



Media release

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## Epilepsy League supports innovative research project

**Prof. Jean-Marc Fritschy and Tilo Gschwind of the University of Zurich have been awarded this year's Research Grant of CHF 25,000 by the Swiss League Against Epilepsy. With the help of innovative optogenetics, the researchers are investigating the development of epilepsy and paving the way for new treatment methods.**



*Jean-Marc Fritschy (left) and Tilo Gschwind*

(Zurich/Basel) This year's Research Grant awarded by the Swiss League Against Epilepsy will be presented to Prof. Jean-Marc Fritschy of the University of Zurich Institute for Pharmacology and Toxicology on 29 September in Basel. His colleague and co-award winner Tilo Gschwind is unable to attend the award ceremony. The grant is for a total of CHF 25,000 and by awarding it, the Epilepsy League is once again offering researchers working in Switzerland start-up funding for larger research projects.

The title of the award-winning project is "Using closed-loop optogenetic intervention to investigate the mechanisms of epileptogenesis and its anti-epileptogenic effects in a mouse model of temporal lobe epilepsy". The project aims to better understand the development of epilepsy in mouse models using a new method. Tilo Gschwind was able to learn the innovative optogenetics technique first hand at the world-leading optogenetics innovation laboratory in Stanford, California. It involves genetically modifying specific cells so that their function can be turned on and off with light. "This method is a real revolution," says Fritschy. The goal of the project is to find out which of the many changes in the brain are responsible for epilepsy. At the same time, findings on closed-loop stimulation could lead to improvements in the existing methods of deep brain stimulation.

The Epilepsy League Prize for Best Dissertation, awarded every three years and totalling CHF 1,000, was awarded this year to Nicola Andrea Marchi from Lausanne. The title of his award-winning doctoral thesis is "Status epilepticus: impact of therapeutic coma on outcome".

### Two awards open to bidding

In the coming year, the Swiss League Against Epilepsy will once again support research into epilepsy: with its annual Research Grant of CHF 25,000 it offers start-up funding for research projects for the advancement of experimental or clinical research in the field of epileptology. Further information [is available in German and French at]:

[www.epi.ch/forschungsfoerderung](http://www.epi.ch/forschungsfoerderung)

[www.epi.ch/soutien\\_recherche](http://www.epi.ch/soutien_recherche)

The Alfred Hauptmann Award is bestowed together with the German and Austrian epileptology associations for the best experimental or clinical research in the field of epileptology in German-speaking countries. It is awarded every two years and totals EUR 10,000. The award is named after the German neurologist Alfred Hauptmann, who discovered the anticonvulsant efficacy of phenobarbital in 1912 and had to emigrate from Germany in 1933 because of his Jewish origins. Further information is available in German at: [www.epi.ch/hauptmannpreis](http://www.epi.ch/hauptmannpreis)

Bidding for both awards is open until 31 December 2016.

**Notes for media:** The Research Grant award presentation will take place on 29 September 2016 at 3.45 p.m. in Basel on the occasion of the [3rd Congress of the Swiss Federation of Clinical Neuro-Societies \(SFCNS\)](#).

Photo in high resolution (for download free of charge)

[http://www.epi.ch/\\_img/o/Forschung/fritschy\\_gschwind\\_zusammen\\_original.jpg](http://www.epi.ch/_img/o/Forschung/fritschy_gschwind_zusammen_original.jpg)

The **Swiss League Against Epilepsy** (Epilepsy League) is a specialist organisation which works throughout Switzerland and at the same time represents the Swiss Chapter of the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE).

The Epilepsy League researches, helps and informs. Its goal is to provide a lasting improvement to the everyday life of those affected by epilepsy and their situation in society.

**Further information:** Swiss League Against Epilepsy, Seefeldstrasse 84, 8008 Zürich, Switzerland  
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