

Letter from the President



Dear Colleagues,

This is my first newsletter since becoming President during the recent Congress in London and I would like to start by thanking our outgoing President, Professor Xavier Montalban, who has provided outstanding leadership during the last two years. During this time, ECTRIMS hosted its two largest congresses ever – there were more than 9000 attendees in Barcelona last year and again in London this year. The recent meeting in London provided extensive scientific information and networking opportunities and informal feedback suggests that it was well perceived by attendees.

In recent years, ECTRIMS has expanded its engagement in projects that directly address its mission, which is “to facilitate communication, create synergies, and promote and enhance research and learning among professionals for the ultimate benefit of people affected by MS”. There are now 5 fellowship schemes (<http://www.ectrims.eu/ectrims-fellowship-programmes/>), an annual focused workshop and summer school, and regional teaching courses (a new activity that started in 2016). Memorandums of Understanding have been agreed with organisations who share common goals, including the European Academy of Neurology (EAN), other TRIMS organisations (ACTRIMS, LACTRIMS, PACTRIMS, BCTRIMS, RUCTRIMS, MENACTRIMS and Iran MS Society), the MS International Federation and the European MS Platform.

During the last year ECTRIMS collaborated with the EAN to develop a joint clinical practice guideline on pharmacological management of MS. Xavier Montalban (for ECTRIMS) and Ralf Gold (for EAN) co-chaired this important project, and the key recommendations were presented during late breaking news at the recent Congress.

This year, three members left the Executive Committee: in addition to Xavier Montalban, we said farewell to Per Soelberg-Sorenson (secretary) and Roland Liblau. My warm thanks to Xavier, Per and Roland for their fine contributions to ECTRIMS and additional thanks to Per for kindly agreeing to manage the Congress teaching programme and regional teaching courses for a further year. A warm welcome also to three new members of the Executive Committee: Mar Tintore, Sandra Vukusic and Lou Brundin.

Looking ahead, ECTRIMS will continue to focus on providing the world's largest annual congress for health care professionals dedicated to MS and related disorders. We are looking at the structure of the congress and ways that it might evolve to better meet future needs of participants. We will maintain, and where appropriate expand, other existing activities, and will investigate new areas where engagement may be

valuable.

Finally, and recognising a common interest in serving the MS health care professional community, we look forward to continued collaborations with fellow TRIMS organisations. Next year's Congress (MSParis2017) is being jointly organised by ECTRIMS and ACTRIMS, and supported by an enthusiastic local organising committee ably lead by Catherine Lubetski, an exciting scientific and social programme is in store.

Prof. David Miller

Topics:

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- [New ECTRIMS Honorary Members](#)
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- [Report of the ECTRIMS Summer School 2016](#)
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ECTRIMS 2016 Meeting in London (14.-17. September)



The 32nd ECTRIMS Meeting was held from September 14 - 17, 2016 in London. The meeting gathered over 9000 participants including clinicians, scientists, nurses, and rehabilitation specialists. This year ECTRIMS partnered with the Annual Conference of Rehabilitation in MS (RIMS). As in previous years the ECTRIMS meeting was again an extraordinary event that attracted even more people than in the preceding years. This continuing success indicates that the scientific programme is very much appreciated by the attending participants. The programme covered a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from disease mechanisms, prognostic markers and novel developments in imaging to the latest clinical trial results and emerging targets for modulation of the innate immune system, neuroprotection and repair. A special section of the programme was dedicated to MS nurses. A total of 17 teaching courses covering the most important topics of the management of MS

completed the programme. The city of London was blazing in the best autumn weather and competed with the magnificent scientific programme. All this made ECTRIMS 2016 a very memorable meeting.

We are grateful to Prof. David Miller, chair of the local organizing committee and the scientific programme committee, Prof. Per Soelberg Sorensen, chair of the teaching courses committee, Prof. Peter Feys, president of RIMS, and all their co-workers for their commendable commitment that made this meeting a scientifically excellent and broad-reaching event.

We thank you for joining us at the 32nd ECTRIMS congress in London this year and we are looking forward to welcoming you next year at MSParis2017!



2nd Joint ECTRIMS / MSIF Fellowship Alumni Meeting in London

During this years' ECTRIMS annual congress the **2nd Joint ECTRIMS/MSIF Fellowship Alumni Meeting** took place on Friday 16 September in London. The event started with a welcome address by the ECTRIMS Past President, Prof. Xavier Montalban, followed by 7 short talks from current and past fellows of ECTRIMS and MSIF, presenting their research projects, training activities and reporting on their fellowship experience. The talks were moderated by Prof. Xavier Montalban for ECTRIMS fellows and by Dr. Dhia Chandraratna, MSIF Head of Research, for MSIF fellows.

The high quality of presentations and the great spirit and motivation of ECTRIMS and MSIF fellows was very impressive. We are looking forward to our next annual alumni meeting which will take place in Paris - MSParis2017 - at the next ECTRIMS conference to offer you an attractive platform for promoting research, training and exchange of information as well as networking opportunities.

For some impressions of the recent meeting, please have a look at the ECTRIMS website at <http://www.ectrims.eu/ectrimsmsif-fellowship-alumni-meeting/>.



New Members of the ECTRIMS Executive Committee,

Council Members & Honorary Members

The London meeting saw the departure of 3 members of the Executive Committee: Prof. Xavier Montalban (Spain), the outgoing President, who has served on the committee for 7 years, Prof. Per Solberg Soerensen (Denmark) who also served on the committee for 7 and Prof. Roland Liblau (France) who served on the committee for 2 years. All 3 were thanked for their excellent work on behalf of ECTRIMS.

Prof. David Miller (United Kingdom) became the new President and Prof. Bernhard Hemmer (Germany) the Vice President and President-Elect. Prof. Maria Pia Amato (Italy) became the Secretary and Prof. Tobias Derfuss (Switzerland) became the Treasurer. Three new members were elected to the committee:

Professor Mar Tintoré (Spain)



Professor Sandra Vukusic (France)



Professor Lou Brundin (Sweden)



As recognition of their long-lasting research efforts in MS and their continuing support of ECTRIMS we are pleased to welcome two new ECTRIMS [Honorary Members](#).

New ECTRIMS Honorary Members:



Professor Maria Tronjano

University of Bari
Department of Neurology
Bari, Italy



Professor Catherine Lubetzki

Salpêtrière Hospital
Department of Neurology
Paris, France

ECTRIMS welcomes 25 **new members to the ECTRIMS Council:**

- Dr. Fritz Leutmezer (Austria)
- Dr. Dominique Dive (Belgium)
- Dr. Finn Sellebjerg (Denmark)
- Dr. Laura Airas (Finland)
- Dr. Sandra Vukusic (France)
- Dr. Bruno Stankoff (France)
- Dr. Panagiotis Papathanasopoulos (Greece)
- Dr. Konstantinos Voumvourakis (Greece)
- Dr. Magdolna Simo (Hungary)
- Dr. Lisa Costelloe (Ireland)
- Dr. Diego Centonze (Italy)
- Dr. Renata Balnyte (Lithuania)
- Dr. Bojan Boskovski (Macedonia)
- Dr. Gariela Novotni (Macedonia)
- Dr. Bob van Oosten (Netherlands)
- Dr. Elisabeth Farbu (Norway)
- Dr. Krzysztof Selmaj (Poland)
- Dr. Marcin Mycko (Poland)
- Dr. Uros Rot (Slovenia)
- Dr. Mar Tintoré (Spain)
- Dr. Miguel Angel Hernandez Pérez (Spain)
- Dr. Jose Maria Prieto Gonzalez (Spain)
- Dr. Chiara Zecca (Switzerland)
- Dr. Alasdair Coles (United Kingdom)
- Dr. Neil Scolding (United Kingdom)

A list of all ECTRIMS Council members is available [here](#).

Report of the ECTRIMS Summer School 2016 - 28. - 30. June in Vienna, Austria

“Use of MR imaging in diagnosis and management of multiple sclerosis”

The 4th edition of the ECTRIMS Summer School 2016 was held in Vienna last summer. This edition was dedicated to one of the hottest topics in multiple sclerosis, the “Use of MRI in diagnosis and management of multiple sclerosis”.

The main objective of this edition was to equip young MS clinicians and investigators with the knowledge and expertise they need to (i) accurately diagnose MS, (ii) evaluate the effectiveness of drugs in MS, (iii) understand

the value of non-conventional and quantitative MR for assessing the structural, metabolic and functional damage occurring in this condition, and (iv) become familiar with the different techniques used for MS imaging analysis.

The structure of the course included educational lectures and interactive workshops that elicited active participation on the part of the school attendees. On the last day, all the students participated in various working groups, where they had to prepare a project related to the use of MRI in clinical practice and research, based on their experience and the knowledge acquired during the lectures and workshops, and with the help and advice of the faculty. Finally, the students presented the outcomes of these workshops in a plenary session.

Forty-five students from 27 different countries (7 outside Europe) were selected from 115 applicants to attend the course. The selection process was based on the applicants' CVs, while also considering a geographical balance. Twenty-six internationally renowned experts from 10 different countries participated as faculty.

The feedback from the students indicated that this 4th edition of the ECTRIMS Summer School was a great success. The vast majority of attendees cited the high quality of the lectures and workshops, and the general agreement was that the course will generate considerable benefits in MS research and the management of MS patients in clinical practice. The students considered the venue and facilities, together with the overall organization, to be excellent.

Upcoming ECTRIMS Events

2nd Regional Teaching Course - 11. November, 2016 Dubai / United Arab Emirates

This new ECTRIMS activity was launched this year with its first Regional Teaching Course from 19th-21st of May in St. Petersburg/Russia. For further information and detailed programme please visit the ECTRIMS Website [here](#).

The aim is to establish local teaching courses in border areas of Europe and other (neighbouring) parts of the world and to provide ready access for regional groups of neurologists to high quality training in MS clinical care. The teaching courses are organised by the ECTRIMS Teaching Course Committee. There will be a close collaboration with local MS experts and neurological associations as well as other TRIMS organizations to ensure the optimal coverage of locally relevant topics.

ECTRIMS Focused Workshop 2017 - 9. / 10. March in Rome, Italy

The 2017 ECTRIMS focused workshop will be held in Rome on March 9th and 10th 2017 on the topic "Advancing Trial Design in Progressive MS." It is being held in association with the Progressive MS Alliance, and will bring together experts from clinical, methodological, outcome measure and pharmaceutical backgrounds. The organising committee members are Jeremy Chataway, Robert Fox, David Miller, Xavier Montalban and Maria Pia Sormani. The programme will consider treatment targets, patient selection, clinical, imaging and other outcome measures, different types of trial design and approaches to statistical analysis, the contribution of large databases and regulatory considerations. Progressive MS is a phase of the disease with a large unmet therapeutic need. The workshop will come at an opportune time when - through the efforts of the Progressive MS Alliance, pharmaceutical industry and other funders - there is a rapid increase in research, including clinical trials, in progressive MS.

ECTRIMS Fellowship 2017

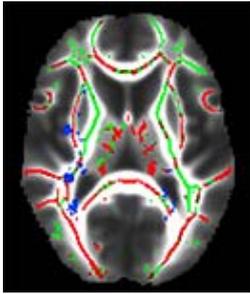
ECTRIMS offers a comprehensive range of fellowship programmes for different target groups. The ECTRIMS Fellowship Programme competitions for 2017 are underway.

The **deadline** will be on **December 1st 2016** for application for the following two fellowships

ECTRIMS Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Exchange Programme

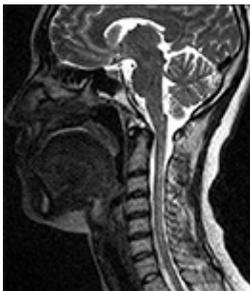
This fellowship is offered to young postdoctoral neuroscientists to facilitate their conduct of and training in basic, clinical or applied research related to MS in European laboratories or clinics. ECTRIMS will support up to three

fellowships annually, each with duration of 1 or 2 years, with an annual stipend of up to € 55,000. Applicants may come from any country and are expected to identify a European research training environment and mentor prior to application and to devote full-time to research and training during their fellowship period (up to 10% time and effort can be spent on teaching and/or clinical care).



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

This fellowship is offered to neurologists and other physicians to provide the opportunity to learn the latest techniques in MS patient management and care and to help foster their careers as MS physicians. It is available for 3, 6 or 12 months and must be performed under the direction of a senior clinical mentor at a European MS clinic and/or MS research centre. Fellows may come from any location but priority will be given to candidates from developing countries. ECTRIMS will award up to three fellowships annually, with a stipend of € 13,750 for a 3 month programme, € 27,500 for a 6 month programme or € 55,000 for a 1 year training programme. The programme is intended to be a full-time MS clinical care training experience. This can include “hands on” clinical care under the guidance of the mentor, correlated course work in the training institutions, and may also include time involved in clinical research under the guidance of the mentor.



We also would like to draw your attention to the following two Fellowship Programme competitions for which the application **deadline is 1 February 2017**:

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

ECTRIMS and the European MAGNIMS (Magnetic Resonance in MS) network jointly support a postdoctoral fellowship to foster the development of young researchers in magnetic resonance studies in MS. The goal of this programme is to achieve transfer and broadening of knowledge regarding the application of magnetic resonance to MS research and to promote the researcher’s integration into the international scientific community. ECTRIMS will support two fellowships annually, each with duration of 1 year, with an annual stipend of up to €55,000.

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

NEW this year: Applications accepted from anywhere in the world

This fellowship is offered to qualified/licensed nurses to provide the opportunity for them to obtain additional expertise through practical nursing experience and training in a mentored MS environment in Europe. The aim of the programme is to enhance care and support of individuals with MS by fostering improved clinical care and education and by helping to promote best practices in nursing care throughout Europe. ECTRIMS will support up to three fellowships each year, each with duration of 6 months to 1 year, with a stipend of up to €55,000. Training must be under the direction and mentorship of a senior MS nurse, in association with a senior MS clinician where appropriate, at a European clinical site with significant expertise in MS.

[MSIF-ECTRIMS McDonald Fellowship](#)

Starting in 2016, MSIF (Multiple Sclerosis International Federation) and ECTRIMS jointly support a 2-year

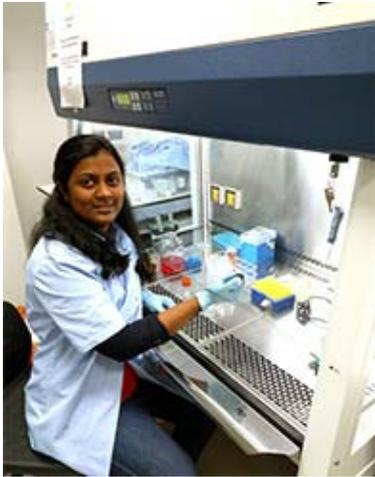
McDonald fellowship every year. This fellowship is offered to young researchers from emerging countries and enables the recipient to travel to an established research institution anywhere in the world to work with leading researchers in the field of MS. It is intended that these fellows return to their home countries after finishing the fellowship program to establish their own research using the newly learned techniques.

For more information regarding the fellowship program and for application please visit the MSIF webpage <http://www.msif.org/research/awards-grants-and-fellowships/mcdonald-fellowships/>

ECTRIMS offers a comprehensive range of fellowship programmes for different target groups. This summer (2016) the first MSIF-ECTRIMS McDonald Fellowship has been awarded to:

Fellow: Dr. Sowmya Sekizar (India) – MD, 2016 Awardee
Research Topic: Development of a focal model of demyelination in *ex vivo* mouse spinal cord slices
Fellowship Institution: MRC Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Mentor: Dr. Anna Williams
Fellowship Duration: 2 years

Dr. Sekizar focuses on developing a new mouse model to better understand the process of remyelination. She hopes to return to India to continue her research in the field of myelin biology and MS research.



Reports of ECTRIMS Fellows

ECTRIMS Clinical Training Fellowship



Fellow: Youssef Sidhom, MD – 2013 Awardee
Fellowship Institution: Pitié Salpêtrière Hospital, Paris, France
Mentor: Dr. Bertrand Fontaine
Fellowship Duration: 1 year

Dr Sidhom's Summary as ECTRIMS Clinical Training Fellow 2014-2015

Few comparative data regarding disease severity have been available in different ethnic groups throughout the world. We have compared multiple sclerosis disability progression between North Africans living in France, North Africans living in Tunisia and Caucasian patients born and living in France. We showed that multiple sclerosis

disability progression is more severe in patients of North African ethnicity. In addition, the study identifies the particular severity of the disease in North Africans living in France, especially for the second generation. North Africans living in Tunisia have an intermediate severity. This demonstrates that, in addition to genetic factors, environmental factors differing between France and North African countries could influence disability progression.

ECTRIMS POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH EXCHANGE FELLOWSHIP



Fellow: Armelle Klopstein, PhD – 2013 Awardee
Research Topic: Molecular mechanisms and cellular pathways involved in the migration of CD8+ T cell subsets across the BBB in vitro and in vivo
Fellowship Institution: Theodor Kocher Institute, Bern, Switzerland
Mentor: Prof. Britta Engelhardt
Fellowship Duration: 2 years

Dr Klopstein's Summary as ECTRIMS Postdoctoral Research Exchange Fellow, 2014-2016

During my 2-years ECTRIMS postdoctoral fellowship, I worked at the Theodor Kocher Institute in Bern in Dr. Prof. Engelhardt's group. I could learn a lot about the blood brain barrier (BBB) and the mechanisms by which immune cells cross it to reach the central nervous system (CNS). My project was to compare side-by-side the multi-step extravasation of activated CD4+ and CD8+ T cells across the primary mouse brain microvascular endothelial cells (pMBMECs), as a model for the BBB; under physiological flow. We identified subset specific mechanisms of interaction. Indeed, CD8+ T cells arrested in significantly higher numbers, stalled and crossed the BBB preferentially via the transcellular route. This study was published this year.

Update on ECTRIMS-EAN Guideline

The Clinical Guideline on the Pharmacological Management of People with Multiple Sclerosis developed jointly by ECTRIMS and the European Academy of Neurology (EAN) was presented during the Late Breaking News session at the 32nd ECTRIMS Congress in London in September last.

This work is the first European collaboration effort aimed to develop therapeutic guidelines for MS including all the available drugs (i.e., approved for commercial use). Research advances over the past years have brought about a new yet complex scenario, whereby clinicians have a wide choice of drugs proven to be effective for the treatment of patients with CIS and MS but are confronted with the tough decision of what is the best drug for an individual patient.

These guidelines have been developed following the GRADE methodology that implies a sequential assessment of the quality of evidence. This is followed by a judgment process as to the balance between desirable and undesirable effects plus subsequent decision about the strength and direction of the recommendation. The main recommendations are based on the latest evidence available and have been agreed to by a large working group of key MS experts from across Europe, with the involvement of patient representatives from the most important MS advocacy groups, such as EMSP and MSIF.

The ECTRIMS/EAN steering group has drafted a number of recommendations for the treatment of CIS patients, patients with relapsing and progressive disease, as well as proper monitoring of treatment response together with switching and stopping treatment strategies. The work is still ongoing to fine-tune some of the statements in advance of publication early next year.

ECTRIMS support of other societies/events

ECTRIMS has provided support to the following event:

1st Global Schools of Neuroimmunology (ESNI, APSNI, ASNI) Pre-Course,
Jerusalem (Israel), 26 September, 2016

10th European Workshop on immune-mediated inflammatory diseases (ewIMID),
Toulouse (France), 19 – 21 October 2016

Meeting dates

ECTRIMS Regional Teaching Course:

Dubai / UAE: 11 November 2016

ECTRIMS Focused Workshop

Topic: Advancing Trial Design in Progressive MS
Rome / Italy: 9-10 March 2017

ECTRIMS 2017

Paris / France: 25-28 October 2017

7th Joint ECTRIMS-ECTRIMS Meeting

Please visit the [ECTRIMS 2017 website](#) for continuously updated information.

Some important dates

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 31 May 2017

Deadline for reduced registration: 23 August 2017

ECTRIMS Executive Committee

D. Miller, London/UK, President
B. Hemmer, Munich/DE, Vice President
M. P. Amato, Florence/IT, Secretary
T. Derfuss, Basel/CH, Treasurer & Newsletter Editor
M. Tintoré, Barcelona/ES
S. Vukusic, Lyon/FR
L. Brundin, Stockholm/SE

ECTRIMS Secretariat

Peter Merian-Strasse 80
CH-4002 Basel
Switzerland
T +41 (0)61 686 77 79
F +41 (0)61 686 77 88
E secretariat@ectrims.eu

