



# Newsletter

Mariagrazia Ugucioni, MD "Chemokines" Group Leader

## NEWS

### IRB Foundation President, Giorgio Nosedà, wins the 2006 SwissAward.

The Swiss Awards, handed out for the fifth time since 2002, go to Swiss personalities for their creative, innovative ideas or for their courage. The Swiss of the Year is chosen among 18 candidates by television viewers from across the country. There are six categories: politics, culture, business, society, sport and show business.

The SwissAward ceremony is organised by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's radio and television stations, as well as newspaper publishers and lotteries.

Giorgio Nosedà, President of the IRB, was awarded the 2006 SwissAward in the Society category for his career-long commitment to the fight against cancer.



Professor Giorgio Nosedà

Professor Nosedà stepped down at the end of 2006 as President of Oncosuisse, a national umbrella organization he founded to coordinate the activities of the three principle organizations engaged in the fight against Cancer; The Swiss Institute of Applied Cancer Research, The Swiss Institute for Experimental Cancer Research and the Swiss Cancer League.

For more info: [www.oncosuisse.ch/](http://www.oncosuisse.ch/)

## COMING AND GOING

### Silvia Monticelli Joins the IRB as a Junior Group Leader.



Silvia Monticelli

Silvia completed her Masters degree at the University of Milan and went on to defend her thesis at the San Raffaele Scientific Institute with Donata Vercelli. Her work there concentrated on isotype switching to IgE in human B lymphocytes.

For the past 7 years Silvia has been working with Anjana Rao at Harvard, first on transcriptional regulation of cytokine production in Th2 lymphocytes and mast cells, and then more recently, on miRNAs.

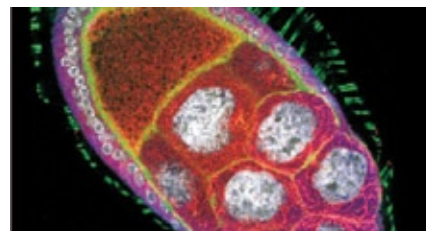
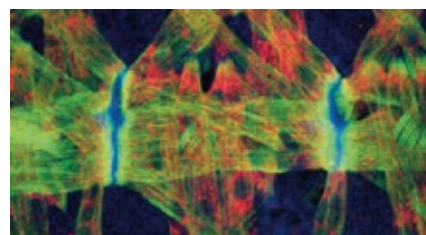
At the IRB Silvia plans to work on T helper lymphocytes and mast cells to illuminate the role of miRNA in the integrated regulatory network that controls gene expression.

"Besides being of fundamental relevance to our understanding of cell differentiation and gene regulation, elucidation of the molecular mechanisms that control mast cells and helper T cell differentiation have substantial potential for clinical application in the treatment of asthma, allergy, autoimmunity, and chronic inflammation. Furthermore, a growing body of data indicates that both the differential expression of specific miRNAs and disruption of the miRNA synthetic pathway as a whole may contribute to oncogenesis. Ultimately, an insight into how the miRNA pathway contributes to cell differentiation and proliferation may establish such pathway as an attractive and tractable therapeutic target."

### IRB seeks funding for powerful new microscope

A Confocal Microscope allows high resolution high speed imaging of living cells.

**Background:** in 2003, in a very positive review of the IRB, the Swiss Science and Technology Council identified the lack of powerful imaging as a hindrance to productivity. Unfortunately the high cost of this sophisticated equipment has made it difficult to acquire. Since then the IRB has both grown in size and has increased collaborative projects with other institutes in Ticino who could also benefit from advanced imaging.



**Public Private Partnership:** a formal request for matching funds has been submitted to the Swiss National Fund toward the purchase a state-of-the-art confocal microscope, capable of multi-color, high-speed imaging of live cells, with maximal 3D resolution. This request has been endorsed by the Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland (IOSI, Bellinzona), the San Giovanni Cantonal Hospital (Bellinzona), the Cantonal

Pathology Institute (Locarno), the Cantonal Microbiology Institute (Bellinzona), Università della Svizzera Italiana (Lugano), the Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana (SUPSI Lugano), and the Centro Svizzero di Calcolo Scientifico (CSCS Manno). **The Goal:** if the IRB reaches the ambitious goal of raising half of the 700'000 SFr. needed it will mark a milestone in the development of the institute as a catalyst for biomedical research in Ticino, and will be a clear indication that the mission of the institute is understood and shared by the people of the Canton. Advanced imaging technology has become essential for timely, competitive biomedical research. The application demonstrates how 6 independent research projects of relevance to Immunology, Hematology, AIDS, and Alzheimer's disease, each from a different SNF-funded Group, will be advanced by access to the requested equipment.

These projects are but the "tip of the iceberg", when one considers the enormous potential utilization of state-of-the-art microscopy by investigators from IRB and collaborating institutions.

**Patronage Committee to be founded to help support the IRB:**

the success of IRB scientists to obtain competitive grants has put the IRB under pressure to raise matching funds for infrastructure, teaching, and other costs not covered by grants. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a healthy equilibrium between dedicated research funding and institutional funding the Founders Board of the IRB will create a Patronage committee. The task of this new organization will be to raise the awareness of the IRB mission amongst private individual and institutional donors and hopefully increase the amount of private donations, essential to the continued success of the institute.

The Patronage Committee will organize events and maintain regular communication with donors to allow them to participate in the life of the institute. More about the Patronage Committee next month.

For more information contact Tom Brooks [tom.brooks@irb.unisi.ch](mailto:tom.brooks@irb.unisi.ch)

**Christmas Party at the IRB.**



The IRB and IOSI celebrated Christmas and the NEw Year with their traditional party in the atrium of palazzo Fabrizia.



■ **FUNDRAISING PROJECTS**

The Foundation for the Institute for Research in Biomedicine covers the running costs of the institute through public and private donations. Every month we will list some of the projects for which we are seeking financial support. Help us realize our vision of world class research in Ticino by making a contribution.

**-Confocal Microscope** - goal 400'000 SFr. These funds would be matched by the Confederation to enable innovative collaborative projects with other institutes.

**-PhD Program and Students** - goal 80'000 SFr. The IRB runs a world renowned PhD program for promising young scientists in collaboration with universities around the world. Your contribution can help a student complete their PhD in Bellinzona.

**-Visiting Student Seminar** - goal 6'000 SFr. In June we would like to invite colleagues and students from Uni Bern to a two day seminar at the mountain retreat / youth hostel Curzuút above Monte Carasso. Your donation will help to cover room and board for the students and professors.

For more information or to organize a visit to the IRB please contact Thomas Brooks [tom.brooks@irb.unisi.ch](mailto:tom.brooks@irb.unisi.ch) + 41 91 820 0327

C.P. 65-433-5  
Fondazione per L'istituto di Ricerca in Biomedicina  
6500 Bellinzona

EVENT CALENDAR

Thursday, January 18th, 2007

**Hilde Cheroute: "Stirring up the melting pot of memory: mucosal T cells and memory differentiation"**

La Jolla Institute of Allergy & Immunology, Division of Developmental Immunology, San Diego, USA

Wednesday, January 24th, 2007

**Kevin Marsh: "Measuring immunity to malaria" and Technology Council**

KEMRI-Wellcome Research Programme, Kilifi, Kenya

Monday, February 12th, 2007

**Klaus Ley: "Role of IL-17-producing T cells in neutrophil homeostasis"**

University of Virginia, Health System Cardiovascular Research Centre, Charlottesville, USA



Special thanks to  
The Helmut Horten Foundation