



Spirit and Soul
of Swiss
Dermatology
and
Venereology
1913–2013

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and Venereology
1913-2013**

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ALLERGOLOGY

HISTORY OF DERMATOLOGY IN SWITZERLAND – SUBSPECIALTY ALLERGOLOGY

Introduction

In this overview the emergence of the field of allergology mainly in the context of dermatology is presented. Allergology as a transversal specialty has been developed within dermatology clinics as well as in independent allergy units often associated with clinical immunology services, but also basic research immunology has been amalgamated with the two clinical specialities, particularly through the foundation of a common Society of Allergology and Immunology. However, in the centennial year of the Swiss Society of Dermatology and Venereology, here the main emphasis is put on the role of dermatologists in advancing this specialty in Switzerland. This shall, however, not underestimate the important role of many others who have played or still have an important role in the closely related fields of allergology, and clinical and basic immunology.

The first discoveries in the fields of allergology and immunology were made at the beginning of the 20th century. As one “side effect” of the development of vaccinations, such as against tetanus and diphtheria, adverse reactions, particularly from the passive sera produced in horses, have been observed. In 1902, Charles Robert Richet (1850-1935) and Paul Portier (1866-1962) coined the term “anaphylaxis,” and in 1903 Maurice Arthus (1862-1945) observed the phenomenon of local immune complex reactions, which still

carries his name today. Clemens von Pirquet (1874-1929), head of the Pediatric Clinic in Vienna, and Bela Schick, a pediatrician of Jewish origin (1877-1967), introduced in 1905 the term "allergy" for these hypersensitivity reactions such as serum sickness and other allergic reactions they observed in their pediatric patients treated with horse sera against diphtheria. Paul Ehrlich (1854-1915), who as a student discovered and described the mast cell and the eosinophil granulocyte, proposed the side chain theory, implicating that antitoxins may bind to toxins by a specific receptor, which he called an amboceptor. For his important discoveries, including the development of Salvarsan[®], the first chemotherapeutic drug to treat syphilis, he received the Nobel Prize in 1908.

Already in 1911, Leonard Noon (1877-1967) and John Freeman (1877-1962) introduced the concept of hyposensitisation by using a crude pollen extract. In 1921 Carl Prausnitz-Giles or Otto Carl Willy Prausnitz (1876-1963) passively sensitised the skin in his forearm to fish by injecting serum from his fish-allergic co-worker Heinz Küstner (1897-1931). The following day, Prausnitz had an immediate-type wheal and flare, later called the Prausnitz-Küstner reaction, after the injection of fish extract into the same site of his skin [1]. This test became famous as the P-K reaction and was clinically and experimentally used for many years.

The term "atopy" was introduced in 1922 by the two American physicians Arthur F. Coca (1875-1959) and Robert A. Cook (1880-1960), depicting patients who had positive skin tests to inhalant allergens, who suffered from hay fever, asthma and/or infantile eczema, and in whom apparently something was not in place (α τοπος) in their immune response [2].

The emergence of allergology in Switzerland

The specialty of dermatology has many facets including immunological and allergic causes of skin diseases. In particular the different types of eczema, e.g. contact dermatitis and atopic dermatitis, as well as urticaria, angioedema and autoimmune disorders, but also the infectious diseases and tumors require an extensive knowledge of immunology. Therefore it is not surprising that dermatologists were among the first who became interested in this new field of medicine. Two dermatologists can be looked upon as the grandfathers of the field of allergology in Switzerland,

both of whom worked clinically and experimentally on allergy topics. Josef Jadassohn (1863-1936), who worked as Director of the Dermatological Clinic in Bern from 1896 until 1910, is considered to be the father of the patch tests. In 1895 he first reported this diagnostic instrument for the testing of contact allergy to mercurial salts, when he was still working in Breslau [3]. Bruno Bloch (1878-1933) first investigated the concept of contact allergy using iodine derivatives, when he was head of Dermatology in Basel, [4]. Later on, when he was Director of the Dermatology Clinic in Zurich he performed studies on the sensitising capacity of primine from *Primula obconica* in guinea pigs as well as on himself [5]. Several moulages showing patch tests and eczema on his arm (among these no. 347-349 from the year 1925) are still kept in the Museum of Moulages at the University of Zurich. Bruno Bloch was also among the first who established a patch test series to detect contact allergens in patients. Poul Bonnevie, a former assistant of Bruno Bloch in Zurich, became later Professor of Occupational Medicine in Copenhagen. He expanded Bloch's limited standard series of tests and published it in his famous textbook on environmental dermatology [6]. Already in 1926 Werner Jadassohn and Margarete Zaruski described for the first time an allergic reaction to cooked celery [7]. In 1933 Bloch died unexpectedly due to agranulocytosis from the analgesic drug Allonal (pyramidone and phenobarbital) he took for frequent headaches, at that time an unrecognised side effect. A few weeks later this side effect was published in the JAMA, which could have saved his life, if it had been recognized earlier [8].

It is evident that many dermatologists became interested in the field of allergology at an early time. This is reflected by the extensive clinical and research work on eczemas, already started by Bruno Bloch, based on his experiences with Josef Jadassohn, later pursued by Werner Jadassohn in Bern, and driven again by Alain de Weck in Bern until the foundation of the Institute for Allergology and Clinical Immunology. In Zurich, it was Guido Miescher and then particularly Hans Storck who established allergology as a subspecialty in dermatology by also creating a special allergy outpatient clinic in 1949. In Basel, it was Wilhelm Lutz, who was primarily interested in eczema, and who also published a statement on the concept of atopy where he criticised the term for being too narrowly based on a pathogenetic approach

instead on the morphological approach. In this publication "Zum Begriff der 'Atopic Dermatitis'" [9] written during the years of the Cold War and the arms race, the misspelled "atomic dermatitis" was overlooked by the author, the lecturer, as well as the proofreader [10].

In Basel, it was Rudolf Schuppli who opened the first allergy consultation in 1949, which he supervised for some years as an attending physician from his private practice, and which was taken over by Ferdinand Wortmann when Schuppli became director of the Dermatology Clinic in 1956. In the French part of Switzerland, Geneva and Lausanne, allergology was more embedded into the emerging field of clinical immunology, which was incorporated into internal medicine. Therefore, in Geneva Jean-Pierre Girard, and in Lausanne Philippe Frey established the first Allergy Units within the Clinical Immunology Units of the University Hospitals. However, dermatologists in both university clinics were very engaged in contact allergy and in Geneva also in drug allergy issues (Table 1, 2, 3).

Allergology in Basel

After the short period with Bruno Bloch as the Head of Dermatology in Basel (1913-1916), Felix Lewandowsky (1879-1921) took over [10]. He was Director from 1917 to 1921, when he died at a young age from colonic cancer. In 1922, Wilhelm Lutz (1888-1958) became Director. As was the case in Zurich for Guido Miescher, he was very interested in the aspects of clinical dermatology, and has published in virtually every major field of dermatology. He was also particularly interested in the different types of eczema, as well as in the classification of diseases. This culminated in the publication of a textbook on dermatology. During this period, Rudolf Schuppli (1915-2006) became registrar in 1944 and started unofficially in 1949 the first Allergy Outpatient Clinic. Officially, it was opened in 1951 – when he was already in private practice but was still the responsible Head of the Allergy Unit as external consultant. In 1947 his habilitation "Klinische und experimentelle Studien zur Pathogenese allergischer Vorgänge" was accepted, demonstrating his genuine interest in this field.

In 1951, Ferdinand Wortmann (1919-1991) became the next responsible registrar for the Allergy Clinic after Rudolf Schuppli. Apart from dermatological issues he was also particularly interested in allergic disorders. When Wilhelm Lutz retired for personal health reasons, Rudolf Schuppli, who was at that time in private practice, was elected Director of Dermatology in 1956. Ferdinand Wortmann then became the Head of the Allergology Policlinic. For the first time in 1966, Dorothee Sommacal (1925-2004) was mentioned as part-time allergology resident. She remained an important support of the Allergology Clinic in Basel until her retirement in 1986.

Ferdinand Wortmann remained Head of the Allergology Policlinic in Basel as attending part-time physician besides his busy private practice until 1986. Because of his extensive clinical workload he was not able to pursue an academic career, but he still performed a lot of scientific work, particularly large studies on hyposensitisation in pollen allergy, but also in many other fields of allergology. He also introduced the concept of oral hyposensitisation by the gastrointestinal route, a concept that has again emerged through the establishment of sublingual immunotherapy. He retired in 1986, still remaining available as an external consultant to the clinic. He unexpectedly died from a heart attack in December 1991, returning from a committee session of the Swiss Society of Allergology and Immunology.

In 1987, Martin Pletscher (born 1950) took over as Head of Allergology. He had received his training in Basel under Ferdinand Wortmann, as well as in New York and Denver, Colorado in the United States. In 1989 he left the clinic and opened a private practice for dermatology and venereology, as well as allergology, in Binningen. The clinic was then managed during 1990 by Claudia Schülin (born 1958), a registrar in dermatology and venereology. Thereafter, she took over the private practice of Ferdinand Wortmann. In 1991 Andreas Bircher (born 1953) became head of the Allergology Unit, at first as a part-time registrar supported by a 50% residency from dermatology [10].

Allergology in Bern

In Bern, the dermatologist Hans Kuske (1909-1970) worked on phytophotodermatitis and photosensitivity. His results were acknowledged as habilitation in 1950 and published in 1954. In 1961, Alain L. de Weck (1928-2013) established an allergy/immunology research group. In 1963, an Allergy Unit was opened within the Dermatology Department, which grew fast and was opened for outpatients in 1965. In 1967, the Department of Allergology and Clinical Immunology ("Abteilung für Allergologie und klinische Immunologie") was founded, which later became part of the newly-founded Institute for Clinical Immunology. Alain de Weck became the first Director of the Institute for Allergology and Clinical Immunology in 1971. Under his directorship, the institute gained worldwide recognition in basic and clinical immunology and allergology [11]. Among many other topics he mainly contributed to the identification of the relevant allergens in IgE-mediated penicillin allergy [11]. In 1993 when Alain de Weck retired, Werner Pichler, who is well-known for his research on the basic mechanisms of drug allergy, became Head of the Allergy Clinic.

In Bern, basic and clinical research on drug allergy has always been a major issue. In the Department of Dermatology, Alfred Krebs (1923-2011) together with Kaspar Zürcher, an internist in private practice, worked on dermato-allergic issues, which culminated in a standard textbook on drug hypersensitivity ("Hautnebenwirkungen interner Arzneimittel," Karger, 1980).

The internist Rolf Hoigné (1923-2004) habilitated at the University Department of Internal Medicine on Drug Allergy in 1964 and described the so-called Hoigné syndrome, a toxic reaction to accidental intravascular injections of crystalline solutions. In 1966 he was elected as Head Internal Medicine at the Zieglerspital in Bern, but continued his work on drug allergy as a professor at the university. He founded the "Comprehensive hospital drug monitoring Switzerland" in cooperation with other university centres. He contributed important studies on the prevalence of adverse drug reactions in hospitalised patients, among others in collaboration with Thomas Hunziker, associate professor at the Department of Dermatology in Bern.

The internist and allergologist Ueli Müller, one of the world-leading experts in hymenoptera allergy, published the first controlled study on venom immunotherapy in Europe in 1979. He closely collaborated with Bob Reisman in Buffalo, USA, and Kurt Blaser and Cezmi Akdis at the SIAF in Davos. He retired at the end of 2006, and Arthur Helbling, associate physician in the Allergology section of the Rheumatology, Immunology, Allergology Clinic at the University Hospital in Bern took over the Allergy Station of the Clinic of Internal Medicine at the Zieglerspital.

In the Department of Dermatology, research on drug allergy has been continued by the dermatologist and allergist Nikhil Yawalkar, who focused on basic immune mechanisms in various types of drug hypersensitivity. In recent years, a unit for skin testing, as well as special clinics for patients with allergic skin diseases have been set up under the supervision of Dagmar Simon, which are well integrated in national and European networks and are a prerequisite for epidemiological and clinical research.

Allergology in Zurich

In 1933 Guido Miescher (1887-1961) became Director of the Dermatological Clinic in Zurich after the unexpected death of Bruno Bloch. His main emphasis was on the interrelation of skin and ultraviolet and x-rays. However, he also supported research on different forms of eczema and made important contributions to erythema nodosum, first described granulomatous cheilitis and granulomatosis disciformis, a variant of necrobiosis lipoidica.

Hans Storck (1910-1983) took over the clinic from Guido Miescher in 1958. He himself suffered from atopic dermatitis and was particularly interested in the newly emerging field of allergology. As a registrar he had already established an allergy unit in 1948. He gave his academic introductory lecture on the topic "Bedeutung der Allergie im Krankheitsgeschehen" [12]. When he returned as Director of the Clinic, he focused again on allergology, including the classical diagnoses and treatments of rhinitis, bronchial asthma and atopic dermatitis. His monograph on "Allergie – Theorie und Praxis," published in 1972, was illustrated by himself and included many anecdotes and various swift observations on rare allergological case vignettes.

His successor Urs Walther Schnyder (1923-2012) took over as Director of the Dermatological Clinic in Zurich in 1972. In 1960 he too had written a habilitation with a theme on allergy: "Neurodermitis-Asthma-Rhinitis – eine genetisch-allergologische Studie," [13] and had published a large epidemiological study on the frequency of atopic allergy.

During this period, Brunello Wüthrich (born 1938) became registrar in 1971, and in 1975 Head of the Allergy Station. In 1975 he received the *venia legendi* for Dermatology and Venereology especially for Allergology, again for a habilitation with a main focus an allergy: IgE and its meaning in atopic dermatitis ("Zur Immunpathologie der Neurodermitis constitutionalis, Hans Huber). He then established the Allergy Station of the University Hospital Zurich as one of the leading clinics dealing with the whole field of allergology. He has published numerous articles, case reports and reviews on the whole field of allergology, with main emphasis on atopic dermatitis (separated into an "extrinsic" and an "intrinsic" type), food allergy ("Celery-Mugwort-Spices-Syndrome"), epidemiology of allergic diseases, and desensitisation. In 1985 he received the "Extraordinariat ad personam." In 2003 he retired and Peter Schmid-Grendelmeier took over the "Allergiestation." He received the *venia legendi* in 2004. His main interests lie in topics such as the molecular and epidemiologic aspects of respiratory allergy and atopic dermatitis. Barbara Ballmer-Weber the co-leader has been working since 1997 in Zurich; her main scientific focus is on food allergy. She participated in many studies on a European level and brought this scientific topic to a worldwide recognised level. A successful research group on allergological topics, particularly new applications and dosing schemes for specific immune therapy, is headed by Thomas Kündig and Gabriela Senti.

Allergology and clinical immunology in Lausanne

In the French part of Switzerland the field of allergology and clinical immunology developed in a slightly different way. In dermatology the main emphasis was on infectious diseases, however, the description of chromium salts as an allergen in cement in 1950 by Hubert Jaeger and E. Pelloni reflects also the interest on allergological issues [14].

Later contact allergology was mainly represented and realised by Daniel Perrenoud in the 1990s until he left the clinic, and from 2005 to 2011 by Paul Bigliardi, when he left for a position in Singapore.

A Clinical Immunology Unit was created in the years 1962 to 1964 within the service of internal medicine, by Philippe Frei (born 1933), then registrar, with the support of Professor Alfredo Vannotti, Head of Internal Medicine. The unit included first a research lab and a lab for the diagnosis of immunological diseases. An outpatient clinic was also intended for patients with allergies. In the 1970s, the unit became a division with a full-time team of internists and technicians and started transplantation immunology. In the 1980s, the division also included a pediatrician who was in charge of immunological diseases in children. In 1998, when Frei retired, the division was a "Service d'immunologie et allergologie" with 50 co-workers. His successors were Giuseppe Pantaleo, Head of the Service and ordinary professor, and François Spertini, associated professor and responsible for all the clinical activities including allergology and clinical immunology. This independent service is still a part of the Department of Internal Medicine.

Allergology and Clinical Immunology in Geneva

In Geneva, it was the dermatologist Werner Jadassohn (1898-1973), originally from the Bloch school in Zurich, who started in around 1950 to promote allergology and who was also very interested in allergic disorders [15]. Experimental studies on eczema were performed by Nicole Hunziker (born 1927) during his directorship. The patch test clinics were run by Werner Jadassohn himself, Nicole Hunziker, the allergologist Emile Musso (1919-1979) and the chemist Robert Brun (1926-2011). In dermatology it was still Nicole Hunziker, who contributed during the directorship of Paul Laugier (1910-2009) to the knowledge on contact dermatitis. In 1980, she founded a research group on experimental contact dermatitis to bring together people with different backgrounds such as dermatologists, immunologists, toxicologists, chemists, and biochemists to share experiences on experimental animal sensitisation. Among the first members were Claude Benezra (Université Louis Pasteur, Strasbourg), Ladislav Polak (F. Hoffmann-La Roche), and Thomas Maurer (Ciba-Geigy). The first meeting took place 1980 in Geneva, and further meetings

followed in Basel and Strasbourg with about 20 participants each. Because of its success, annual meetings were planned, and in 1983 in Amsterdam the name "European Research Group on Experimental Contact Dermatitis" (ERGECD) was coined. From the initial intention of gathering people from the "Basel- Strasbourg, Geneva" area, it was then welcoming people from many other countries, including the USA. The number of participants was increasing from 20 to more than 100 participants. In 2012 the 24th meeting took place in Trier reflecting the ongoing interest and success of this informal group. In 1986 Nicole Hunziker was also the founder and first president of the Swiss Contact Dermatitis Research Group (SCDRG), a group of dermatologists interested in the clinical aspects of contact dermatitis.

In the Department of Dermatology emphasis was again on severe drug hypersensitivities such as toxic epidermal necrolysis. For example, important contributions have been made by Jean-Hilaire Saurat (born 1943), the successor of Laugier, and Lars French (born 1963) with regard to the treatment with immune globulins of this often lethal adverse drug reaction. A consultation "Dermatologie- Environnement" was started first by Nicole Hunziker and Jean-Pierre Grillet (born 1952). After she became Professor Emeritus in 1991, Contact Allergology in Dermatology was mainly represented and supervised by the attending physicians Pierre Piletta (born 1962) and Florence Pasche-Koo (born 1964), who also both have a private practice.

In Geneva, similar to Lausanne and in the same period (1962-1964), a Division of Clinical Immunology was created by André Cruchaud (born 1928), within the Service of Internal Medicine with the support of its Head, Professor Alex Müller. The Division (headed by André Cruchaud) was soon organised into three units: (1) Clinical immunology, headed by André Cruchaud himself; (2) Transplantation immunology headed by Michel Jeannet (born 1932) and (3) Allergology headed by Jean-Pierre (Othenin)-Girard (1923-1996).

The division included a diagnostic laboratory, first headed by Jean-Pierre Despont, and since 1996 by Pascale Roux-Lombard, who is still in charge today. The unit of transplantation immunology functioned as a histocompatibility central laboratory for Switzerland; Michel Jeannet during these years being thus responsible for transplantation immunology for the whole country.

In 1988, when Jean-Pierre Girard retired, Barbara Polla (born 1950) took over the Allergology Unit. Jean-Michel Dayer joined the Division in 1980 on his return from Massachusetts General Hospital. In 1993 he succeeded André Cruchaud as Head of the Division. At the same time, when Barbara Polla left, the Allergology Unit was taken over by Conrad Hauser, again a dermatologist, and later Carlo Chizzolini joined, being responsible for clinical immunology. Conrad Hauser left the Allergology Unit in 2008 to pursue a career in the industry after Jean-Michel Dayer retired in 2007, and Jörg Seebach became Head of the Division of Clinical Immunology. From 2012 Thomas Harr took over as Head of the Allergology Unit.

Dermatology Clinics with allergology sections in other hospitals (Table 4)

The Städtische Poliklinik in Zurich was founded in 1913 by Max Tièche (1878-1938) to improve the dermatological patient-centered care for the underprivileged people of the city. Walther Burckhardt (1905-1971), who received his formation by Bruno Bloch and Guido Miescher, became in 1938 Head of the Städtische Poliklinik. He introduced the alkali resistance test of the skin, worked on occupational dermatoses and eczema due to sensitisation to cement, and worked on other aspects of allergy. Kaspar Schwarz (1923-2011) became in 1971 successor of Walther Burckhardt, and contributed remarkable publications on light dermatoses and photoallergy. His successor was Alfred Eichmann from 1988-2002, followed by Stephan Lautenschlager from 2002. Both have their focus on venereal diseases; however, allergology is covered by specialised registrars [14].

Other dermatology clinics have been established in several hospitals in Switzerland. The first was founded in 1934 at the Ospedale San Giovanni in Bellinzona by Fausto Techio (1904-1999). In 1975 Francois Gillet (1937-2011) took over and established as special topics allergology and venereology. In 2001 Carlo Mainetti (born 1958) took over, his interest being cutaneous autoimmune disorders and dermatological surgery. In 2007 Silvy Bach Bizzozero, specialising in allergology and clinical immunology, established an outpatient clinic for allergology at the hospital. From July 2012 Giovanni Ferrari, a pediatrician and allergologist trained in Aarau

and at the Zurich Allergy Unit, was appointed to a common Allergy Unit for the hospitals of Bellinzona and Lugano.

At the Kantonsspital in Luzern in 1934 a Dermatology Department was already opened in Internal Medicine, which was headed by Eduard Frei. Today, the division has two full-time head physicians; Christoph Brand in dermatology, and Gerhard Müller in allergology.

In 1997 a Dermatology Clinic was established at the Kantonsspital in Aarau, headed by Peter Itin until 2006, followed by Markus Streit. Allergology was overseen first by Mark Anliker, then Marianne Lerch, and since 2009 by Jürgen Grabbe.

In 2004 a Dermatology Clinic was opened at the Kantonsspital in St. Gallen, headed by Mark Anliker, which also takes care of patients with allergic disorders.

Also the Kantonsspital in Schaffhausen has had a small Department of Dermatology and Allergology, which was first overseen by attending physicians. From 1999 Paul Bigliardi junior headed a small unit from his private practice while he led a research group in Basel. His habilitation on opiate receptors of the skin was accepted in 2003. In 2005 he became Associate Professor at the Dermatology Clinic at the CHUV in Lausanne. His practice and the consultation at the hospital in Schaffhausen were taken over by two German dermatologists Michael Buslau and Teodor Karamfilov.

The most recent Department of Allergology/Dermatology was opened within the Department of Internal Medicine in 2011 at the Kantonsspital Winterthur headed by Marianne Lerch.

In addition, numerous practising dermatologists such as Annemarie Benz in Zurich and Stefano Gilardi in Locarno have promoted allergology within dermatology. Many more have obtained a double formation in dermatology/venerology and allergology/clinical immunology (Table 5) and have delivered high quality care to their patients, or are still promoting allergological care for many patients and their referring general practitioners.

The Swiss Contact Dermatitis Research Group (SCDRG)

The interest in contact allergology resulted in the foundation of a working group on contact dermatitis in 1986 by Nicole Hunziker, who also became its first President. The founding members

included Florence Pasche from Geneva, Daniel Perrenoud from Lausanne, Leena Bruckner-Tuderman from Zurich, Theo Ruffi and Andreas Bircher from Basel and Thomas Hunziker from Bern, as well as several dermatologists in private practice. The first multicentre publication in 1989 was "Sensitization to Kathon CG (a mix of chlormethylisothiazolinone and isothiazolinone) in Switzerland: Report of the Swiss Contact Dermatitis Research Group" (in *Current Topics in Contact Dermatitis*, Springer, 1989). Methylisothiazolinone, a part of this preservative mixture, which increasingly caused contact allergies during these years, emerged again in 2012 as a relevant contact allergen. Later, this informal group was presided over by Andreas Bircher, Daniel Perrenoud, Paul Bigliardi, Dagmar Simon and again by Andreas Bircher. For many years Rita Sigg (at a private practice in Luzern) served as secretary. It is a small working group of interested dermatologists with a main focus on contact and occupational allergy. It is well connected to the SUVA by Hanspeter Rast, who has been an active member in the group for many years. It has strong links to the European Society of Contact Dermatitis (ESCD), where it is represented on the Council as well as in the European Contact Dermatitis Research group (ECDRG), a group of European dermatologists from Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, France, Germany Italy, Spain and Switzerland dedicated to contact allergy.

The Dermato-Allergological Commission

In 1999 the foundation of a Dermato-Allergological Commission was proposed by Lasse Braathen, Director of Dermatology in Bern. Its main purpose was to establish a platform for postgraduate and continuing education in allergology for dermatologists. Every second year a course in dermatoallergology was organised by one of the University's Dermatology Clinics. The first official course took place in Lausanne in 1999 (organised by Daniel Perrenoud), the second in Bern 2001 (Lasse Braathen); the third course in 2003 in Basel (Andreas Bircher); the fourth in 2005 in Geneva (Conrad Hauser); the fifth in 2007 in Zurich (Peter Schmid-Grendelmeier); the sixth in 2009 in Lausanne (Paul Bigliardi); and the seventh one in 2011 in Bern (Dagmar Simon). It now is a well-established and highly regarded course, still taking place every two years. In 2011 it was decided to merge the SCDRG and

the Dermato-Allergological Commission to unite all allergological issues of interest in dermatology into one group. Currently the Commission is presided over by Andreas Bircher (Basel), and other members include Dagmar Simon (Bern), Barbara Ballmer-Weber (Zurich), and Philippe Sprung (Lausanne), and Pierre Piletta and Florence Pasche-Koo (Geneva). Currently it is the managing group of the SCDRG for the organisation of the course on dermatology-allergology (Table 6).

The Swiss Allergy Society

An important step for the establishment and development of Allergology in Switzerland – also within dermatology – was the foundation of the Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Allergie (SGA) on February the 25th 1950 in Zurich. Among the founding members were also many dermatologists such as Werner Jadassohn (Geneva), Guido Miescher and Hans Storck (Zurich), and Alain de Weck (Bern) [11]. The statutes, the names of the founding members and the presentations were published in *International Archives of Allergy*, Vol. 1, Karger Verlag, 1951. A major factor in the establishment of a Swiss Allergy Society, as it was named in 1950, was the necessity to have an organising host society for the First International Congress of Allergology, which was held in Zurich on 23-29 September 1951. The principal organiser of this Congress was A. Grumbach, Professor of Microbiology in Zurich. Thirteen national allergy societies participated and on that occasion the “International Association of Allergology” (IAA) was founded, a further milestone for the promotion of allergology in Europe (S. Karger, *Proceedings*, Basel-New York, 1952).

By the early 1960s, immunology was increasingly emerging as a new medical and scientific discipline, breaking old ties with microbiology and seeking independent recognition. First, a number of self-appointed “immunologists” from different scientific backgrounds including Henri Isliker (biochemistry), Ernst Sorkin (microbiology), Alfred Hässig (blood transfusion) and Alain de Weck (dermatology) wanted to create an independent immunological society. Instead, it was finally decided to combine the disciplines of allergology and immunology within one single society; the SSAL. This fruitful cooperation and combination of two closely related interdependent fields is still active and prosperous today.

Allergology and Clinical Immunology as a medical specialty

After some discussions among the different "main" specialties involved in managing allergic patients, first in 1977 a "Fähigkeitsausweis für Allergologie und klinische Immunologie", and then in 1984 the subspecialty in allergology and clinical immunology, were created as an add-on formation of two years duration to the main specialties of dermatology, internal medicine, ENT, or pediatrics. In 2001, all the subspecialties of internal medicine became full specialties and allergology and clinical immunology was also transformed into a full specialty title with a formation of 6 years. Nevertheless, most physicians, who have so far acquired the specialty title in allergology and clinical immunology, still have a second specialty, either in internal medicine, dermatology, pediatrics or ENT. Currently in Switzerland approximately 184 holders of a specialty title in allergology and clinical immunology are active and members of the Swiss Society of Allergology and Immunology. Among these, 49 also have a title in dermatology (see Table 5), 87 in internal medicine, 26 in pediatrics, and 9 in ENT.

Outlook

This short overview is far from complete and we apologise if I have inadvertently omitted any people who have contributed to the field of allergology in dermatology, or if there are any mistakes with regard to names or birth years etc.

It is obvious that many dermatologists have played an important role in the development of allergology, which has emerged over the last 100 years, and which is now an independent medical specialty. This is not surprising since many inflammatory dermatoses, such as eczema, drug exanthems, urticaria, and cutaneous autoimmune disorders, but also tumors and infections, have a relation to the immune system. This close interrelation has resulted in many dermatologists also specialising in allergology and clinical immunology, and particularly in the German-speaking part of the world, many dermatologists are heading allergology units and departments, or are taking care of allergy patients in private practice. With the emergence of new aimed treatments

with biological drugs in most medical specialties, the transversal specialties of allergology and clinical immunology have received a new stimulus and will remain important specialties in clinical medicine and research.

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Table 1:
Representatives in the field of allergology in Switzerland

–The grandfathers (first half of the 20th century)

- Josef Jadassohn, Bern (1863-1936)
- Bruno Bloch, Basel/Zürich (1878-1933)

–The founders of allergology/clinical immunology (from the 1950s)

- **Basel**

- Wilhelm Lutz (1888-1958)
- Rudolf Schuppli (1915-2006)
- Ferdinand Wortmann (1919-1991)
- Theo Ruffi (1940-2008)

- **Bern**

- Hans Kuske (1909-1970)
- Alain L. de Weck (1928-2013)
- Rolf Hoigné (1923-2004)
- Alfred Krebs (1923-2011)
- Ueli Müller (born 1941)

- **Zurich**

- Guido Miescher (1887-1961)
- Hans Stork (1910-1983)
- Walther Burckhardt (1905-1971)
- Brunello Wüthrich, Zürich (born 1938)

- **Lausanne**

- Philippe Frei (born 1933)
- Alain Pécoud (born 1946)

- **Geneva**

- Werner Jadassohn (1897-1973)
- Nicole Hunziker (born 1927)
- Jean-Pierre (Othenin)-Girard (1923-1996)
- Hubert Varonier (born 1932)
- Jean-Hilaire Saurat (born 1943)

Table 2:
The successors (from the 1990s to 2000)

- **Basel (Allergology in Dermatology)**
 - Martin Pletscher (born 1950) 1986-1990
 - Claudia Schülkin (born 1958) 1990
 - Andreas Bircher (born 1953) from 1991
- **Bern (Allergology in Rheumatology)**
 - Werner Pichler (born 1949) from 1994
 - Arthur Helbling (born 1955) from 1995
- **Bern (Dermatology)**
 - Thomas Hunziker (born 1948) retired 2011
 - Lasse Braathen (born 1942) retired 2007
 - Nikhil Yawalkar (born 1962) from 1995
 - Dagmar Simon (born 1960) from 2000
- **Zurich (Allergology in Dermatology)**
 - Peter Schmid-Grendelmeier (born 1959) from 2003
 - Barbara Ballmer-Weber (born 1963) from 1997
- **Zurich (Dermatology)**
 - Leena Bruckner-Tudermann (born 1952) until 1993
 - Peter Elsner (born 1955) until 1997
 - Frank Nestle (born 1964)
- **Lausanne (Allergology in Internal Medicine)**
 - Francois Spertini (born 1955) from 1991
 - Annette Leingruber (born 1947)
- **Lausanne (Dermatology)**
 - Daniel Perrenoud (born 1959)
 - Paul Bigliardi (born 1964)
- **Geneva (Allergology in Internal Medicine)**
 - Barbara Polla (born 1950)
 - Conrad Hauser (born 1954)
 - Jörg Seebach (born 1964) since 2008

- **Geneva (Dermatology)**
 - Pierre Piletta (born 1962)
 - Florence Pasche Koo (born 1964)
 - Lars French (born 1963) until 2007

**Table 3:
The University Clinics for Allergology
and Clinical Immunology and their staff in 2013**

- **Basel (Dermatology Clinic)**
 - Andreas Bircher
 - Kathrin Scherer
- **Bern (Clinic for Rheumatology and Allergology)**
 - Werner Pichler
 - Arthur Helbling
- **Zürich (Dermatology Clinic)**
 - Peter Schmid-Grendelmeier
 - Barbara Ballmer-Weber
- **Zürich (Children's hospital)**
 - Alice Koehli-Wiesner
 - Roger Lauener
- **Lausanne (Internal Medicine)**
 - Francois Spertini
 - Annette Leimgruber
- **Geneva (Internal Medicine)**
 - Jörg Seebach
 - Thomas Harr
- **Geneva (Children's Hospital)**
 - Philippe Eigenmann

Table 4:
Other clinics with allergy sections

- **Aarau (Dermatology, Kantonsspital)**
 - Jürgen Grabbe
- **Aarau and Luzern (Pediatrics, Kantonsspital)**
 - Peter Eng
- **Bellinzona (Dermatology, Ospedale Regionale di Bellinzona e Valli)**
 - Carlo Mainetti from 2001
 - Silvy Bach-Bizzozero
 - Giovanni Ferrari
- **Geneva (Hôpital de la Tour)**
 - Pierre Gumowski
- **Lausanne (Pediatrics CHUV)**
 - Michaël Hofer
- **Lugano (Servizio di Allergologia e Immunologia clinica, Ospedale Regionale di Lugano – Civico e Italiano)**
 - Gianluca Vanini
 - Giovanni Ferrari
- **Luzern (Dermatology, Kantonsspital)**
 - Christoph Brand
 - Gerhard Müller
- **Mendrisio (Servizio di Allergologia e Immunologia clinica, Ospedale Regionale di Mendrisio Beata Vergine)**
 - Massimiliano Fontana
- **St. Gallen (Dermatology, Kantonsspital)**
 - Mark Anliker
- **Winterthur (Internal Medicine, Kantonsspital)**
 - Marianne Lerch (from 2011)
- **Zürich (Triemlispital)**
 - Stephan Lautenschlager
 - Siegfried Borelli

Table 5:
Double title holders in Dermatology and Allergology
(members of the SSAI and/or FMH, in private practice
or in Dermatology clinics, not mentioned in the text)

Blank Armin, Zürich
 Bloch Peter Heinrich, Feldbrunnen
 Büchner Stanislaw, Basel
 Cajacob Andreas, Schaffhausen
 Disch Rainer Wolfgang, Davos Platz
 Dummer Reinhard, Zürich
 Egli Marja-Leena, Sissach (retired)
 Emmenegger Véronique, Lausanne
 Fäh Jürg, Wetzikon
 Fierz Ulrich (retired)
 Fischer Casagrande Barbra, Zürich
 Frey Werner, Chur (retired)
 Grillet Jean-Pierre, Genève
 Grob Martin, Dübendorf
 Gutzwiller Peter, Liestal (retired)
 Häffner Andreas, Zürich
 Hofbauer Günther, Zürich
 Huber Hanspeter (retired)
 Huwyler Toni, Wohlen AG
 Imhof Gex-Collet Caroline, Brig
 Inauen Patricia, Bern
 Kägi Martin, Zürich
 Kuhn Walter, Zürich
 Langauer Messmer Sabine, Basel
 Mazzi Rodolfo, Locarno (retired)
 Meyrat René, Chur (retired)
 Nestle Frank, London UK
 Pletscher Martin, Binningen
 Rüdlinger Rene, Zürich
 Scheidegger Paul, Brugg

Schuster Christian, St. Gallen
Somazzi Stefano, Pregassona
Stäger-Kosinski Joanna, Zürich
Thürlimann Wolfgang, Zürich
Torrice Rocco, Lugano-Paradiso
Trüb Ralph, Zürich
Tschannen Tanja, Zürich
von Schulthess Zortea Anne, Baden
Wyss Myriam, Meilen
Zortea-Cafilisch Claudia, Rapperswil

Table 6:
**The divisions for Contact Allergology and Occupational
Dermatology in 2013**

Basel (Dermatology Clinic, University Hospital)

Andreas Bircher
Kathrin Scherer-Hufurcier

Bern (Dermatology Clinic, University Hospital)

Dagmar Simon

Zurich (Dermatology Clinic, University Hospital)

Barbara Ballmer-Weber

Lausanne (Dermatology Clinic, CHUV)

Philippe Sprung

Geneva (Dermatology Clinic, HUG)

Pierre Piletta
Florence Pasche Koo

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