

The 6th SSB+RM Young Scientists Symposium

On the 12th of January, 2024, researchers from labs all around Switzerland gathered in the main building at ETH Zurich for the 6th SSB+RM Young Scientists Symposium. This event was filled with stimulating talks, engaging poster presentations, and enlightening discussions. The symposium aimed to create a platform for young scientists to connect and engage with peers in their research field, potentially sparking new inter-institutional collaborations across Switzerland. The primary attendees of our symposium were master's and PhD students, many of whom may not have had extensive opportunities to present their work in such a conference environment. Therefore, the symposium also served as a valuable experience for these participants to gain confidence in presenting their research and to enhance their overall communication skills.



We were pleased to welcome 89 participants to our auditorium for the event, continuing the success of last year's significant attendance. While a substantial portion of the participants (56%) is affiliated with Zurich-based research institutions such as ETH Zurich, the University of Zurich, and the University Hospital Zurich, the event successfully broadened its target audience, attracting numerous attendees from various institutions across Switzerland and even Germany. The presence of attendees

from the AO Research Institute Davos, Empa, University of Basel, RMS Foundation, FHNW, University of Tübingen, and EPFL, was a particularly gratifying aspect of the event.

We were especially pleased to welcome our two distinguished keynote speakers to the event: Prof. Dr. Géraldine Guex, assistant professor at the Oral Implantology Lab, University Center of Dental Medicine Basel, University of Basel, and Prof. Dr. Francesco Stellacci, a professor at the Supramolecular NanoMaterials and Interfaces Laboratory, Institute of Bioengineering, EPFL in Lausanne. The audience gained a summary of their fascinating career paths and their research. Prof. Dr. Géraldine Guex spoke about her previous work on cell-material interactions and how she is combining that knowledge for her new research group, and Prof. Dr. Francesco Stellacci explained his research path to fighting infections and viruses. Both talks showcased highly innovative and groundbreaking research, sparking numerous questions and stimulating discussions during the subsequent Q&A session and coffee and lunch breaks.

In addition to our two keynotes, there were eight oral presentations of 15 minutes each (incl. Q&A) and a block of 10 two-minute rapid-fire presentations. Moreover, the symposium displayed 25 posters featuring just a few examples: bone organoids for cancer research, osteochondral plugs for osteoarthritis, injectable biomaterials for disc degeneration, 3D-printed soft tissue models for surgery, and optimized mandibular implants. The challenging task of determining the award winners was performed by a fantastic jury that carefully listened to each oral presentation and thoroughly assessed every rapid-fire and poster presentation. During the award ceremony, the winners were announced. The award for the best oral presentation of this year's symposium went to two participants, Joyce Kimenai (ETH Zürich) and Annalena Maier (ETH Zürich), with equal points. The rapid-fire presentations were won by Jaimie Mayner (ETH Zürich), followed by Elian Kuhn (AO Research Institute Davos) in second place. The first place in the poster presentation category was won by two participants as well: Celine Labouesse (ETH Zürich) and Marcia Mürner (AO Research Institute Davos).





Oral presentation awardees:

1st: Joyce Kimenai (ETH Zürich) and
1st: Annalena Maier (ETH Zürich)



Rapid-fire presentation awardees:

1st: Jaimie Mayner (ETH Zürich)
2nd: Elian Kuhn (ARI Davos)



Poster presentation awardees:

1st: Celine Labouesse (ETH Zürich) and
1st: Marcia Mürner (ARI Davos)

In keeping with tradition, we concluded our symposium with an Apéro at the bQm bar on the Polyterrasse at ETH Zurich, accompanied by great music and a casual ambiance to network and end the day.

We were very satisfied and proud of how the symposium unfolded and are grateful for the positive feedback we received. We eagerly anticipate organizing the next one!

The success of this event owes much to the invaluable support provided by the following institutions and individuals:

First and foremost, our profound gratitude goes to the SSB+RM parent organization, especially to its president, Prof. Dr. Markus Rottmar, for their unwavering support in all our endeavors.

Our profound appreciation goes to the AO Research Institute Davos and Exabone for their support in sponsoring the event.

Also, our sincere thanks are extended to ETH Zurich for supplying the essential infrastructure to host this event, which was crucial to the event's success.

We want to express our deep gratitude to our outstanding jury members: Dr. Elena Della Bella from AO Research Institute Davos, Dr. Giulia Milan from the University of Basel, Dr. Kongchang Wei from Empa, Dr. Parth Chansoria and Dr. Costanza Giampietro both from ETH Zurich and Dr. Katharina Gegenschatz-Schmid from the University of Zurich.

Last but not least, we would like to thank our two keynote presenters, Prof. Dr. Géraldine Guex and Prof. Dr. Francesco Stellacci, for taking the time to travel to Zurich to share their enthusiasm for research with our audience.

