

PRESS RELEASE**13th SWISS BRIDGE Award: 500,000 Swiss francs for excellent health services research projects in the cancer field**

Zurich, October 17, 2013 – “Health services research in oncology” is the topic for this year’s SWISS BRIDGE Award. Four researchers are sharing the 500,000 Swiss franc award for their outstanding projects, aimed at improving medical care for cancer patients. The awardees are: Prof. Christine Bouchardy, MD, University of Geneva; PD Sibil Tschudin, MD, Basel University Hospital; Prof. Lisa Licitra, MD, IRCCS Foundation National Cancer Institute, Medical Oncology, Milan; and Heidi Götze, PhD, University of Leipzig.

It’s already the 13th time the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation has presented this research award, known by the same name. Four scientists are being honoured this year for their excellent projects in the field of oncology health services research. The focus of the four research projects is on the best possible and appropriate treatment and care of cancer patients – with regard to patients’ long-term health and quality of life, as well as from the viewpoint of healthcare economics.

Four award winners from Switzerland, Germany and Italy

The SWISS BRIDGE Award 2013 is being presented this evening in Zurich by the president of the Scientific Jury, Prof. Gordon McVie, MD, of the European Institute of Oncology in Milan. Four researchers from Switzerland, Germany and Italy are sharing the award as follows:

- **Prof. Christine Bouchardy, MD**, Head of the Geneva Cancer Registry, Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Geneva: 150,000 Swiss francs;
- **Prof. Lisa Licitra, MD**, Chief of Head and Neck Cancer Medical Oncology Unit, IRCCS Foundation National Cancer Institute, Medical Oncology, Milan: 125,000 Swiss francs;
- **Heide Götze, PhD**, Department of Medical Psychology and Medical Sociology, University of Leipzig: 125,000 Swiss francs;
- **PD Sibil Tschudin, MD**, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Gynecological Social Medicine and Psychosomatics, Basel University Hospital: 100,000 Swiss francs.

Better patient care through health services research

All four award winning projects are aimed at improving existing medical practices through therapy and care for cancer patients. The epidemiologist Christine Bouchardy examines the impact on surgeon’s caseload, meaning the annual number of breast cancer patients who are operated on, on the quality of care and the prognosis of the treated women. The aim of Sibil Tschudin’s work is the evaluation of an online tool as a decision-making aid for young cancer patients and in the decision-making process on fertility preservation measures.

Lisa Licitra verifies which strategy is most suitable in the long-term follow-up of successfully treated patients with head and neck cancer, with regard to their health as well as from an economic perspective. Heide Götze devotes her work to long-term survivors. She explores the long-term effects and the needs of approximately 400 former cancer patients who completed therapy 10 years ago.

A total of 27 projects were submitted by researchers who are working at academic cancer research institutes in Europe. A scientific jury, which includes nine experts from Switzerland and four other countries, was responsible for the expert assessment and reviewing process. Following this examination, eight applicants could develop individual, detailed project studies from which, ultimately, the four named winners have been chosen. Once again the Research Funding department of the Swiss Cancer League was responsible for the request for proposals and organization of the application review process.

**Information on the
SWISS BRIDGE Foundation:**

Dietmar Gundel
Managing Director
SWISS BRIDGE Foundation
Bleicherweg 45
PO Box
8002 Zurich
Tel. +41 43 317 13 60
info@swissbridge.ch
www.swissbridge.ch

**Information on the
research projects:**

Dr. Rolf Marti
Head of Research Funding
Swiss Cancer League
Effingerstrasse 40
PO Box 8219
3001 Bern
Tel. +41 31 389 91 45
rolf.marti@swisscancer.ch
www.swisscancer.ch

*The **SWISS BRIDGE Award for Cancer Research**, endowed with 500,000 Swiss francs, is awarded already for the 13th time. The award is granted to outstanding research projects which are selected by a jury composed of internationally renowned scientists. The **SWISS BRIDGE Foundation** was founded in 1997, on the initiative of the former managing director and current foundation board member, Thomas Hoepfli, with the support of the Swiss Cancer League. Their goal is to financially support high-quality domestic and foreign research projects aimed at the fight against cancer, along with the help of private donors and foundations. Since its founding, the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation has been able to award over 20 million Swiss francs for research work in Belgium, Brazil, England, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Spain and Switzerland.*

Short descriptions of the four supported research projects

Prof. Christine Bouchardy, MD, Head of the Geneva Cancer Registry, Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Geneva receives 150,000 Swiss francs for the following project:

Breast cancer quality of care and outcome according to surgeon's caseload

Breast cancer is a serious public health problem in Switzerland, with about 5,500 new incidences and 1,300 deaths annually. Research in the field of quality of care for patients with breast cancer is a priority. In this research project, the effect on the number of annual newly operated breast cancer patients, the so-called surgeon's caseload, on the quality of care and the survival of affected women will be determined for the first time. Breast cancer patients who were operated on in private clinics between 2000 and 2009 and who have been registered in the Geneva Cancer Registry serve as a basis for this study.

Prof. Lisa Licitra, MD, Chief of Head and Neck Cancer Medical Oncology Unit, IRCCS Foundation National Cancer Institute, Medical Oncology, Milan, receives 125,000 Swiss francs for the following project:

Health and economic outcomes of two different follow up strategies in effectively cured advanced head and neck cancer

In contrast to other types of cancer, the current follow-up strategies for successfully treated head and neck cancer patients have not been systematically evaluated. In order to overcome this shortcoming, 330 patients at eleven centers in Italy and Switzerland are examined; during which two more or less intensive follow-up studies will take place over a three year period. As a result, the health effects (survival, potentially preventable recurrences or secondary tumours) are compared to the cost of medical examinations (radiology, Positron Emission Tomography), using statistical methods.

Heide Götze, PhD, Department of Medical Psychology and Medical Sociology, University of Leipzig, receives 125,000 Swiss francs for the following project:

Long-term consequences of cancer and its treatment and satisfaction with health services – predictors of physical and mental health in long-term survivors

Increasing life expectancy and the growing number of long-term cancer survivors in Europe lead to new challenges with regard to health care, rehabilitation and support needs – especially for the elderly. This study investigates how former cancer patients are affected by specific long-term effects and how these influence information resources and health care use. Through the use of questionnaires and interviews with 400 long-term survivors, factors for physical and mental health which promote survivors' quality of life and satisfaction can be determined – serving as a basis to develop and implement follow-up programs for long-term cancer survivors.

PD Sibil Tschudin, MD, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Gynecological Social Medicine and Psychosomatics, Basel University Hospital, receives 100,000 Swiss francs for the following project:

Decisional conflict of young cancer patients with regard to fertility preservation – effects of an online decision-aid tool

Impaired fertility is often a result of successful cancer treatment. Today, young women who are affected can make use of measures to preserve fertility. However, the decision to take such an option must be made within a short period of time following cancer diagnosis and prior to treatment. Therefore, decision-aid tools are highly desirable in this conflict-ridden situation. This study will evaluate whether an online support tool used in addition to standard medical advice reduces decision conflict, facilitates the decision, increases fertility preservation knowledge and improves long-term satisfaction with the decision made.