

Dr. Marco Osterwalder receives the *venia docendi*



We are delighted to announce that Dr. Marco Osterwalder, research group leader in the cardiovascular (CVD) program at the DBMR, has been awarded the *venia docendi* (habilitation) for his research on Developmental Biology.

[Marco Osterwalder](#) is an expert in developmental genetics and embryogenesis, with a particular focus on how transcriptional enhancers control cardiac gene networks and the genomic architecture in mammalian genomes. His current research explores the role of the non-coding genome implicated in congenital heart defects.

Since 2020 he is a group leader at the Department for BioMedical Research of the University of Bern, supported by major funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) through an Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship and a National Research Programme 79 grant. Recent achievements from his lab include the functional characterization of multiple *in vivo* heart enhancers and the identification of a gene desert as a modular *cis*-regulatory hub controlling pleiotropic expression of the *Shox2* developmental regulator gene, essential for cardiac pacemaker, limb and craniofacial development. These studies contribute to establishing a functional map of the non-coding genome and highlight the complex genomic regulatory architecture underlying developmental gene regulation and transcriptional robustness.

We warmly congratulate Dr. Osterwalder on the well-deserved habilitation!

Contact:

PD Dr. Marco Osterwalder – marco.osterwalder@unibe.ch