

Circulation

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

European Perspectives in Cardiology



Funding: Swiss National Science Foundation Ambizione Programme and Fellowships for Prospective and Advanced Researchers

Grants for Junior Researchers to Work on Projects in Switzerland and for Prospective and Advanced Researchers to Work on Projects Abroad

Recipients of Ambizione grants for cardiovascular research and fellowships for prospective and advanced researchers describe their research and their experience to Jennifer Taylor, BSc, MSc, MPhil.

The Swiss National Science Foundation has a number of funding awards for young scientists.

Ambizione Programme

The Ambizione programme promotes junior researchers in all disciplines. It is geared towards young researchers who would like to conduct, manage, and lead an independently planned project at a Swiss university. Researchers from all disciplines can apply provided they have received a PhD within the past 5 years or have completed their medical training with a doctorate (MD) and done at least 3 years of clinical work. Clinicians must apply within 9 years of obtaining their medical licence. Qualified researchers from Switzerland who are working abroad or who have returned after a stay abroad are eligible. The programme also aims to attract the best, next-generation foreign talent to carry out research work in Switzerland. Applications should include confirmation from the host institute that it will fund research expenses such as material, equipment, personnel, and travel. Shortlisted candidates are invited to present their research project and career plan.

The Swiss National Science Foundation Research Council conducts the scientific assessment of proposals. It looks for quality, originality, relevance, and independence of the research project; scientific autonomy of the applicant at the host institute; applicant's scientific track record and suitability for a high-level career in academic and clinical research; proof of mobility regarding choice of workplace; and potential for integration into the Swiss scientific community. Each year it awards 40 to 50 grants and aims to award ≈35% of these to women. Successful applicants receive a salary (≈CHF 110,000 per year) and project funds for 3 years. Grants may be extended by up to 2 years.

Recent Ambizione Grants for Cardiovascular Research

2010: To Investigate the Functional Characteristics of Stem Cell-Derived Cardiomyocytes

Nina D. Ullrich, PhD, is a research fellow working with Professor Ernst Niggli, MD, at the Institute of Physiology, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland.



During her postdoc in the field of cardiac cell physiology and pathophysiology, Dr Ullrich became increasingly interested in modern cardiac repair methods and regenerative medicine. With the Ambizione grant she is investigating whether stem cell-derived cardiomyocytes provide all of the required functional characteristics to successfully integrate into the cardiac environment. She is characterising the electrophysiological properties of single stem cell-derived cardiomyocytes and the intercellular communication with native heart cells. Dr Ullrich says, "The grant has helped me become scientifically independent and start up my own research group, and I got the chance to start a totally new area of research at our Institute."

2009: To Investigate the Kinin System in Endogenous Endothelial Repair

Nicolle Kränkel, PhD, is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Physiology, Department of Cardiology, University Hospital Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland, under the supervision of Professor Ulf Landmesser, MD. She is investigating the action of the vascular kallikrein kinin system, in particular bradykinin derived from the vascular wall, on circulating and rolling

