Bio speakers:

Derk Amsen

Dr. Derk Amsen is a professor of Molecular T cell Immunology at the Amsterdam University Medical Center and group leader at the Sanquin Landsteiner Laboratory for Blood Cell Research. His expertise centers on the molecular and genetic regulation of T cell immunology, with a long-standing focus on effector/memory T cell differentiation, function, and T cell tolerance. Using mouse genetics, he established the central role of the Notch signaling pathway in controlling T cell responses and elucidated much of its molecular mechanistic basis. Since joining Sanquin in 2013, his research has uncovered key regulatory mechanisms in human T cells, including tissue-resident memory T cells and regulatory T cells, employing techniques such as mass spectrometry, transcriptomics, and genetics. Beyond fundamental studies, his lab pursues translational programs to develop adoptive cellular therapies against inflammatory diseases with regulatory T cells. Amsen earned his PhD at the Netherlands Cancer Institute under Dr. Ada Kruisbeek, studying thymic and peripheral mechanisms of T cell tolerance. He completed postdoctoral training and served as an Associate Research Scientist in Dr. Richard Flavell's lab at Yale University. In 2006 he returned to the Netherlands as an AMC fellow and moved to Sanquin in 2013.

Jan Terje Andersen

Andersen is a professor of biomedical innovation at the University of Oslo and a research group leader at Oslo University Hospital. He leads the Laboratory of Adaptive Immunity and Homeostasis, which is part of PRIMA - a Centre of Excellence in Precision Immunotherapy funded by the Research Council of Norway. His research focuses on the cellular processes and molecular interactions that govern the functions of the two most abundant proteins in blood: albumin and IgG. By integrating structural and biophysical techniques with cellular and in vivo studies, his team aims to design novel molecules with enhanced functions. The laboratory collaborates extensively with biotech and pharmaceutical companies. Andersen has received the Fridtjof Nansen Prize for Early Career Achievements, University of Oslo Innovation Award for 2025 and a Distinguished Innovator Grant from the Novo Nordisk Foundation. He is also an elected member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and a co-founder of the biotech companies Authera AS and Superio Bio AS.

Stephen Beers

Stephen Beers is Professor of Immunology and Immunotherapy at the Centre for Cancer Immunology, University of Southampton. He graduated with a first-class degree in Biochemistry in 1999 and completed a BBSRC-funded PhD in 2003. After postdoctoral work in Immunochemistry and Immunotherapy within the Cancer Sciences Division, he was awarded a career track fellowship and established a research group investigating antibody effector mechanisms.
His work spans antibody biology, in vivo modelling, myeloid cell function, the tumour microenvironment, receptor biology and interactions with small-molecule drugs. He has contributed to research exploring mechanisms of action and resistance relevant to antibody-based

therapies, including studies supporting the development of anti-FcγRIIB antibodies and investigations into Fc-dependent requirements for CD40-targeting antibodies. His current research uses advanced in vitro and in vivo systems, alongside spatial multi-omics, to study how host factors and the tumour microenvironment influence therapeutic responses, with the aim of informing future antibody engineering and combination approaches.

María Casanova-Acebes

Since January 2021, María Casanova-Acebes has been a Junior Group Leader at the Spanish National Cancer Research Centre (CNIO), where she leads the Laboratory of Cancer Immunity. As a PhD student with Andrés Hidalgo at CNIC, she uncovered how circadian cues regulate neutrophil aging and clearance, impacting hematopoietic and metastasis-prone organs such as the bone marrow and lung. Her graduate work was published in Cell (2023) and JEM (2018). With a Human Frontiers Postdoctoral Fellowship, she joined Miriam Merad's lab at Mount Sinai, New York. There, she demonstrated that lung-resident macrophages control early Treg expansion and EMT programs in lung cancer (Nature 2021). Her lab now studies how micro- and macro-environmental factors shape myeloid cells in tumors, seeking new therapeutic targets. By 2025, she has published over 25 papers with more than 8,000 citations. She received both an ERC Starting Grant and the EMDS Award in 2023. María also serves as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Experimental Medicine and is a member of the Spanish Young Academy and Secretary of the Spanish Society of Immunology. Outside the lab, she is an avid reader and enjoys spending time with her children.

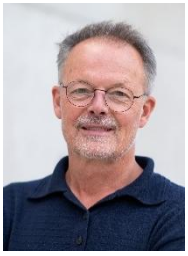
Omer Dushek

Omer Dushek is Professor of Molecular Immunology at the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, University of Oxford. After initial training in physics (BSc) and applied mathematics (PhD) in Canada, he moved to the UK for his post-doctoral work where carried out experimental work on T cells. His laboratory is now focused on understanding and exploiting the process of T cell antigen recognition by the T cell antigen receptor and synthetic antigen receptors, and the role of co-signalling receptors in this process. He has recently co-founded MatchBio Ltd to translate his basic science into improved CAR-T cell medicines.

Susanne Kooistra

Dr. Susanne Kooistra is an Associate Professor in Molecular Neurobiology at the University Medical Center Groningen. Her scientific interest centers on cellular changes in development in disease as well as the molecular processes that regulate these changes. She received her PhD from the University of Groningen in 2009. Initially, her work was centered on the role of chromatin modifying proteins in embryonic stem cells and in embryonic development. Currently, she studies changes in cellular phenotypes in glial cells in the developing and diseased CNS. Using various transcriptomic and epigenetic approaches, she addresses cellular heterogeneity in the human CNS. Her recent work is mainly focused on microglia function in the context of diseases like AD and multiple sclerosis.

Bart Lambrecht



Prof. Dr. Bart N. Lambrecht is a leading expert in pulmonary medicine, asthma, allergy, and respiratory infections. His research has significantly advanced our understanding of lung immunity, shaping new treatment strategies for respiratory diseases. He earned his MD and PhD in Medicine at Ghent University (UGent) and specialized in Pulmonary Medicine at Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam. Today, he is Professor of Pulmonary Medicine at both ErasmusMC and UGent and Director of the VIB Inflammation Research Center, where he leads 400 scientists.

He is a multiple ERC grant awardee, has authored over 400 scientific papers, and serves on the editorial boards of Trends in Immunology and the Journal of Experimental Medicine. Together with Prof. Hamida Hammad, he leads a 36-member research unit, focusing on antigen-presenting cells (APCs) in asthma and respiratory infections. Their work has advanced the scientific understanding of how dendritic cells, macrophages, and epithelial cells drive immune responses in the lung.
By collaborating with biotech and pharma, he actively drives breakthroughs from the lab to the clinic, advocating that scientific discoveries reach patients. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, he has led large multi-center trials investigating novel immunotherapies, advancing the fight against respiratory diseases.

Jeanette Leusen

Prof. Jeanette Leusen, received her PhD in 1995 at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands in the field of immunology. She became head of the antibodytherapy group of the University Medical Center in Utrecht in 2006, and head of the UMAB facility in 2012. She has co-authored more than 160 publications in peer-reviewed journals and is inventor on 13 patent applications. Her group of 24 FTE works on all aspects of antibodies, ranging from human milk to IgA to treat cancer to IgG antibodies to treat autoimmune disorders. Jeanette Leusen is also the leader of the Biologics workstream of Oncode Accelerator.

Reina Mebius

Prof. dr. Reina Mebius is renowned for her work on micro-environmental control of immune reactions, especially within lymph nodes. The lymph node microenvironment, which is formed by non-immune stromal cells, dictates whether a beneficial (e.g. launching an immune response to clear an infection) or a detrimental (e.g. break of tolerance which will lead to chronic inflammation) response will occurs. Her research has provided the insights om how theses micro-environments (i.e. lymph nodes) form during embryonic development, how these stromal cells in adult life (i.e. in lymph nodes, and tertiary lymphoid structures) differentiate and contribute to both a healthy non inflamed versus chronic inflammatory (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis) or anti-tumor responses. She is translating the findings of her fundamental research by innovating 3D models of human lymph node in combination with microfluidics in order to generate better human disease models in the future.
Mebius is a principal investigator at the department of Molecular Cell Biology and Immunology at the Amsterdam UMC, location VUmc. She was a postdoc at Stanford University USA (1991-1995), while simultaneously collaborating with Genentech. She obtained a KNAW fellowship allowing her return to the Netherlands (1995-2000). She became professor in 2007 at her current department. She was President of the Dutch Society for Immunology from 2013 – 2018, received a VICI grant in 2005 and is van Loghem Laureate (2021), and teaches Immunology for bachelor students Medicine VU University. Since March 2022 she is one of the two directors of the Amsterdam Institute of Immunology & Infectious disease.

Thomas Pradeu

Thomas Pradeu is a tenured Senior Investigator in Philosophy of Science at CNRS & the University of Bordeaux, France, and a Presidential Fellow at Chapman University, California, USA. He was trained at the Ecole normale supérieure in Paris, the Sorbonne, and Harvard University. He is the founder and leader of the Conceptual Biology and Medicine team in Bordeaux, and the coordinator of the Philosophy in Biology and Medicine international network (PhilInBioMed). From 2008 to 2014, he was an Associate Professor in Philosophy at Paris-Sorbonne University. Starting from 2014, he became an “embedded philosopher” in the Bordeaux immunology lab (ImmunoConcept). From 2015 to 2020, he was the PI of

an ERC Starting Grant project on the microbiome and biological individuality. In 2020-21, he was a CASBS Fellow at Stanford University. His research, published equally in science and philosophy of science journals, deals with immunology, cancer biology, and the microbiome, and more generally with the conceptual and theoretical foundations of today's biological and biomedical sciences. His work in the field of conceptual and theoretical immunology has explored the immune self-nonself, immunological memory, the danger theory, the discontinuity theory, the crosstalk between the microbiome and the immune system, among many other issues. He collaborates with many scientists, including Eric Vivier, Gérard Eberl, Sören Paludan, Rob Knight, Margaret McFall-Ngai, Louis Du Pasquier, and Bruno Lemaitre. In 2017, he was awarded the Lakatos Award, the most prestigious award in philosophy of science internationally.

Gerty Schreibelt

Gerty Schreibelt is a group leader at the Medical BioSciences department of the Radboudumc in Nijmegen. After obtaining her PhD in the field of neuroimmunology from the VU University in Amsterdam in 2007, she joined the department of Tumor Immunology at Radboudumc in Nijmegen, - now part of the Medical BioSciences department – where she has since studied the use of dendritic cells as anti-cancer vaccines. Her research primarily focused on human natural circulating DC subsets, to understand their functional properties and to establish their value for treatment of cancer and for prevention of cancer in patients with hereditary cancer syndromes such as Lynch Syndrome and CMMRD. She has recently expanded her research focus to include cell-based therapies for rare genetic diseases. As translational scientist integrating bench-to-bedside and bedside-to-bench approaches she is dedicated to bridging the gap between fundamental research and clinical application in cell-based therapies.

Karina Silina

Dr. Karina Silina is a group leader at the Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich) since 2022. She obtained her PhD from the University of Latvia, where she explored cancer autoantibody repertoires and humoral immunogenicity of human cancer in the Cancer Biomarkers lab at the Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre led by Prof. Aija Linē. She identified a new class of cancer antigens generated as a result of aberrant alternative splicing utilising germ cell-specific splice sites in cancer cells, termed cancer-testis-spliced antigens. For her postdoc, she acquired funding to join the lab of Prof. Maries van den Broek at the University of Zurich, where she began studying cancer-associated tertiary lymphoid structures (TLS). She described the concept of TLS maturation in cancer and demonstrated its relevance in patient prognosis that has since been broadly recognised in the field. In her lab, Dr. Silina studies the spatial and phenotypic complexity of the tumour immune microenvironment, explores organ-specific parenchymal factors orchestrating the development of various immune cell niches in cancer, as well as engages in developments of computational pathology approaches.

Rene Toes

Rene Toes received his MSc in 1989 from the Free University, Amsterdam, and in 1996 completed his PhD at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. He held postdoctoral positions at the Department of Cell Biology at the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Germany, and Leiden University Medical Centre, Leiden, Netherlands from 1996 to 2001, in which he specialized in antigen presentation, anti-tumor immunity and T-cell activation. Since 2001, he is leading the laboratory for experimental Rheumatology at the Leiden University Medical Centre. Since 2010, he is a full professor in experimental rheumatology at the University of Leiden.