

### Letter from the President



We are now midway through the year and plans are moving smoothly ahead for the 2018 Annual Congress, which is being held in Berlin on 10-12th October. Over 1800 abstracts were submitted to be considered for presentation at the congress and abstract selection will take place in July. Further information regarding the congress is provided in this newsletter by Reinhard Hohlfeld, the Local Organising Committee chair and more details are available on the ECTRIMS website. Exciting and comprehensive scientific and educational course programmes have been developed and you are encouraged to register soon for this important meeting.

ECTRIMS continues with collaborative activities with other organisations. A joint ECTRIMS-European Academy of Neurology (EAN) symposium is taking place during the 2018 EAN annual congress in Lisbon in June. The topic of the symposium is "Therapeutic challenges in progressive multiple sclerosis". ECTRIMS and the US National MS Society jointly sponsor the International Advisory Committee on Clinical Trials in MS and a meeting of this committee is scheduled to take place in Washington DC in September. The meeting topic is "International Conference on Data Leveraging in Multiple Sclerosis".

ECTRIMS is pleased to have awarded 11 new fellowships in 2018: there were 4 new post-doctoral research exchange fellowships, 4 clinical training fellowships, 2 ECTRIMS-MAGNIMS fellowships and one nurse training fellowship. Further details are included in this newsletter. Also in the newsletter you will find items about the 2018 ECTRIMS summer

school and ECTRIMS new status as an eligible health care professionals' organisation with the European Medicines Agency.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter.

David Miller

## Topics

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## ECTRIMS 2018 – 10 – 12 October 2018 in Berlin, Germany

Dear colleagues,

I am delighted to report that ECTRIMS received 1841 Abstracts. These will now be reviewed and assigned to oral or poster presentation. The topics fall into 3 broad categories: Clinical aspects of MS, Pathology and Pathogenesis of MS, and Therapy. The largest numbers of abstracts address the following topics: MRI and PET (191 abstracts), Immunomodulation/Immunosuppression (168), Clinical Assessment Tools (118), Biomarkers (109), Risk Management for Disease Modifying Treatments (94), and Long-Term Treatment Monitoring (92).

Needless to say, many other important topics will also be covered, including particularly challenging areas like safety, biosimilars and worldwide access to modern treatments. The scientific and teaching course programs are available online. They offer an attractive range of clinical and scientific topics presented by an outstanding international faculty.

Together with my colleagues from the local organizing committee I look forward to welcoming you in Berlin in October!

With kind regards  
Reinhard Hohlfeld  
ECTRIMS 2018 Chair

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## Update on ECTRIMS Regional Teaching Course 2018 in Curitiba, Brazil

The next ECTRIMS Regional Teaching Course 2018, which is being held in Curitiba, Brazil on 2-3rd November 2018 is approaching. Please [click](#) here for the updated programme of the ECTRIMS Regional Teaching Course Curitiba.

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## Update on ECTRIMS Summer School 2018 in Budapest, Hungary

The next ECTRIMS Summer School, which is being held in Budapest, Hungary on 25-27th June 2018 is approaching. This year's summer school focuses on OCT. OCT is a non-invasive imaging technique for evaluation of the central retinal architecture. Due to the fact that the retina reflects central nervous system tissue directly accessible to optical imaging, OCT has developed to a highly sensitive method for monitoring retinal neurodegeneration during the course of multiple sclerosis. The summer school will give a general introduction to this technique and then work on its application in neuroimmunology. Besides lectures there will also be time for hands on experience. Please [click](#) here for the updated programme of the ECTRIMS Summer School 2018.

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## European Medicines Agency – ECTRIMS recognized as eligible healthcare professionals' organisation

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) engages with a network of over twenty-five eligible organisations ensuring that the needs and concerns of a wide range of healthcare professionals across Europe are represented via direct contact with the EMA.

ECTRIMS complies with the definition of healthcare professionals' organisations, fulfils all the necessary criteria and belongs since beginning this year to the EMA network. ECTRIMS is very much looking forward to giving its input to this important network to improve treatment of MS in Europe.

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## ECTRIMS Fellowships 2018

ECTRIMS offers a comprehensive range of fellowship programmes for different target groups.

In 2018 11 new fellowships were awarded:

### [ECTRIMS Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Exchange Programme](#)

Dr. Hideaki Nishihara: 2-year fellowship at the Theodor Kocher Institute, University Berne, Switzerland, under the mentorship of Prof. Britta Engelhardt. Project: Advancing human stem cell derived in vitro models of the human blood-brain barrier to study the migration of human immune cells into the central nervous system.

Dr. Iris Kleerekooper: 2-year fellowship at the Queen Square Multiple Sclerosis Centre, University College London, United Kingdom, under the mentorship of Dr. Anand Trip. Project: Minimally invasive testing of mitochondrial function to predict progressive neurodegeneration in acute multiple sclerosis associated optic neuritis.

Dr. Alerie Guzman de la Fuente: 2-year fellowship at the Wellcome-Wolfson Institute for Experimental Medicine, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom, under the mentorship of Dr. Denise Fitzgerald. Project: Does remyelination fail due to an immune-mediated depletion of ageing Central Nervous System progenitor cells?

Dr. Elena Morandi: 2-year fellowship at the Centre de Physiopathologie de Toulouse-Purpan, Inserm UMR, Toulouse, France, under the mentorship of Dr. Abdelhadi Saoudi. Project: Investigation of the impact of Multiple Sclerosis associated genetic variant CD226 Gly307Ser on T cell functions.

### [ECTRIMS Multiple Sclerosis Clinical Training Fellowship Programme](#)

Dr. Mateus Boaventura de Oliveira: 1-year fellowship at the Cemcat, Barcelona, Spain, under the

mentorship of Dr. Jaume Sastre-Garriga.

Dr. Saül Reyes: 1-year fellowship at the Centre Lead Neuroscience and Trauma, Blizard Institute Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University London, United Kingdom under the mentorship of Prof. Gavin Giovannoni.

Dr. Zaid Ghanim: 1-year fellowship at the Neuro-immunology and Cell Therapy Unit, Centre of MS, Hadassah Ein-Kerem, Jerusalem, Israel under the mentorship of Prof. Dimitrios Karussis.

Dr. Venkatraman Karhikeayan: 1-year fellowship at the The Walton Centre NHS Trust Liverpool, United Kingdom under the mentorship of Dr. Anu Jacob.

#### [ECTRIMS Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Nurse Training Programme](#)

Francesco Pastore: 6-months fellowship at the University of Bari, Italy under the mentorship of Mrs. Domenica Lanave.

#### [ECTRIMS-MAGNIMS Fellowship Programme in MRI in Multiple Sclerosis](#)

Dr. Alberto Calvi: 1-year fellowship at the Queen Square Multiple Sclerosis Centre, University College London, United Kingdom under the mentorship of Profs. F Barkhof and O Ciccarelli  
Project: Slowly Evolving Lesions (SEs) in multiple sclerosis.

Dr. Margareta Clarke: 1-year fellowship at the Hospital Universitari Vall d'Hebron, Barcelona, Spain under the mentorship of Prof. A Rovira. Project: Iron rims around multiple sclerosis lesions. A new MRI marker of disease activity and progression?.

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### **MSIF-ECTRIMS McDonald Fellowship**

We are happy to announce that the application is now open for the

#### [MSIF-ECTRIMS McDonald Fellowship](#)

The McDonald Fellowship enables young researchers from **emerging countries** to work with the world's leading researchers in MS, with a view to returning to their own countries to establish a programme of MS research that involves the application of newly learned techniques. This is a **two-year fellowship**, with an award of **£30,000 per annum** to the candidate and an additional sum of £2000 awarded to the host institute.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.msif.org/research/awards-grants-and-fellowships/mcdonald-fellowships/>

Deadline for nominations is **30 June 2018**.

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### **Report of ECTRIMS Fellows**

#### **ECTRIMS MS CLINICAL TRAINING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME**

**Fellow**

Nicolas Dubuisson, PhD

**Fellowship Institution**

1. Blizard Institute, Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University London, 4 Newark Street, London E1 2AT , UK
2. Department of Neurology, Royal London Hospital, Barts Health NHS Trust, London, UK

**Mentor**

Prof. Gavin Giovannoni

**Fellowship Duration**

1 year

**Summary as ECTRIMS Clinical Training Fellowship Programme Fellow 2016 – 2017**

The year in London was an amazing opportunity for me to learn from well-known experts in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) such as Professor Giovannoni and other consultants from the Royal London Hospital neurology department. This experience has dramatically improved my knowledge in how to manage patients with MS in its entirety, from the diagnosis to the treatment, without forgetting the human and social dimensions. I also gained a great experience in the treatment area, by learning how to use molecules such as alemtuzumab and cladribine, which are less commonly used in our Belgian centre. I had the opportunity to attend high quality teaching sessions either at the Royal London Hospital or at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Queen Square.

My main research project, with the support and help of Prof. Giovannoni, was to improve the self-management of patients suffering from multiple sclerosis in order to allow them to participate and take an active role in monitoring their MS status to allow them to participate in their healthcare. One of the advantages of self-monitoring is to compensate for the short amount of time available for patients during routine consultations, while maintaining high quality care for all.

Improving self-management requires the creation of new tools for patients with MS. In this perspective:

- 1) For the upper limb monitoring, we developed and validated an environmental-friendly cardboard version of the 9-hole peg test. We also organised a web-survey to collect and analyse data concerning the importance of upper limb function for MS patients.

2) To monitor lower limb function, we created a tool in order for patients' to be able to perform and record their own 25-feet walking test at home. This tool is currently being tested by patients to assure its validity and ease of use, but is available online ([www.clinicspeak.com](http://www.clinicspeak.com))

3) For visual function, we developed a smartphone application to test the contrast sensitivity and visual fields of patients with MS. A prototype has been tested and partially validated. Further versions are planned and will be validated in the near future.

In my time in the unit, I did a meta-analysis of the literature and have written a review on chronic progressive MS clinical trial inclusion criteria. This work has a direct link to self-monitoring as most of the time investigators ask for a proof of worsening during the last 1 or 2 years in order for subjects to be included in clinical trials. Self-monitoring might prove to be the best way to provide important confirmation of recent MS disease activity to allow patients to be included in clinical trials.

In addition to this project, I worked on biomarkers in multiple sclerosis. In collaboration with Doctor Gnanapavan (Blizard institute) I wrote a review on current biomarkers in MS and had the opportunity to analyse a biomarker data set in collaboration with the Gothenburg University in Sweden.

Finally, in collaboration with Professor David Baker and Dr Ceronie, were analysed blood samples using Fluorescence-activated cell sorting (FACS) from MS patients treated with either alemtuzumab or cladribine in order to determine the impact of these drugs on lymphocyte subsets. Because relative proportions and absolute numbers of memory B cells were significantly depleted in alemtuzumab and cladribine treated patients compared to both healthy and MS controls, this study provided further support for the crucial role of memory B cells in the immunopathogenesis of MS, as evidenced by their depletion by effective disease modifying therapies (DMTs).

Throughout the year, I had the great opportunity to publish several papers and also to present my projects at the Association Of British Neurologists (ABN) Annual Meeting 2017 (Liverpool), European Academy of Neurology (Amsterdam),ECTRIMS 2017 (Paris), World congress of Neurology 2017 (Kyoto) and American Academy of Neurology 2018 (Los Angeles).

In conclusion, I would like to thank ECTRIMS and also the neurology department of the Royal London Hospital for having given me this extraordinary opportunity.

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## **ECTRIMS-MAGNIMS FELLOWSHIP IN MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING IN MS**



### **Fellow**

Sara Collorone, MD

**Research Topic**

Cortical Networks in Clinically Isolated Syndrome

**Fellowship Institution**

NMR Research Unit, Queen Square MS Centre, UCL Institute of Neurology, Faculty of Brain Sciences, University College London, London, United Kingdom

**Mentor**

Dr. Ahmed Toosy; Prof. Frederik Barkhof

**Fellowship Duration**

1 year

**Summary as ECTRIMS MAGNIMS Fellowship in Magnetic Resonance Imaging in MS Fellow 2016 – 2017**

During my MAGNIMS fellowship, I had the great opportunity to work in the NMR UNIT of the Department of Neuroinflammation at the University College London. In this prestigious center I have gained a thorough experience in multiple sclerosis (MS). I had the chance to work as a clinical fellow at the MS Centre of National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, but, above all, I have gained knowledge in advanced MRI techniques.

The MAGNIMS research project, done in collaboration with the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam, was focused on cortical connectivity: a technique that describes coordinated patterns of cortical morphology in structural MRI scans as networks. Our aim was to determine if alterations in cortical networks (CNs) could provide new insights into the early pathological changes in clinically isolated syndrome (CIS). For this purpose, we used a large multi-centre MAGNIMS dataset of 60 CIS patients (recruited within 3 months from the onset) and 38 healthy controls.

The results showed alterations of the small world coefficient, a property of biological networks that maximise their efficiency, in CIS patients in comparison to healthy controls. These alterations were associated with a worse disease burden (high white matter lesion load, diagnosis of MS and worse cognitive performance). These findings suggest that CNs analysis can provide potential biomarkers for disease diagnosis and progression. Besides, they show that it is possible to investigate CNs with retrospective structural scans in a multi-centre setting.

Finally, I had also the chance to disseminate my results at the ECTRIMS - ACTRIMS Meeting 2017, Paris. This was a unique opportunity to meet leading international scientists and clinicians in MS, share ideas, attend the highly valuable teaching courses, broaden my knowledge and hence improve the quality of my work.

My ECTRIMS-MAGNIMS fellowship has definitely benefitted my future career and I would like to thank ECTRIMS, my mentors and the NMR Research Unit team at UCL.

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**Meeting Dates****EAN 2018**

Lisbon / Portugal: 16 – 19 June 2018

**ECTRIMS Summer School 2018**

Budapest / Hungary: 25 – 27 June 2018

**ECTRIMS 2018**

Berlin / Germany: 10 – 12 October 2018

**ECTRIMS Regional Teaching Course 2018**

Curitiba / Brazil: 2 – 3 November 2018

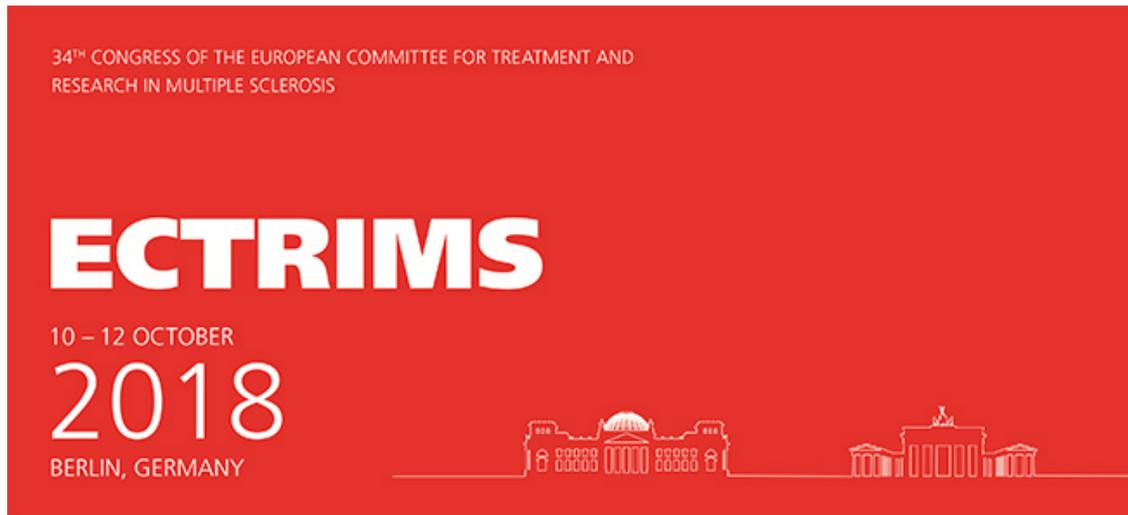
**European Charcot Foundation 26th Annual Meeting**

Baveno / Italy: 15 - 17 November 2018

**ECTRIMS 2019**

Stockholm / Sweden: 11 – 13 September 2019

We are looking forward to seeing you in Berlin!



Please be aware of fraudulent organisations!

**WARNING**

There are an increasing number of fraudulent websites that impersonate ECTRIMS2018. We would like to alert all participants to be aware of possible scams and to strongly advise you to only use the official ECTRIMS2018 registration and ECTRIMS accommodation agency Congrex Travel.

**ECTRIMS Executive Committee**

- D. Miller, London/UK, President
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- M. P. Amato, Florence/IT, Secretary
- T. Derfuss, Basel/CH, Treasurer & Newsletter Editor
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