté de Médecine de l'Université de Genève and cardiovascular surgery of the Hospital shared the results from her work "Acute type A aortic dissection: outcomes of a standardized institutional protocol".



Figure 2: The awardees of the Albrecht von Haller Award 2022. From left to right: Stefano Ministrini, Center for Molecular Cardiology, Zurich (Project award), Gabriel Bronz, Bellinzona, Desiree Nadine Wussler, Basel, and Supitchaya Philippoz, Genève (all dissertation awardees).

UVSS Research Promotion Prize 2023

The Union of Vascular Societies of Switzerland (UVSS) will again award a "Research Promotion Prize" endowed with CHF 10,000 in 2023. The aim is to support research of vascular diseases. Projects that have already been started and are being carried out in Switzerland will be considered. One and the same protocol can only be submitted to one of the announced competitions of the societies of the UVSS in the same year. Projects that have already received an award or are supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) are excluded.

- Researchers up to the age of 45 years who are working in Switzerland are eligible. The winner will be selected by the UVSS Scientific Board.
- The prize will only be awarded once to the same person.
- The awardee commits to presenting the project at the union meeting of the UVSS in Lausanne from 15 to 17 November 2023.

Applications must be submitted in German, French or English by **28.08.2023** at the latest **via e-mail** with the following documents:

1. Project description and preliminary results (maximum 5 pages)
2. Bibliography
3. Curriculum vitae (maximum 1 A4 page)
4. Signed cover letter from the applicant

The application should be sent to:
USGG@meister-concept.ch