

Innovation in MS Highlighted During MS Expert Opinion Series Co-Sponsored by MS-LINK

On October 7, 2021, an MS-LINK co-sponsored a webinar, titled “Innovation in MS: Working towards better disease management” took place. The event, chaired by EMD Serono’s Pierre-Yves Berclaz, highlighted several research initiatives, including updates in the field of MS and their potential to benefit people living with the disease.

Below is the agenda from the program.

- Translating innovation in science to the clinical situation: role of microglia/macrophages in disease progression
 - **Speaker:** Laura Airas, MD, Professor of Neuroimmunology at University of Turku, Finland, and Neurology Consultant at Turku University Hospital
 - The presentation highlighted scientific research on the pathophysiology of disease progression and the increasing evidence for a prominent role of microglia
- Using 3-D MRI imaging to advance our understanding of MS pathology and treatment effects
 - **Speaker:** Darin Okuda, MD, a clinician-scientist and professor specializing in MS within the Department of Neurology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas
 - The presentation detailed how 3D-MRI enables patients to ‘see their disease’ and how it has the potential to assist physicians to understand disease staging and possible areas of repair
- Increasing value of patient involvement in MS assessment tool development and clinical management
 - **Speakers:** Cindy Nowinski, MD, PhD, a licensed clinical psychologist and a research associate professor in the Departments of Medical Social Sciences and Neurology, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and Aaron Boster, MD, the president of The Boster Center for Multiple Sclerosis, Columbus, Ohio and a board-certified neurologist specializing in MS and related CNS inflammatory disorders
 - The discussion covered the increasing contributions made by MS patients in the development of patient-related outcome tools and patient-centric management
- Merck KGaA Darmstadt Germany’s commitment to supporting scientific innovation
 - **Speaker:** Pierre Yves Berclaz

During the event’s conclusion, Berclaz announced the winners of the 2021 Grant for Multiple Sclerosis Innovation (GMSI), funded by Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany.

GMSI is an annual grant that has supported promising translational research projects by academic researchers with the aim of advancing science and medical research for the ultimate benefit of people with MS since 2012.

Below is an overview of the 2021 GMSI winners:



Name: Tim Vanmierlo

Job title: Assistant Professor, Maastricht University, Maastricht, Netherlands and Hasselt University

Location: Diepenbeek, Belgium

Project title: Regulatory T cells in multiple sclerosis: from methylation to (re)myelination

Project purpose: To look at ways to overcome the remyelination block in progressive MS



Name: Olaf Stüve

Title: Professor, Department of Neurology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

Location: Dallas, Texas

Project title: CD11c+CD88+CD317+ myeloid cells as cellular targets in multiple sclerosis

Project purpose: To determine whether a novel myeloid cell population found in the rim area of chronic active MS lesions is a future target for MS treatment