



Press release – Zurich, January 28, 2023

25th MS State of the Art Symposium 2023

On January 28, 2023, the 25th edition of Switzerland's most significant MS congress took place at the KKL in Lucerne, with many neurologists, specialist doctors, researchers and paramedical professionals in attendance.

The annual MS State of the Art Symposium congress held by the Swiss MS Society has been gathering the most important experts from the field of multiple sclerosis (MS) for 25 years now and marked the first highlight of the year 2023. The programme included specialist presentations with national and international experts, who shared extensive insights and the latest findings on topics such as the Epstein-Barr virus, the Swiss MS Cohort Study and MS therapies and treatments with those in attendance. The adjoining workshops provided opportunities for exchange on practical matters. 20 poster presentations additionally showed research projects that are supported by the MS Society.

The Epstein-Barr virus as a main cause of MS: epidemiological evidence and possible mechanisms

For many years, the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) has been suspected of playing a potential role in multiple sclerosis, as the epidemiology of MS resembles that of Pfeiffer's glandular fever, which often occurs after a primary EBV infection in young people and adults. In a long-term study, which observed over 10 million young adults, Prof. Alberto Ascherio (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, USA) was able to prove that an EBV infection is a main cause of MS. In his presentation, Alberto Ascherio explained the potential mechanisms by which the Epstein-Barr virus can cause MS, along with the effects on MS prevention and treatment.

Swiss MS Cohort Study (SMSC): achievements and next steps

Under this heading, Prof. Cristina Granziera and Prof. Jens Kuhle (both from the University Hospital Basel) presented their research work in the Swiss MS Cohort Study. The study was founded in 2012 and, with 1,578 participants, is one of the largest clinical MS research databases of its kind in Europe and North America. As part of the study, long-term observations of clinical, MRT and biomarker parameters are carried out and evaluated. The researchers' focus here is on developing diagnostic and therapeutic procedures to improve the medical treatment of MS patients in clinical practice. The Cohort Study includes more than ten ongoing projects and has also received financial support from the Swiss MS Society right from the start.

MS medication and treatment: achievements of the last 25 years

Development in the area of multiple sclerosis has been marked by huge scientific, diagnostic and therapeutic progress over the last few decades. While only a few injectable medications were available at the start of the 1990s, the number of approved medications has risen sharply, especially in recent years. At the same time, however, the treatment of multiple sclerosis has become much more complex due to sometimes severe and previously unanticipated side effects. In his presentation, Prof. Andrew Chan (Inselspital Bern) outlined the progress that has been made, but also the questions that remain unanswered and on which those affected, patient organisations, scientists, doctors, therapists and the industry need to continue working together to solve.

Four topic-based workshops

In the afternoon, attendees had the chance to take part in four workshops.

- Prof. Myrta Kohler and Prof. Viktor von Wyl held a workshop on the topic “Digital technologies – solutions for people with MS and professional nursing staff?”.
- Dr. Johanna Oechtering and Dr. Axel Regeniter gave their workshop on the topic “Fluid diagnostics in MS – fundamental information and news: what neurologists need to know”.
- The workshop by Prof. Pasquale Calabrese and Anke Salmen dealt with the topic “Integrative care concepts in MS – what do patients need alongside medical treatment?”.
- In their workshop, Prof. Cristina Granziera and Prof. Maria Isabel Vargas Gomez explored the topic “Modern MRT biomarkers and gadolinium-based contrast agents – routine clinical use”.

Simplified summaries of the specialist presentations from the MS State of the Art Symposium are given on the MS Society website. <https://www.multiplesklerose.ch/de/ueber-ms/fachkongresse/ms-state-of-the-art-symposium-2023/>

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Sprüngli for generously providing some chocolatey snacks for everyone attending. The Swiss MS Society works without any financial donations from MS medication producers.

The next MS State of the Art Symposium will take place on January 27, 2024.

Support people affected by MS. Help to make it better for them.

Multiple sclerosis can affect anyone and progresses differently for everyone affected.

The Swiss Multiple Sclerosis Society has been supporting people affected by MS for over 60 years. You too can help us to give people with MS a better quality of life:

www.multiplesklerose.ch

Donation account: IBAN CH04 0900 0000 8000 8274 9

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