



# **Bern VCA Symposium**

Advancing the Frontier: Innovations and  
Challenges in Vascularized Composite  
Allotransplantation

**13.01.2025**

Inselhospital, Bern University Hospital, Switzerland

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## Welcome to the Bern VCA Symposium

It is with great pleasure and honor that we welcome you to the Bern VCA Symposium organized by the Department for Plastic and Hand Surgery, Inselspital Bern University Hospital and the Rieben Lab of the Department for BioMedical Research, University of Bern. This symposium marks a significant milestone, bringing together for the first time in Switzerland some of the most renowned names in vascularized composite allotransplantation.

The field of Vascularized Composite Allotransplantation (VCA), which includes hand and face transplantation, represents one of the most revolutionary advances in reconstructive surgery, offering new hope for patients who have experienced lifealtering trauma or illness.

Throughout the symposium, leading clinicians and researchers from across the globe will share their invaluable experiences and insights. We will delve into various topics surrounding this unique medical development, covering current practices, ethical considerations, and the promising future of VCA in Switzerland.

As plastic and reconstructive surgeons, we have the privilege of profoundly changing the lives of our patients by restoring both function and aesthetics. This symposium offers an opportunity to reflect on the cutting-edge techniques and innovations that allow us to meet the growing demands of our society. With new technologies and scientific breakthroughs continually evolving, it is essential that we remain at the forefront of these advancements.

We hope that this symposium not only meets your expectations but also provides an enriching experience that will inspire future advancements in VCA. We wish you a successful and insightful symposium.

Warm regards,

Prof. Dr. Esther Vögelin  
Prof. Dr. Robert Rieben  
Prof. Dr. Mihai A. Constantinescu  
PD. Dr. Radu Olariu



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Universitätsklinik für  
Plastische- und Handchirurgie



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## Symposium speakers

**Prof. Dr. Scott Levin.** Chair Emeritus Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Co-Director Penn Nerve Center, Paul B. Magnuson Professor of Bone and Joint Surgery. University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

**Prof. Dr. Dietmar Ulrich.** Chair Department of Plastic Surgery. Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands.

**Prof. Dr. Patrik Lassus.** Chair Department of Plastic Surgery. Helsinki University, Finland.

**PD. Dr. Radu Olariu.** Deputy Chair Department Plastic and Hand Surgery. Inselspital Bern University Hospital, University of Bern, Switzerland.

**Prof. Dr. Robert Rieben.** Group Leader Rieben Lab. Department for BioMedical Research. University of Bern, Switzerland.

**Prof. Dr. Esther Vögelin.** Co-Director Department Plastic and Hand Surgery. Inselspital Bern University Hospital, University of Bern, Switzerland.

**Prof. Dr. Faddi Issa.** Consultant Department of Plastic, Reconstructive and Burns Surgery. University of Oxford, England.

**Prof. Dr. Gerald Brandacher.** Co-Director and Executive Vice Chair of Research, Department of Visceral, Transplant and Thoracic Surgery. Innsbruck Medical University, Austria.

**Prof. Dr. Emmanuel Morelon.** Chair Department of Transplantation, Nephrology and Clinical Immunology. University Hospital of Lyon, France.

**PD. Dr. Franka Messner.** Consultant Department of Visceral, Transplant and Thoracic Surgery. Innsbruck Medical University, Austria.

**Prof. Dr. Daniel Sidler.** Senior Consultant Department for Nephrology and Hypertension. Inselspital Bern University Hospital, University of Bern, Switzerland.



## Program

08:30-09:00 **Welcome and Registration**

9:00-11:30 **Public defense MD/PhD Thesis. Isabel Arenas Hoyos:** “Vascularized composite allotransplantation: A model for understanding graft rejection”

Thesis committee: **Prof. Dr. Robert Rieben, PD. Dr. Radu Olariu, Dr. Nicoletta Sorvillo, Prof. Dr. Stefan Schneeberger, Prof. Dr. L. Scott Levin, Prof. Dr. Dr. Stephan von Gunten.**

11:30-12:30 *Lunch break*

**Symposium section I.** Chairs: PD. Dr. Radu Olariu, Prof. Dr. Stefan Schneeberger

• 12:30-12:35 Welcome and introduction of speakers. **PD. Dr. Radu Olariu**

• 12:35-13:00 Are there any changes since the first hand transplantation in 1998?

**Prof. Dr. Esther Vögelin**

• 13:00-13:30 Technical innovations in vascularized composite allotransplantation: from extracorporeal perfusion to 3D printing and smart rehabilitation. **Prof. Dr. Dietmar Ulrich**

• 13:30-14:00 VCA upper extremity and face transplantation: Long-term outcome.

**Prof. Dr. Emmanuel Morelon**

• 14:00-14:30 Current state of face transplantation. **Prof. Dr. Patrik Lassus**

14:30-15:00 *Coffee break*

**Symposium section II.** Chair: Prof. Dr. Robert Rieben

• 15:00-15:30 Molecular diagnostics in VCA – where next? **Prof. Dr. Fadi Issa**

• 15:30-16:00 Immunobiology and rejection in VCA. **PD. Dr. Franka Messner**

• 16:00-16:30 Cell-based immune modulation in vascularized composite allotransplantation. **Prof. Dr. Gerald Brandacher**

16:30-17:00 *Coffee break*

**Symposium section III.** Chairs: PD. Dr. Radu Olariu, Prof. Dr. Robert Rieben

• 17:00-17:30 Ex vivo perfusion and local immunosuppression: Experimental VCA in Bern. **Prof. Dr. Robert Rieben**

• 17:30-18:00 VCA-The highest rung on the orthoplastic reconstructive ladder. **Prof. Dr. Scott Levin**

• 18:00-18:30 Round table. VCA in Switzerland. The patient perspective. **Prof. Dr. Robert Rieben, Prof. Dr. Scott Levin, Prof. Dr. Esther Vögelin, Prof. Dr. Daniel Sidler**

**Venue:**  
Conference Rooms 5-7  
Anna-Seiler-Haus  
Inselspital Bern University Hospital  
Freiburgstrasse 20, 3010 Bern

- Accreditation:**
- Swiss Society of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery: 8 CME Credits
  - Swiss Society for Hand Surgery: 8 CME Credits

### Registration



For more details contact [bernvcasymposium@insel.ch](mailto:bernvcasymposium@insel.ch)

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