

ENMC MENTEES 2021

Dr Rossella Avagliano Trezza | Maastricht, The Netherlands



ROSSELLA (37) is an Italian basic and translational researcher, currently a post-doc at the Maastricht University Medical Centre in The Netherlands. She is a midcareer scientist at the crossroad of making choices for her academic career and balancing private life and professional demands and ambitions.

Rossella is an experienced and passionate molecular biologist with a solid background in different fields with

10+ years of laboratory experience ranging from biochemical research in yeast to molecular and cellular studies in mouse brain. She is currently applying for personal grants to build-up her own group on MDC1A.

Rossella's mid-career mentors are Prof. A. Aartsma-Rus, Drs A. Ateama and Dr S. Tromp.

Dr Paloma Gonzalez-Perez | Boston, USA



PALOMA (44) is a Spanish adult neuromuscular neurologist who directs the Myopathy Clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, USA. She is specifically interested in diagnosis, management, and clinical research in the field of Myopathies. Her area of focus is muscular dystrophies.

She has been a recipient of the recipient of the Clinical Research Training Scholarship in Neuromuscular Diseases funded by Muscle Study Group,

American Brain Foundation, and the American Academy of Neurology to study myotonic dystrophy type 2.

Paloma's mid-career mentors are Dr J. Dowling, Prof. U. Schara-Schmidt and Prof. B. Smeets.

Dr Aurea Martins-Bach | Oxford, United Kingdom



AUREA (40) is a Brazilian/Italian basic researcher. Since 2019, Aurea is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Oxford, where she leads the preclinical imaging research in the Physics Group at the Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging (WIN). Next to this she is currently a tutor in the

Physics module of the MRI Graduate Programme at the University of Oxford, and she co-supervises a PhD student.

Aurea has recently received a seed grant from the Medical Sciences Division – University of Oxford to start developing her own research. Aurea also leads the WIN Global Scholars Programme, which offers training in MRI, mentoring and opportunities for career development to early career researchers working with MRI in the Global South.

Aurea's mid-career mentors are Drs A. Ateama and Prof. M. Rueegg.

Dr Nicole Voet | Nijmegen, The Netherlands



NICOLE (41) is a rehabilitation physician and senior researcher at the Outpatient Clinic for Neuromuscular Diseases (NMD) of the Radboud University Medical Centre, Nijmegen, and rehabilitation center Klimmendaal, Arnhem, The Netherlands. She is a translational researcher who, in her research projects,

aims to produce meaningful and directly applicable results, focusing on improving the level of social participation of

patients with NMD. For example, in the DETAIL-NMD project, Nicole works with basic scientists, biomedical researchers, sports physicians, physical therapists, technicians, and of course, patients to bring results directly from bench to bedside. She recently organized an ENMC workshop on psychological interventions in NMD. Her target areas are FSHD and Myotonic Dystrophy type 1, and she is a Board member of the Dutch FSHD Foundation.

Nicole's mid-career mentors are Prof. H. Lochmüller and Prof. J.A. Urtizberea.

ENMC MENTEES 2022

Dr Laure Gallay | Geneva, Switzerland



LAURE (37) is a MD, PhD specialized in clinical immunology and rare diseases, whose main interests are neuro-muscular disorders, and more specifically acquired myopathies. She has developed expertise in both clinical and basic science and works to link these two areas.

Thanks to the AFM-Telethon

financial support, she is currently performing a postdoctoral fellowship at the university of Geneva, carrying out

investigations on the involvement of muscle stem cells in the pathogenesis of inflammatory myopathies. She aims to work in the public hospital setting, to pursue mixed clinical and scientific activities, and develop translational research in this specific field of interest.

Laure's mid-career mentors are Dr C. Wallgren-Pettersson and Dr A. Mammen.

Dr Mert Karakaya | Cologne, Germany



MERT (38) is a Turkish pediatrician, currently in the final year of his residency in Human Genetics at the Institute of Human Genetics, University of Cologne (Germany). He is also working as a clinical post-doc at the same institute in the research group of Prof. Brunhilde Wirth. His main research focus is on neuro-

muscular disorders of childhood, on the identification and characterisation of their genetic causes and molecular

pathomechanisms - in particular Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) and non-5q SMAs. Mert had been previously selected for the early career scientist program and attended one of the ENMC's workshop in 2015.

Mert's mid-career mentors are Prof. C. Bönnemann and Prof. M. Vainzof.

Dr Eric Voorn | Amsterdam, The Netherlands



ERIC (37) is working as a senior researcher at the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine of the Amsterdam University Medical Centers in The Netherlands. His primary research interest is on preserving and improving physical functioning of people with neuromuscular diseases, by means of physical activity,

exercise and nutrition. The target group is slowly progressive neuromuscular diseases, including post-polio

syndrome, Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease and muscular dystrophies. Eric has received several grants for national and international projects and important goals of his participation in the ENMC mentoring program include to further extent his international collaborations and to increase visibility of his work.

Eric's mid-career mentors are Prof. V. Straub and Prof. A. Oldfors.

ENMC MENTEES 2023

Dr Salman Bhai | Dallas, USA



SALMAN (37) is an adult neuromuscular neurologist who is the Director of the Neuromuscular Center at the Institute for Exercise and Environmental Medicine and Assistant Professor of Neurology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, USA. His research interests include metabolic and mitochondrial

abnormalities in muscle diseases. Clinically, he focuses on metabolic, mitochondrial, and inflammatory myopathies.

He runs an integrative physiology lab and collaborates with basic and translational colleagues. He has also led biopharmaceutical drug development.

Salman's mid-career mentors are Prof. E. Hoffman and Prof. A. De Luca.

Dr Margherita Giannini | Strasbourg, France



MARGHERITA (38) is an Italian MD PhD, rheumatologist and physiologist, working in inflammatory myopathies (IM) clinical and translational research in Physiology department of the Strasbourg University Hospital (France), in the Prof. Alain Meyer research group. During her PhD, taking advantage of IM preclinical

models, she elucidated the mechanism of glucocorticoids therapeutic effect in IM. Her research projects aim to

understand the molecular mechanisms specific of IM subgroups to develop dedicated treatments based on pathophysiology. Margherita has been recently named Associate Professor in Physiology at the University of Strasbourg, and she co-supervises several students in the lab at the Biomedicine Research Centre (CRBS) in Strasbourg.

Margherita's mid-career mentors are Prof. O. Benveniste and Dr A. Mammen.

Dr Saskia Houwen | Nijmegen, The Netherlands



SASKIA (43) is a paediatric rehabilitation physician in the neuromuscular centre of the Radboud University Medical Centre in the Netherlands. She combines her clinical tasks with research activities, under which sponsored initiated clinical trials. Her PhD has focused on future perspectives of adult males with

DMD and on females with dystrophinopathy. Her research is characterized by the impact of disease signs and

symptoms on social participation and how to support the resilience of people with NMD and their families. Her aim is to interweave care activities with her research, in which barriers in care situations are the base for new research proposals and research results are directly implemented in the care situation for all children with NMD. She is a board member of the Duchenne Center of the Netherlands and the working group of Dutch rehabilitation physicians working with NMD, and is World Muscle Society Program Committee member.

Saskia's mid-career mentors are Mrs S. Foye and Prof. C. Gagnon.

Dr Piera Smeriglio | Paris, France



PIERA (40) is a dynamic principal investigator at the Myology Institute in Paris (France), leads a diverse group of researchers dedicated to the study of motor neuron diseases. With a deep interest in the epigenetic regulation of these conditions, she employs advanced multi-omics technologies to identify potential

therapeutic targets. In 2020, Dr. Smeriglio's exceptional work was recognized with the prestigious EU Marie

Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellowship, furthering her research into the complex epigenetic factors influencing motor neuron diseases.

As a tenured research scientist at INSERM since 2022, Dr. Smeriglio is committed to translating laboratory discoveries into clinical applications, promoting a seamless integration of research and patient care. She also places a strong emphasis on mentoring the next generation of scientists.

Piera's mid-career mentors are Prof. A. Aartsma-Rus and Dr A. Beggs.