
S W I S S  B R I D G E

SUPPORT FOR CANCER RESEARCH WORLDWIDE

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2006

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MAIN ACTIVITIES — The **SWISS BRIDGE AWARD 2006** was announced with CHF 500,000 price monies. Over 60 applications have been submitted. Three researcher have been selected by our scientific board as winners (more details on the back page).

The award ceremony was embedded in a benefice event, organized at the Zunfthaus zur Meisen in Zurich on 1st November 2006. The beneficiaries of the proceeds were “Krebsforschung Schweiz”, “Forschungsstiftung Kind und Krebs” and SWISS BRIDGE. More than 120 persons enjoyed a delicious dinner, most interesting presentations and a tombola with very attractive prizes.

Biobank Suisse, which will accept tissue, blood and serum from a network of pathological institutes in Switzerland, has been founded by Swiss Cancer Research and SWISS BRIDGE. It will categorize them and extract RNA and DNA and the expressed proteins, which will be stored together with the original tissue samples. SWISS BRIDGE has contributed CHF 250,000 initial capital and has formed a pool with other foundations to support the set-up of this vital institute.

Leganet, the joint legacy promotion project involving various cancer organizations, led by SWISS BRIDGE Foudation, was further developed. Large donations were already received by the project partners through this vehicle.

Instituto Nacional de Câncer (INCA) in Rio de Janeiro is in the third year of running four projects with annual funds of approx. CHF 1,250,000. The donors for this project have agreed to support a three-day workshop before the end of this year between researchers of the Istituto Europeo di Oncologia, Milano and INCA in Rio de Janeiro. All parties involved are thrilled of the opportunity to exchange know-how and findings across continents.

WE WILL LEAVE OUR DESCENDANTS A PRECIOUS LEGACY — If you know anyone, who may want to become a donor or a supporter and friend of the foundation SWISS BRIDGE, please contact us.

One of our prime objectives is to encourage individuals to bequeath legacies, to secure the long-term success of SWISS BRIDGE. Please do not hesitate to speak to us, or contact your solicitor.

SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION — We are proud to inform you, that all costs for administration and public relation have been born in the past years by this group of friends.

We are very pleased to announce, that Mr. Jean-Pierre Cuoni, Chairman – EFG International Zurich, has joined the INNER CIRCLE of the supporters and friends of SWISS BRIDGE.

We welcome more participants. Please contact us at info@swissbridge.ch

GOLF DAY — On 15th September 2006 the 9th Golf Day of the Supporters and Friends of the Foundation was held at the Golf Club Niederbüren. 60 golfers participated in the competition for “The Triumvirate” Trophy. Beautiful autumn weather, many attractive prizes and delicious food at the golf restaurant helped this traditional event again to a great success.

The venue of the next Golf Day will be announced soon.

SWISS BRIDGE AWARD 2006 – WINNERS

Prof. Dr. **Matthias Egger** of the Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPM) at the University of Bern receives CHF 250,000.– for the project:

HIV-related lymphomas in the era of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy.

The chances of getting cancer of the lymph glands is increased 165-fold in AIDS patients compared with the non-affected population. Indeed “lymphomas”, as these cancers are called, are included by some experts as part of the AIDS illness. The gratifying success of HAART (Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy) against HIV associated morbidity and mortality, has not had much impact on the incidence of the cancer complication. This European study is massive and probably the biggest available, and thus will define exactly what the scale of the problem is, and point to ways of controlling it better.

Dr. **Manel Esteller** of the Cancer Epigenetics Laboratory at the Spanish National Cancer Centre (CNIO) in Madrid receives CHF 150,000.– for the project:

Characterization of the DNA Methylation Patterns of Double Strand DNA Viruses Associated with Human Cancer: Clinical and Epidemiological Impact.

Certain viruses have been known to play a part in causing cancer, thought to be due to interference with the cell's DNA. DNA is the stuff of genes, and is damaged in many cancers. But recently the chemical substances in intimate contact with DNA may be altered in cancers. This important project looks closely at virus-induced cancers in culture in test tubes to study how viruses have adapted the infected cells to escape rejection and killing by the cells, and eventually have helped to turn the cells cancerous. The hypothesis is that part of the trickery of the virus is in changing the “epigenetics” of the target cells (see below).

Dr. **Zdenko Herceg** of the Molecular Carcinogenesis & Biomarkers Group at the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in Lyon receives CHF 100,000.– for the project:

Role of epigenetic changes induced by environmental and dietary factors in human cancer.

The unraveling of the Human Genome, i.e. the identification of each human gene was a massive achievement, because it opened the way to link genes with ill health. In cancer many such genes have surfaced, but surprisingly, gaps exist in explanation of causation of cancer by implicating genes alone. It would appear that defects in the chemical structures which surround the genes may be as much to blame in certain cancers as direct damage to genes themselves. The above project from Spain examines this in depth in cancers associated with viruses. Epigenetics as the name suggests is the study of those molecules which cushion genetic material, and this European study led from IARC in France will look at links between known cancer-causing triggers like cigarettes and the “epigenetic” changes in cancer tissues. These last have already been collected from patients suffering from cancers of the lung, head, neck and oesophagus.

Please do not hesitate to request more information on the projects supported from info@swissbridge.ch.
