Local initiatives in Basel to build the next generation of clinical researchers

Prof. Mirjam Christ-Crain
SCTO symposium, Lausanne, 16.6.2016
What was important for my own career in clinical research?

- An open mind
- Self initiative
- Frustration tolerance
- Scientific ambition
- A good mentor

What was lacking?

A good and structured program with protected research time!
Starting position in Basel, 2014

- MD PhD Program: interfaculty program (medical faculty and Science faculty)
- Experimental research only
- No program for patient-oriented clinical research
PhD program in clinical research

- Development of clinical PhD program 2014, first students 2015

**Details of the program:**

**Conditions:**

1) **master degree in medicine or a related study area** (e.g. biochemistry, biology, psychology)

2) **Supervisor** (1st and 2nd; «Faculty Gruppierung» I or II)

3) **Confirmed salary for 3 years** (PhD student SNF position)

4) **at least 60% time investment** for PhD

5) **project plan**

6) **maximum of 5 PhD students per Supervisor**
PhD program in clinical research

Procedures:

1) **Duration**: in general 3 years
2) **Cumulative thesis**: in general 3 first authorship papers,
   (one has to be accepted at the time of defense)
3) **18 ECTS**
4) **Regular progress reports** annually, discussed in PhD commission
Students are hosted by the Department of Clinical Research

All students in the track «clinical research» are hosted by the DKF

What do we offer?
- Methodological / statistical support for project (for free) in planning phase
- Courses for ECTS acquirement for total of 5’000.- per student
- Journal club monthly with supervision of epidemiologist
- Regular student days for new students
PhD Program educational platform

- PhD Program Health Sciences (PPHS)
  → Umbrella infrastructure supporting different PhD disciplines of health sciences

PPHS Educational platform

Medical faculty

- Epidemiology
- Clinical research
- Nursing science
- Sport Science
- Biomedical engineering
- Basic Science

with Phil Nat faculty
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## PPHS

### Support PPHS

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How to guarantee quality?
Minimal standards

Why minimal standards?

- High quality in PhD education -> attractiveness increases
- Complying with international standards
- Orientation for students, supervisors & evaluation in the PhD commission
- Harmonization of different PhD programs in Basel
- Many different competences needed for scientific career
  (knowledge – skills – attitudes)
Minimal standards

• 3 Domains:
  – Knowledge & Scientific Competences
  – Organization & Management Competences
  – Leadership & Personal Competences
Minimal standards for competencies of PhD students in Health Sciences

Knowledge and Scientific Competencies
- Research Methods
- Information literacy
- Scientific writing
- Professional conduct, ethics and integrity
- Awareness of interdisciplinary context

Leadership & personal competencies
- Communication skills
- Leadership

Organisation & management competencies
- Project management
- Self-management
- Teaching
PhD Doctoral committee

- Supervises PhD student during PhD education
- Nomination at beginning of research protocol
- First supervisor, second supervisor, external expert
- Either first or second supervisor has to be of «Gruppierung» I of medical faculty
- Supervisors write end-report about thesis and submit to PhD commission
PhD Commission medical faculty

- Has general responsibility for PhD (quality, education)

- 9 members of the medical faculty plus vice dean research

- Monthly meetings:
  - Examine request of first supervisor to supervise PhD student
  - Decision about needed ECTS
  - Examine composition of PhD Doctoral committee
  - «Supervise the supervisors»
  - Discussion of all projects at start of PhD & of all progress reports with written feedback
Development of PhD Program in clinical research 2014-2016

2016: 25 PhD Students in clinical research
    19 with master in medicine
    6 with master in biology, biochemistry or pharmacology
MD PhD Program in clinical research

- Same program
- Start immediately after Master of medicine (without previous MD)
- First publication is submitted as «MD»
Importance of embedded PhD Programs

In BS: at least 60% of PhD has to be research work; FMH accrediting: no universal rules
Importance of Funding

Today: SNF Funding very difficult
- clinical research less established in CH than experimental research
- Importance of a separate PhD funding commission with clinical researchers
Summary

PhD Programs for clinical research are helpful and needed to build the next generation of clinical researchers.

Importance of

- Embedding into clinical education
- Protected research time
- Individual training and support for research competences
- Interdisciplinary scientific exchange
- Funding opportunities
- Career options
The next generation of clinical researchers!

PhD Journal Club 7.6.2016
Thank you for your attention.