



Schweizerische Pädiatrische Onkologie Gruppe
Groupe d'Oncologie Pédiatrique Suisse
Gruppo d'Oncologia Pediatrica Svizzera
Swiss Paediatric Oncology Group



Annual report

2025

Research - giving a future
to children with cancer

Editorial

Dear readers

The year 2025 was also marked by challenges that we were able to take on only by working together. Around the world, paediatric oncology research suffered major financial losses and constraints, especially in the US. However, we are grateful that we were able to expand our support. In addition, we can rely on many long-standing partnerships for which we are sincerely grateful. We were also delighted at the funding that has already been promised for 2026 – without this support the work done by SPOG for children and adolescents with cancer would not be possible.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the FOPH, Swissmedic, and the cantonal ethics committees: In challenging regulatory times, they have always been willing to listen and have supported us with pragmatic solutions.

Looking back at 2025

In March, together with the Swiss Society of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology (SSPHO), we held the second stakeholder meeting on the topic of the National Cancer Plan. With around 100 participants, we discussed the particular role of paediatric and adolescent oncology within a National Cancer Plan and emphasised the need for active involvement in shaping it.

The involvement of patients and the wider public is an essential part of all cancer research. That is why SPOG established the SPOG Patient Advisory Board (SPAB). The first five members have started their work. They provide particular support for clinical trials and related communication. At this year's meeting of the Board with the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), we focused on strategy and received valuable input from a European perspective.

At the end of the year, the SPOG Board elections also took place. Two new Board members were appointed, thereby creating a good balance between experienced and new members.

My second term as President has now come to an end. I would like to thank everyone at the SPOG Coordinating Centre, my colleagues on the SPOG Board and all the colleagues at the nine SPOG member hospitals for their outstanding collaboration and dedication. Only by working together can we continually improve the chances of cure for children and adolescents with cancer and minimise the late effects. I am looking forward to my third and final term. •



Prof. Dr med. Katrin Scheinemann, M.Sc.

President of SPOG



Prof. Dr med. Katrin Scheinemann, M.Sc. is a specialist in paediatric and adolescent medicine working in paediatric oncology/haematology and director of the Haematology/Oncology Centre at the Ostschweizer Kinderspital. She has been President of SPOG since 2020.

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SPOG 2025 in figures



The Swiss Paediatric Oncology Group (SPOG) is the national association of all nine hospitals that treat cancer in children and adolescents. SPOG is organised as an association and both coordinates and is responsible for a comprehensive clinical programme of cancer research for children and adolescents in Switzerland. Prof. Dr med. Katrin Scheinemann has been President of SPOG since 2020.

The Coordinating Centre in Bern is responsible for study management, quality management, communications and fundraising. The SPOG member hospitals and the Coordinating Centre work hand in hand to give a future to children and adolescents with cancer. •

203
patients

participated in a study for the first time in the past year. Twenty-one of them were enrolled in two studies. This resulted in a total of 224 new study enrolments.

100
reports

on changes to study procedures were submitted by SPOG to the ethics committees, and a further 25 safety reports were filed. 42 study change notifications and 23 safety reports were submitted to Swissmedic.

154
publications

in which SPOG researchers played an active part appeared in scientific journals in 2025. Of these, six publications were directly related to studies in the SPOG portfolio, and 20 involved SPOG Young Investigator Grant winners.

14
clinical studies

were open to patients in SPOG member hospitals at the end of December and a further 14 research projects were ongoing. Three of these studies were added in 2025: one on acute myeloid leukaemia (CHIP-AML22/Master), one on acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL-BFM Registry), and one on soft tissue tumours (SoTiSaR 2.0-NIS).

0
critical findings

and three major findings were identified by the external auditors during audits in 2025. Furthermore, they issued only 24 minor findings. The three member hospitals in Basel, Bern and Aarau were audited.

The SPOG member hospitals



All children's hospitals in Switzerland that treat children and adolescents with cancer are members of SPOG. They are represented by the respective heads of paediatric oncology and haematology departments. The graphic shows the SPOG member hospitals and their representatives as of October 2025. •

SAB – the Scientific Advisory Board

SPOG is well connected internationally and, through its Scientific Advisory Board, can draw on the expertise of outstanding figures in paediatric cancer research.

The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) is the scientific advisory body of SPOG. It comprises recognised experts in patient-oriented research in paediatric oncology and haematology.

Independent expertise on scientific and strategic issues

The SAB supports SPOG with its independent expertise – whether on strategic or scientific matters. The SAB meets with SPOG every two years. As an independent panel of experts, the SAB also evaluates applications for the Young Investigator Grant. The SAB must have at least three members, who are appointed by the SPOG Board and must be independent international experts.

2025: one meeting and a new member

In October 2025, the SAB met with the SPOG Board and the management team of the SPOG Coordinating Centre. They exchanged views on a wide range of current topics, including the revised SPOG strategy and aspects of study funding as well as experiences and challenges relating to international contract negotiations.

At the end of March 2025, following the resignation of Professor Angelika Eggert for professional reasons, the Board appointed Pamela Kearns, Emeritus Professor at the University of Birmingham, to the SAB. •



Prof. Dr med. François Doz
Université Paris Cité et Institut Curie, Paris



Prof. em. Pamela Kearns
College of Medicine and Health,
University of Birmingham



Prof. Dr med. Stefan Pfister
Hopp-Kindertumorzentrum (KITZ),
Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (DKFZ),
Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg

SPAB – the voice of patients

At the beginning of 2025, SPOG established an advisory board to incorporate the perspectives and needs of patients into childhood cancer research. The new body has already been extremely active.

The SPOG Patient Advisory Board (SPAB) was established in January 2025. Its members include both childhood cancer survivors and the parents of children affected. The SPAB ensures that the perspectives and needs of patients and their families are incorporated into the studies, activities, and committees of SPOG.

In addition to three to seven patients (currently five), the SPAB includes a liaison member from the SPOG Board and a representative from the SPOG Coordinating Centre. Patient representatives are elected by the SPOG Board.

The first meeting of the Patient Advisory Board took place on 7 March 2025 and was followed by four further meetings. SPAB Chair Nicole Seiler and Nicole Scobie, who serves as patient representative on the Protocol Governance Committee (PGC), also attend SPOG General Assemblies as guests in an advisory capacity.

An engaged first year

In its first year, the SPAB initially focused on familiarising itself with the processes of SPOG childhood cancer research. However, the patient representatives were quickly able to

contribute their expertise to various committees and projects. A brief overview:

- statement to the SPOG General Assembly in support of an international study on a rare cancer type (B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma), which provides access to innovative treatment approaches (Glo-BNHL)
- a presentation by SPAB member Nicole Scobie at the SPOG SSPHO stakeholder meeting
- election of one SPAB member to the Steering Committee of the KidsCan-01 study
- statement to the Federal Office of Public Health on the inclusion of a cancer medication for children (dinutuximab beta) in the Specialities List¹
- detailed feedback on the SPOG annual report and other communication materials
- participation in several Oncosuisse workshops on the National Cancer Plan
- contribution to the new study platform www.swiss-kids-cancer-trials.ch
- submission of topics via the SPOG Coordinating Centre in the context of the revision of the Human Research Act

In its first year, the SPAB actively made use of its opportunities to contribute and tangibly enriched exchanges within the committees. SPOG received valuable input and is pleased that the voice of patients now plays an established role in its childhood cancer research. •



The members of the SPOG Patient Advisory Board (from left to right): Nicole Scobie, Claudio Nicita, Paul Castle, Nicole Seiler (Chair), Prof. Dr med. Dr Phil. Raffaele Renella (SPOG Board), Gaëlle Solioz. Not shown: Dr Dustin Singer (SPOG Coordinating Centre).

¹ Medicinal products on the Specialities List are automatically reimbursed by health insurers provided the indication corresponds.

Interview: What do you do as a national study chair, Nicolas Gerber?

Each of the 66 studies in the SPOG portfolio has a national study chair. We spoke with paediatric oncologist Nicolas Gerber about the role of the Swiss national study chair in international studies.

What motivated you to specialise in paediatric oncology?

Paediatric oncology combines highly complex medicine with a deeply meaningful purpose. It is a highly specialised field that requires a broad perspective: Not only can every organ system be affected by disease or therapies but each cancer diagnosis also places a heavy emotional burden on patients and their families. Treatments last many months and patients often require more than one course of therapy. Follow-up care can continue for many years. I consider it a privilege to be able to support these families over long periods and often quite intensively.

You are now overseeing your fourteenth study for SPOG as a national study chair. What exactly are the responsibilities of a national study chair?

SPOG studies are typically multinational studies initiated by a centre abroad. National Study Chairs (NSCs) are the medical link between the international study chair and the treating paediatric oncologists in Switzerland and serve as contacts for both sides. They are part of international study groups, create the structural prerequisites for conducting studies in Switzerland, and support treating centres in opening and running them.

What does this involve in practice?

The process usually begins with presenting an international study first to an SSPHO Tumour Working Group and then to SPOG. If the study is approved by the SPOG General Assembly and a national study chair is appointed, the first step in certain studies is to establish national reference centres depending on tumour type (e.g. in pathology, radiology, or radiotherapy). A national data centre is also established. In some studies, this centre has extensive responsibilities while in others, data from the individual participating oncology centres flow directly to the international study coordinating centre.

What additional responsibilities are involved?

The study chair reviews the study documents prepared by the SPOG Coordinating Centre. These include patient infor-

mation brochures and informed consent forms (both of which must comply with Swiss requirements) as well as Switzerland-specific appendices to the study protocol. The study chair is also responsible for overseeing medical training for the hospitals; in some cases, they assess whether patients meet the eligibility criteria, advise hospitals on patient treatment, or assist with questions regarding study conduct. The aim is to conduct the study to a high standard of quality so that patients benefit from modern diagnostics and standardised therapies. The data obtained serve to further develop therapies for a future generation of patients.

«**National Study Chairs (NSCs) are the medical link between the international study chair and the treating paediatric oncologists in Switzerland and serve as contacts for both sides.**»

Are medical questions the main focus, or is it more a matter of organisation and study procedures?

Both are equally important. Medical questions include the interpretation of inclusion criteria, the assessment of side effects, and the adjustment of treatments as well as broader therapeutic recommendations. Organisational questions concern procedures, documentation, data collection, or the implementation of protocol amendments across all centres. Fortunately, many non-medical questions are handled by the SPOG Coordinating Centre, thereby allowing national study chairs to focus on medical aspects.

How much coordination is required with the international study chair?

The greatest need for coordination arises at the beginning when setting up a study for Switzerland. Topics that arise later include participation issues in specific situations, safety

reporting, and protocol amendments. National study chairs can also discuss treatment recommendations for patients in special circumstances with the international study chair. The international study chair generally has extensive experience and access to data from all patients in the study (and often also from previous studies). Collaboration is generally constructive and based on mutual trust.

How should the exchange with those responsible at the various SPOG member hospitals be understood?

After a study has been opened at participating hospitals, communication usually focuses on specific questions relating to patients. Such exchanges often take place by email, telephone, or video call or during a presentation at a joint tumour board.

In some studies, many functions are organised at the national level. This means that the national study coordinating centre checks whether all potential patients meet the eligibility criteria, reviews the study data, and discusses all study patients in a structured tumour board.

Other studies are organised in a more centralised way; apart from advice on treatment-related questions, most matters are handled directly between the treating centre and the international study coordinating centre.

How can you, as a national study chair, be sure that all hospitals comply with the study protocol correctly?

Clear communication, training, and standardised documents all contribute to this. The SPOG Coordinating Centre plays a central role here; for example, it carries out monitoring and

«**Fortunately, many non-medical questions are handled by the SPOG Coordinating Centre, thereby allowing the national study chairs to focus on medical aspects.**»



PD Dr Nicolas Gerber
Senior Consultant in Oncology and Head of the
Oncology Clinical Trials Unit at the University
Children's Hospital Zurich.

works together with the hospitals to ensure that deviations are avoided. Open communication with the treating hospitals is essential.

How does the work of a national study chair help these families?

It enables comprehensive access to modern, evidence-based therapies and helps to continually improve diagnostics and treatments. In the long term, all children and adolescents with cancer benefit from the insights gained in these studies.

How do you explain to adolescents, children, and their parents what it means to participate in a clinical study?

The treatment in a SPOG study often corresponds to the current standard of care. This means that the discussion focuses on the treatment itself. Patients benefit from participating in a study – for example, through standardised diagnostics and



treatment recommendations – and the knowledge gained can benefit future patients. These are two factors that encourage most families to participate.

What are the greatest challenges in conducting an international childhood cancer study in Switzerland?

Regulatory requirements, a high administrative burden, and a small number of patients represent a major challenge. This means that each study enrolment requires considerable time and financial resources. In the physician-initiated studies typ-

«Patients benefit from participating in a study – for example, through standardised diagnostics and treatment recommendations – and the knowledge gained can benefit future patients.»

ical of paediatric oncology, these costs are not covered by pharmaceutical companies. In addition, negotiating contracts with partner institutions often takes a very long time.

As a national study chair, are you also involved in publishing the study results?

Yes, the study chairs are usually involved not only in data collection but also in data interpretation and publications.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your work as a national study chair, and what is the most challenging?

The most rewarding aspect is seeing that clinical studies lead to lasting improvements in the prognosis for children and adolescents with cancer.

However, the most challenging aspect is having to accept how slowly processes sometimes move. On one hand, this is due to the fortunately small number of patients in our field; some studies remain open for 10 years until the required number has been reached. On the other hand, increasing regulatory hurdles and expanding bureaucracy are slowing progress. •

PD Dr Nicolas Gerber



studied medicine in Geneva and trained as a paediatrician at the University Children's Hospital Zurich (Universitäts-Kinderhospital Zürich). He worked for two years as a study physician at a brain tumour study centre in Würzburg before specialising in paediatric oncology in Zurich. In addition, Gerber completed specialist training in pharmaceutical medicine. He currently works as Senior Consultant in Oncology at the University Children's Hospital Zurich, where he leads the Clinical Trials Unit of the Department of Oncology. Since 2020, Gerber has been Vice President of SPOG and leads the Protocol Governance Committee (PGC).

Protocol Governance Committee

The Protocol Governance Committee (formerly the Protocol Working Group) evaluates study proposals and makes recommendations to the SPOG General Assembly. In this way it lays the foundation for the comprehensive research programme carried out by SPOG.

The former Protocol Working Group was renamed the Protocol Governance Committee (PGC) in March 2025. The new designation reflects a broader responsibility. This includes not only patient benefit, scientific criteria, and feasibility but also financial and organisational aspects in terms of governance.

The committee now also includes a representative from the SPOG Patient Advisory Board (SPAB), which was established in 2025. She ensures that the voice of patients is directly incorporated into research.

In 2025, the committee evaluated six study proposals and recommended all of them to the General Assembly for approval. The committee also pre-evaluated applications for the positions of National Study Chairs (NSC) and Vice National Study Chairs (Vice-NSC); these are the Swiss study chairs and their deputies.

Six newly approved studies

The General Assembly approved the following six studies and appointed the national study chairs:

- **Glo-BNHL** (clinical study on B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphomas): Francesco Ceppi (Lausanne) as NSC
- **IRNHL Registry** (research project on non-Hodgkin lymphomas): Francesco Ceppi (Lausanne) as NSC
- **FORUM2** (clinical study on acute lymphoblastic leukaemia): Marc Ansari (Geneva) as NSC and Ulrike Zeilhofer (Zurich) as Vice-NSC
- **EsPhALL2022** (clinical study on a rare form of leukaemia): Francesco Ceppi (Lausanne) as NSC and Nastassja Scheidegger (Zurich) as Vice-NSC
- **IntReALL BCP 2020** (clinical study on relapses in acute lymphoblastic leukaemia): Jean-Pierre Bourquin (Zurich) as NSC and Nastassja Scheidegger (Zurich) as Vice-NSC.
- **SIOP-E CNS-REST** (research project on rare brain and spinal cord tumours): Katrin Scheinemann (St. Gallen) as NSC and Ana Guerreiro Stücklin (Zurich) as Vice-NSC.

Changes in the study chairs

New NSC responsibilities for the following studies:

- **CHIP-AML22/Master**: Nastassja Scheidegger (Zurich) as NSC
- **ML-DS 2018**: Nastassja Scheidegger (Zurich) as NSC.

The following open positions were filled:

- **EsPhALL2017**: Francesco Ceppi (Lausanne) as NSC
- **ALL-BFM Registry**: Mutlu Kartal-Kaess (Bern) as Vice-NSC
- **Interfant-21**: Francesco Ceppi (Lausanne) as Vice-NSC
- **AIEOP-BFM ALL 2017**: Francesco Ceppi (Lausanne) as Vice-NSC
- **CHIP-AML22/Master**: Frédéric Baleyrier (Geneva) as Vice-NSC
- **ML-DS 2018**: Fanny Gonzales (Geneva) as Vice-NSC.

An overview of all Swiss study chairs is available online at <https://spog.ch/en/study-teams>. •

Protocol Governance Committee



The Protocol Governance Committee (PGC) reviews new clinical studies and research projects for scientific relevance, methodology, and level of innovation. It also assesses the financial aspects and feasibility in Switzerland. The committee also considers whether the studies can provide a benefit to patients and their families and whether they align with the statutory purpose of SPOG. This year, the SPOG Board appointed three new members, thereby bringing the total number of committee members to 11. Eight member hospitals, the SPOG Coordinating Centre, and the SPOG Patient Advisory Board are represented.

Head Protocol Governance Committee



PD Dr Nicolas Gerber
PGC Chair

PD Dr med. Tamara Diesch-Furlanetto
PGC Vice-Chair

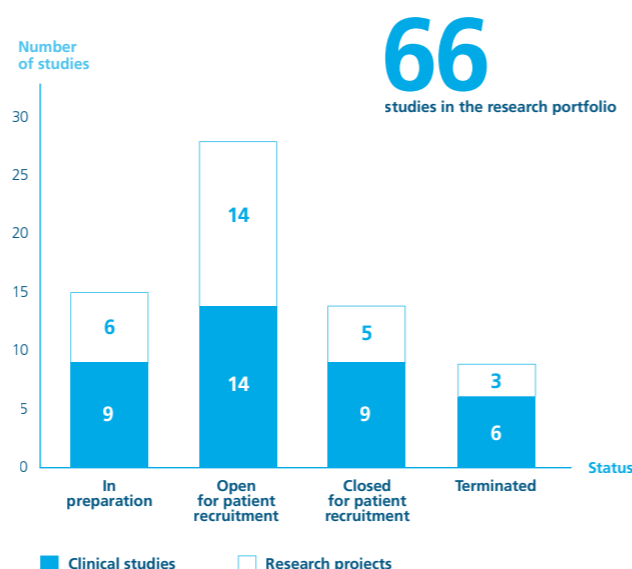


The research portfolio of SPOG

SPOG coordinates and is responsible for a broad portfolio of clinical studies and research projects aimed at improving the treatment of children and adolescents with cancer.

SPOG maintains an extensive research programme in childhood cancer. This includes clinical studies and research projects on various types of cancer such as leukaemias, lymphomas, and bone marrow disorders as well as solid tumours and tumours of the brain and spinal cord. Researchers are also working on studies relating to treatment-resistant and recurrent cancers.

The graphic shows the number of clinical studies and research projects at the various stages as of 31 December 2025.



Studies open at the end of 2025

The 14 clinical studies and 14 research projects listed in the following tables were open for patient recruitment at the end of 2025. SPOG aims to offer open studies at as many of its nine member hospitals in Switzerland as possible, thereby enabling as many children and adolescents with cancer as possible to participate.

Overview of clinical studies open on 31 December 2025

Study code	Condition under investigation	Number of participating SPOG member hospitals	Study open since
ALCL-VBL	Anaplastic large-cell lymphoma	9	2023
ALL SCTped 2012 FORUM	Allogeneic stem cell transplant in acute lymphoblastic leukaemia	3	2015
CHIP-AML22/Master	Acute myeloid leukaemia	1	2025
FaR-RMS	Rhabdomyosarcoma	9	2021
HR-NBL2/SIOPEN	High-risk neuroblastoma	9	2021
IntReALL HR 2010	High-risk relapsed acute lymphoblastic leukaemia	9	2019
LBL 2018	Lymphoblastic lymphoma	9	2020
ML-DS 2018	Acute myeloid leukaemia associated with Down syndrome	7	2022
rEECur	Recurrent and primary refractory Ewing sarcoma	9	2018
SCRIPT-AML	Allogeneic stem cell transplant in acute myeloid leukaemia	3	2024
SIOPE ATRT01	Atypical teratoid/rhabdoid tumours	9	2022
SIOP Ependymoma II	Ependymoma	9	2018
SIOP-HRMB	High-risk medulloblastoma	9	2021
SIOP Randomet 2017	Kidney tumours with metastases	9	2022

Overview of research projects open on 31 December 2025

Study code	Condition under investigation	Number of participating SPOG member hospitals	Study open since
ALL-BFM Registry	Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia	6	2025
ALL-REZ BFM	Relapsed acute lymphoblastic leukaemia	7	2013
EU-RHAB	Rhabdoid tumours	9	2013
EWOG-MDS 2006	Myelodysplastic syndrome and juvenile myelomonocytic leukaemia	8	2006
EWOG-SAA 2010	Acquired severe aplastic anaemia	7	2012
I-HIT-MED	Medulloblastoma, ependymoma and pineal tumours	9	2017
INFORM	Tumours that are recurrent or progressing under therapy	9	2017
KRANIOPHARYNGEOM Registry 2019	Craniopharyngiomas and other sellar masses	9	2020
LOGGIC Core	Low-grade gliomas	9	2020
MNP2.0	Brain tumours	9	2018
SIOPEN BIOPORTAL	Neuroblastomas and ganglioneuroblastomas	9	2024
SoTISaR 2.0-NIS	Soft tissue sarcoma and other soft tissue tumours	5	2025
STEP 2.0	Rare tumours	9	2023
UMBRELLA SIOP-RTSG 2016	Kidney tumours	9	2020

More information about the studies

www.spog.ch/spog-studies

Number of patients included in studies in 2025

In 2025, a total of 224 new patients were registered in the studies (this number does not correspond to the number of new diagnoses in Switzerland). 21 patients participated in two studies and are therefore counted in both studies.

SPOG member hospitals	Aarau	Basel	Bellinzona	Bern	Geneva	Lausanne	Lucerne	St. Gallen	Zurich	Total
Total number of study enrolments	16	22	3	35	22	22	11	26	67	224
Number of study patients (excluding multiple references)										203
Treatment studies	2	5	1	9	5	8	1	4	9	44
ALL SCTped 2012 FORUM		1			2					3
FaR-RMS		1		1	1	3		1		7
HR-NBL2/SIOPEN				1		1	1	1	1	5
IntReALL HR 2010				1						1
LBL 2018		1				1			1	3
LCH-IV		1	1	2		1		1	3	9
MAKEI V				1				1	1	3
rEECur	1						2			3
SCRIPT-AML		1			2					3
SIOPE ATRT01									1	1
SIOP Ependymoma II	1			1						2
SIOP-HRMB									1	1
SIOP Randomet 2017				2					1	3

Research projects (registry studies and biology studies)	Aarau	Basel	Bellinzona	Bern	Geneva	Lausanne	Lucerne	St. Gallen	Zurich	Total
Research projects (registry studies and biology studies)	14	17	2	26	17	14	10	22	58	180
ALL-BFM Registry	5			6			6	10	8	35
ALL-REZ BFM		1		3					1	5
CWS-Register SoTISaR				1				1	1	3
EWOG-MDS 2006									1	1
EWOG-SAA 2010									1	1
I-HIT-MED		2		2	2				4	10
INFORM	1	4		2	2	3	2		8	22
KRANIOPHARYNGEOM Registry 2019	2							2	1	5
LOGGIC Core	2	1	1	1	4			3	11	23
MNP2.0		3		6		1		1	9	20
SIOPEN BIOPORTAL	2	1			4	9		2	6	24
STEP 2.0	1	3		4	4	1		1		14
UMBRELLA SIOP-RTSG 2016	1	2	1	1	1		2	2	7	17

The Young Investigator Grant

SPOG supports young researchers in paediatric oncology and awards grants for patient-oriented research every two years.

In 2025, SPOG paid out the 2024 grant totalling CHF 75 000 to the winners. The grant was awarded to early-career researchers Arianna Piffer (Kinderspital Zürich) and Uli Herrmann (Kinderklinik Inselspital Bern) for their first independent research projects.

The two winners presented their projects at the 2026 SPOG SSPHO Scientific Meeting in Lugano on 16–17 January. •

Call for proposals for the 2027 grant



The next call – already the fifth – for the SPOG Young Investigator Grant will take place in spring 2026. SPOG awards grants to young researchers under 40 working in a SPOG member hospital. The independent international Scientific Advisory Board of SPOG assesses the relevance and methodological quality of the projects submitted. The winners will be announced at the end of 2026.



SPHO Biobank Network

The “Swiss Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Biobank Network” (SPHO Biobank Network) collects and stores cells and tumour material from patients treated at the SPOG member hospitals for research purposes.

In 2025, SPOG provided the sum of CHF 50 000 to support the work of this network. The aim of this support from SPOG is to ensure that researchers at our member hospitals have access to cells and tumour material for their basic research projects.

The Biobank Network added a total of 128 leukaemia samples, 36 samples of solid tumours and 42 blood samples in 2025. It received one request for leukaemia samples. Two publications were produced based on samples from the SPHO biobank network:

- Saorin A et al. Transcriptional remodeling shapes therapeutic vulnerability to necroptosis in acute lymphoblastic leukemia. *Blood*. 2025 Aug 14;146(7):861-873.
- Tirado N et al. CAR-T cells targeting CCR9 and CD1a for the treatment of T cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. *J Hematol Oncol*. 2025 Jul 1;18(1):69. •

The SPHO Biobank Network



The SPHO Biobank Network is a fundamental part of the infrastructure for clinical research. The Biobank collects biological material and the associated medical data and makes them available for research. This enables researchers to gain a better understanding of diseases and to develop new therapeutic approaches. The intention is to avoid placing an additional burden on patients in the process. If samples are required for SPOG clinical studies and research projects, samples can be taken for the Biobank at the same time, provided patients give their consent. This enables researchers to use the samples for current and future research projects. The organisation of the Biobank comprises two review boards, whose members are appointed by the SPOG General Assembly.



A word from the Managing Director

Dear readers

2025 – a year of optimism, success, and anticipation for SPOG! By opening three new studies, we strengthened the SPOG study portfolio, thereby once again enabling a larger number of children and adolescents with cancer to receive treatment within this framework. A new research project on acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, one of the most common childhood cancers, contributed greatly.

When families consent to having their child treated within a study, this entails an obligation on our part to ensure that these studies are conducted and funded in a sustainable and reliable manner, so that every treatment and every follow-up is fully secured. We are therefore grateful that, also in the past year, we were able to rely on established funding partnerships and secure new ones. A particular highlight was the signing of the new service agreement with the federal government following our recognition as a nationally relevant research infrastructure.

We are also very pleased about existing and newly acquired private donors. Every contribution counts in pursuing our vision: to cure as many children and adolescents with cancer as possible, with the best possible quality of life.

Technological advances in document management and regulatory developments now require complete traceability of all study management processes. This led us to introduce a system that ensures traceability and supports constructive collaboration with the authorities. This collaboration enables pragmatic approaches to current regulations and supports international compatibility. This is crucial in our research environment.

At the end of the year, my sincere thanks go to the patients and the families who participate in SPOG studies. They place their trust primarily in the teams at our member hospitals, as well as in SPOG as an organisation.

I would like to thank the member hospitals for their constructive collaboration, the General Assembly for its important role in fundamental discussions and decisions, and the SPOG Board for the constructive exchange and strong collaboration. In particular, I would like to thank the President for her exceptional commitment, her foresight and overview, her critical thinking, her trust, and her support for the team at the Coordinating Centre.

I would also like to thank the team for their achievements over the past year, for their dedication and perseverance, for their cohesion, and for their enthusiasm for our work.

Looking ahead: 50 years of SPOG

Preparations for the fiftieth anniversary in 2026 have already created anticipation at the Coordinating Centre and, hopefully, at the member hospitals as well.

We would be delighted to welcome you, dear readers, to one or more of our activities over the course of the year. •

With my enormous thanks and best wishes

Isabelle Lamontagne-Müller
Managing Director



Isabelle Lamontagne-Müller
has been Managing Director
of SPOG since 2008.

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Clinical Project Management

The Clinical Project Management team supports childhood cancer studies from preparation, through opening and implementation, to closure and archiving. A total of 19 study openings took place at various member hospitals. Three new studies were added to the SPOG portfolio.

In 2025, we opened the clinical study CHIP-AML22/Master at a member hospital. In addition, the clinical study SCRIPT-AML, which was opened in 2024, was launched at another hospital. SCRIPT-AML is now open for patient enrolment at all three SPOG member hospital that carry out stem cell transplants.

In 2025 we newly opened the ALL-BFM Registry research project at the first six centres and the SoTiSaR 2.0-NIS research project at the first five centres. The remaining centre openings for both research projects will follow in 2026. We also opened the SIOPEN BIOPORTAL research project, which had been launched in 2024, at the remaining six centres. In total, 19 study openings at a member hospital took place in 2025.

Details of the newly opened treatment study

- **CHIP-AML22/Master:** The aim of the clinical study is to develop an improved treatment with fewer side effects for children and adolescents with newly diagnosed acute myeloid leukaemia (AML).

Details of the newly opened research projects

- **ALL-BFM Registry:** The research project collects data from children and adolescents with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL). This is done regardless of whether the young patients are participating in a clinical study. The data are used by researchers for long-term observation and for planning new clinical studies and research projects.
- **SoTiSaR 2.0-NIS:** Soft tissue tumours arise in the soft tissues of the body (e.g. muscles, fatty tissue, and ligaments). In the non-interventional study SoTiSaR 2.0-NIS, researchers collect and analyse data from patients with such a soft tissue tumour.

Management of more than 65 studies

In 2025, we prepared 15 initial submissions for new clinical studies and research projects on brain and spinal cord tumours and solid tumours as well as leukaemias, lymphomas, and bone marrow disorders. In total, we managed a research portfolio of 66 studies (as of 31 December 2025). For this purpose, we made just under 200 submissions to the Swiss authorities (see table).

Submissions to the authorities

The table shows all relevant submissions to the authorities in 2025.

	Ethics committees	Swissmedic	Federal Office of Public Health	Total
Annual safety reports	25	23	1	49
Notifications of variation	100	42	1	143
Initial submissions	5	2	0	7
Total	130	67	2	199

Transition to electronic study documentation

In 2025, the SPOG Coordinating Centre transitioned to fully electronic study documentation, thereby enabling optimisation of our processes. The more efficient and sustainable management of study dossiers ultimately benefits patients. The Cloria Foundation and the Ernst Göhner Foundation also provided financial support for this extensive project.

Head Clinical Project Management

Lara Fux
Team Leader Clinical Project Management
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Quality Management

Ensuring the well-being of study participants and protecting their rights are key objectives of quality management. At the same time, it ensures a high quality of study results.

Quality management is independent of clinical project management. It plays a central role in compliance with the overriding international guidelines (ICH-GCP¹) and the legal requirements for clinical studies and research projects in Switzerland. Quality management should not only protect the rights, safety and well-being of study participants; it should also ensure that the study produces high-quality findings. Two major aspects here are systematic monitoring of studies at the member hospitals and regular external audits both at the SPOG Coordinating Centre and at the member hospitals. Regulatory inspections also fall within the responsibility of quality management.

Monitoring: supervising study processes

The purpose of monitoring is to continually supervise studies. It ensures strict adherence to the study protocols and compliance with all scientific, ethical and regulatory requirements.

In 2025, our monitors Sara Nyffeler, Petra Polakova (until April 2025), Seraina Domenig (from May 2025), and Adrian Manser carried out a total of 48 monitoring visits for clinical studies and nine visits for research projects at the SPOG member hospitals.

Audits: independent quality review

Audits are a further vital component of quality management at SPOG. Here, independent experts review compliance with defined standards at a specific point in time. SPOG is committed to regular audits of the SPOG Coordinating Centre and SPOG member hospitals by external service providers. The three SPOG member hospitals in Basel, Bern and Aarau were audited in 2024. In total, the external auditors identified 24 minor findings, three major findings, and no critical findings – overall, a good result.

In addition, the SPOG Coordinating Centre underwent an audit during the reporting year. The external auditors examined the newly implemented electronic study documentation as well as the validation processes. The audit was successful, and the electronic study documentation was implemented.

Inspections: regulatory review

Inspections are regulatory reviews of clinical studies. The authorities verify whether all legal requirements and ICH-GCP standards are met and whether patient safety and the quality of study data are ensured.

In Switzerland, Swissmedic is responsible for this. In November 2025, Swissmedic inspected the SPOG member hospital in Aarau; the formal conclusion of the inspection will take place at the beginning of 2026.

Continual quality improvement

Continual monitoring and regular audits are of central importance in performing clinical studies and research projects at the highest scientific standards. They help to continually improve the quality of clinical research. Those involved at the SPOG member hospitals along with the monitors at the SPOG Coordinating Centre and the external auditors regard the exchange as valuable and constructive.



Head Clinical Operations

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¹ ICH-GCP: Guideline for Good Clinical Practice by the International Council for Harmonisation.

Partner Relations

Maintaining existing partnerships and building new ones is central to the work of Partner Relations. We provide information about childhood cancer research in Switzerland and thereby motivate private individuals and institutions to support our mission. Without donations and financial contributions, clinical childhood cancer research in Switzerland would not be possible.

The Partner Relations department brings together communication, fundraising, and administration. Our goal is to strengthen the financial foundation of SPOG and to make childhood cancer research visible throughout Switzerland.

Communications

In 2025, we published 15 news articles on the website, two press releases, and 171 social media posts. This enabled us to maintain a continuous presence across our communication



channels. Transparent communication about our study portfolio and our activities helps to build trust and gain support. The campaign "Hüpfend Gutes tun" ("Skipping for a good cause") was launched on International Childhood Cancer Day on 15 February. Together with our ambassador Jann Billeter, we encouraged people to pick up a skipping rope and take part in a sporting activity to show support for SPOG childhood cancer research. A particular highlight was the cooperation with the Winterthur Sports Office. More than 300 children skipped in support of a world in which children and adolescents with cancer can be cured. We recorded 469470 jumps in total. The campaign raised public awareness of childhood cancer research and generated additional funding through collaboration with companies and foundations.

Planning for the anniversary activities in 2026 was in full swing during the reporting year. The first activity began in November: Children from across Switzerland created colouring pages of our mascot "Spogli". These will be combined into a detailed illustration for T-shirts, which our partner "Stadtland-kind" will sell during the anniversary year. The proceeds will go towards SPOG childhood cancer research.

A major project in 2025 was the development of the online platform "Swiss Kids Cancer Trials", which went live in December. It provides information for families about ongoing childhood cancer studies in Switzerland. The platform is independent and transparent; it is operated by SPOG and funded by the non-profit organisation "Zoé4Life".

Fundraising

The strategic task of fundraising is to further strengthen the financial security and independence of SPOG and to maintain existing partnerships. Collaboration with the federal government is particularly important in this regard. SPOG is



recognised as a research infrastructure of national relevance. The service agreement signed on 1 January 2025 with the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) for the years 2025 to 2028 forms an important cornerstone of our funding.

During the reporting year, the fundraising team further expanded cooperation with charitable foundations and institutions. For the first time, we submitted funding applications to foundations in Ticino and received positive responses. For several years, an increasing number of private individuals and companies have been supporting SPOG childhood cancer research. We ran various campaigns to engage them as partners in our mission. Our collaboration with our donors is particularly important to us, and their annual membership contributions provide essential support to SPOG. In 2025, more than 2000 people took out a new patron membership through doorstep fundraising. For this, we are very grateful. We can count on more than 5000 donors in total. Our campaign "Forschung ist Gold wert" ("Research is worth its weight in gold") also helped to raise awareness of childhood cancer research in private households: those interested were able to take part in an online quiz and, with a bit of luck, win a gold Vreneli coin offered by AEK Bank. We were also pleased with the response to our request for churches to consider SPOG as a recipient of donations. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who donated to childhood cancer research during a church service, at weddings and baptisms, or in memory of a loved one.

Administration

In 2025, SPOG organised various external and internal events. The second stakeholder meeting of SPOG and the Swiss Society of Paediatric Haematology and Oncology (SSPHO) took place on 7 March. Around 100 participants gathered in Bern to discuss the National Cancer Plan. The annual Scientific Meeting was postponed to January 2026 because the scientific community had already been able to exchange views at the stakeholder meeting. At the Swiss Oncology & Hematology Congress (SOHC) in Basel, which took place from 19 to 21 November, we presented SPOG at an information stand. Our President, Professor Katrin Scheinmann, who is a member of the programme committee, organised several sessions and took an active part as a speaker and chair. The Partner Relations department also coordinates the meetings of SPOG committees: General Assembly, Board, Scientific Advisory Board, and Patient Advisory Board. This adminis-



trative work behind the scenes is essential to ensuring that everything runs smoothly. Your support, whether as a patron, donor, foundation, or partner, enables the SPOG to continue its research and to help give children and adolescents with cancer a future. For this, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. ♥

Head Partner Relations

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Head Partner Relations
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Many thanks!

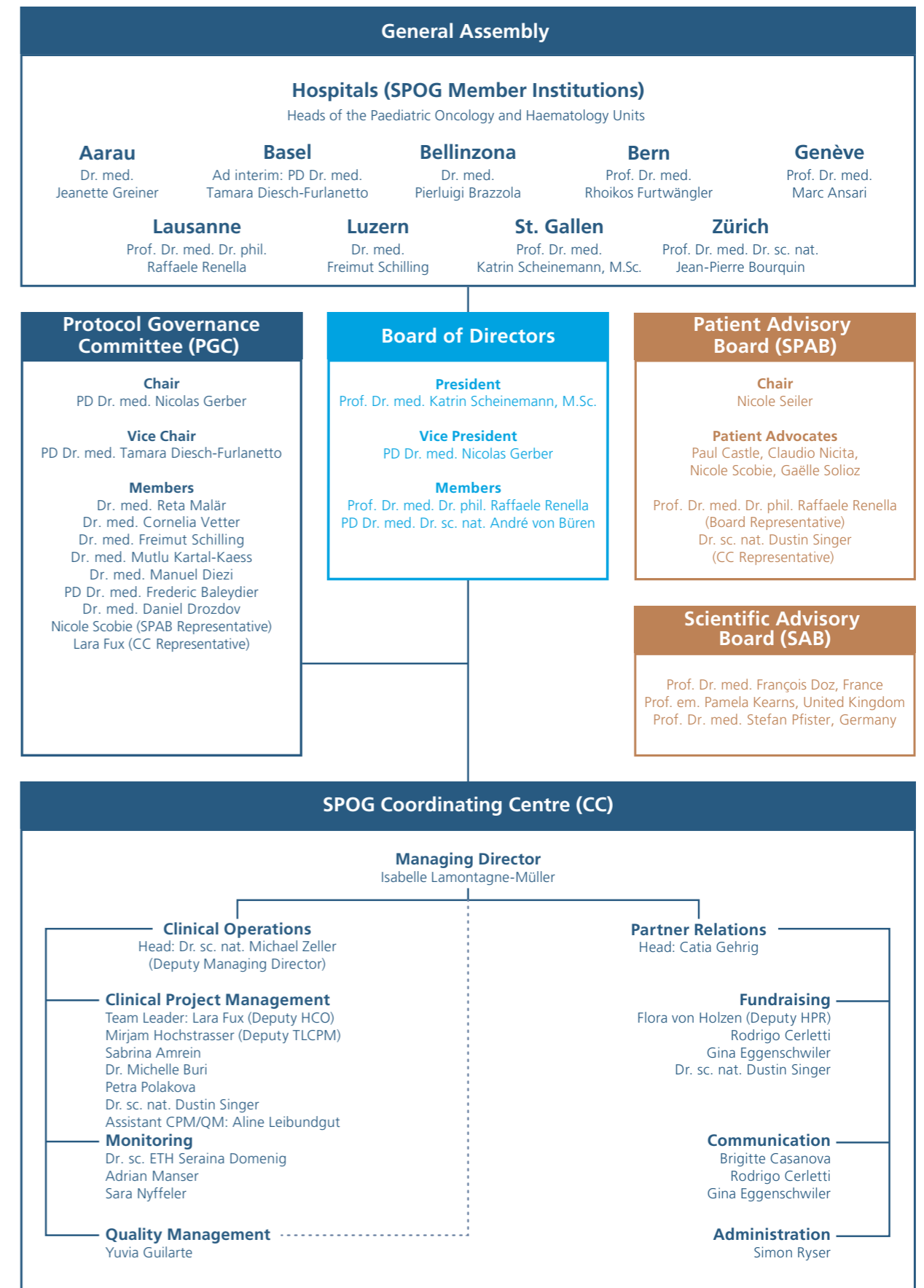


We extend our sincere thanks to each and every one of you. Thanks to your generosity, we can continue our research work and make an important contribution to developing new treatment options for young people with cancer.

Organisation chart (as of 31.12.2025)



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Source of funding

Whenever we open a study, we make a long-term commitment to ensuring that every child taking part can complete treatment within the study. Thanks to the support of many donors, the annual result not only covered all ongoing costs but also helped to secure the long-term continuity of our portfolio.

Foundations and associations (54.5 %)

The following 37 foundations and associations supported SPOG – in some cases with substantial contributions – and together form the main source of funding. They all share a commitment to the well-being of children and adolescents.

- Association Jurassienne d’Aide aux Familles d’Enfants atteints de Cancer (AJAFEC)
- Fondation Avenir
- Béatrice Ederer-Weber Foundation
- Catanias Charitable Foundation
- Celia Foundation
- Cloria Foundation
- Dingena W. von Westernhagen-Misset Foundation
- Dr. Angela Reiffer Foundation
- Drei Rosen Foundation
- Ernst Göhner Foundation
- Eugen & Elisabeth Schellenberg Foundation
- Fondation du Prince Nasser Eddin Nasser
- Fondation Georges et Sonia Gerber
- Fondation José Carreras pour la lutte contre la leucémie
- Fondation Marie & René
- Fondation Nazli SABRY
- Fondation Nirmo
- Fondation Robert et Carla Rey-Kortlandt
- Charitable Foundation EMPIRIS
- Golfen für krebskranke Kinder
- Hedy Glor-Meyer Foundation
- HKH Foundation
- Childhood Cancer Switzerland (Kinderkrebs Schweiz)
- Kinderkrebshilfe Zentralschweiz
- Swiss Cancer Research (KFS)
- Lotte und Adolf Hotz-Sprenger Foundation
- R. and V. Draksler Foundation
- Rheinkind Foundation
- Swiss Foundation for Clinical Cancer Research (special allocation following liquidation)
- Stiftung für krebskranke Kinder, Regio Basiliensis

- Helping Hands for Kids Foundation
- Thomas und Doris Ammann Stiftung, Zurich
- Tritan Foundation
- Verein Bärigüf
- Three further foundations that would like to remain anonymous

« SPOG ensures that children and adolescents with cancer have access to the most advanced therapies within the framework of international studies. The Thomas and Doris Ammann Foundation wholeheartedly supports this important work. »

Georg Frei, President, Thomas and Doris Ammann Foundation, Zurich

Federal funding (31.9 %)

On the recommendation of the Swiss Science Council (SSC), the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation increased federal funding for SPOG. The SSC recognises the national role of SPOG and recommends the increase in view of growing regulatory requirements and limited competitively awarded funding.

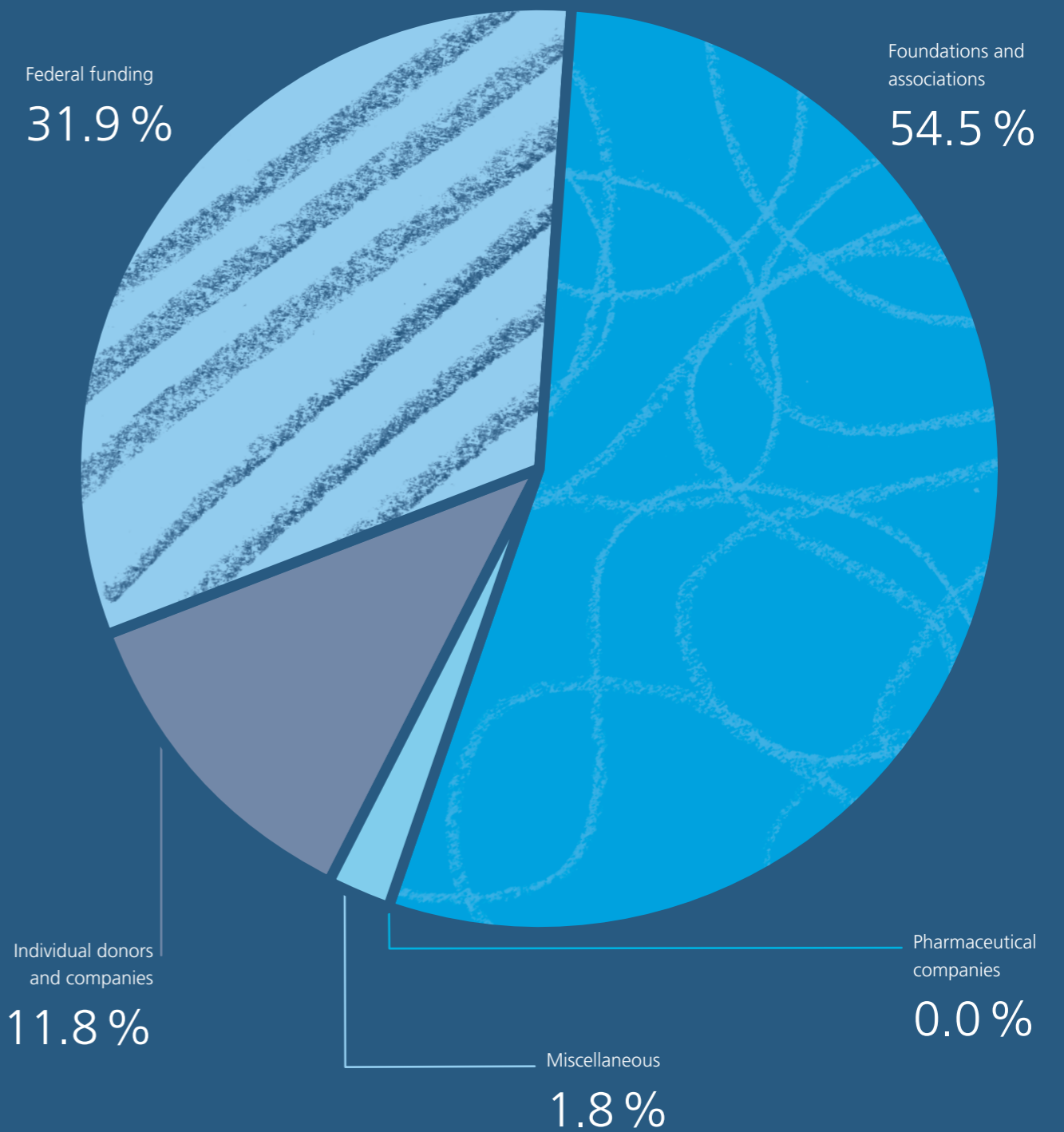
Support from individual donors and companies (11.8 %)

In 2025, more than 2000 new patrons chose to support SPOG. Around 40 companies also contributed to funding childhood cancer research – including through the “Hüpfend Gutes tun” (“Skipping for a good cause”) campaign. In addition, we received valuable donations amounting to around CHF 5810 in total from 12 church communities.

Miscellaneous income (1.8 %) and pharmaceutical companies (0.0 %)

Other income includes revenue from collaborations. One example is funding from the Zoé4Life association for the development of the online platform Swiss Kids Cancer Trials. Apart from sponsorship income linked to the Scientific Meeting, which did not take place in 2025, SPOG received no funding from the pharmaceutical industry. •

Sources of funding in 2025



Income statement

Operating account 1 January to 31 December	2025		2024	
	CHF		CHF	
Operating income				
Research contributions, Federal Government	1,075,000		922,110	
Research contributions from foundations and associations	1,439,858		2,060,252	
Research contributions from Swiss Cancer Research	400,000		400,000	
Donations, legacies and bequests	399,429		322,103	
Miscellaneous income	60,505		174,964	
Total operating income	3,374,792	100.0 %	3,879,429	100.0 %
Operating costs				
Miscellaneous study-related expenses	-81,160		-74,960	
Research contributions, centres	-609,988		-1,145,151	
Other operating expenses	-67,403		-61,679	
Total operating expenses	-758,550	-22.5 %	-1,281,789	-33.0 %
Interim result 1	2,616,242	77.5 %	2,597,639	67.0 %
Coordinating expenses				
Personnel expenses	-1,856,028		-1,752,017	
Other coordinating expenses	-708,616		-584,506	
Total coordinating expenses	-2,564,643	-76.0 %	-2,336,522	-60.2 %
Interim result 2	51,599	1.5 %	261,117	6.7 %
Financial result				
Financial income	49,758		27,579	
Financial expenses	-3,080		-2,360	
Total financial result	46,677	1.4 %	25,219	0.7 %
Interim result 3	98,276	2.9 %	286,336	7.4 %
Extraordinary expenses and out-of-period result				
Extraordinary expenses	0		0	
Out-of-period income	0		0	
Total extraordinary expenses and out-of-period result	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Annual result	98,276	2.9 %	286,336	7.4 %

Auditor's report



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Report of the statutory auditor on the limited statutory examination To the General Assembly of

Swiss Paediatric Oncology Group (SPOG), Bern

As statutory auditor, we have examined the financial statements (comprising the balance sheet, operating statement and notes) of Swiss Paediatric Oncology Group (SPOG) for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the Board of Directors. Our responsibility is to perform a limited statutory examination on these financial statements. We confirm that we meet the licensing and independence requirements as stipulated by Swiss law.

We conducted our examination in accordance with the Swiss Standard on the Limited Statutory Examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of entity personnel and analytical procedures as well as detailed tests of entity documents as considered necessary in the circumstances. However, the testing of operational processes and the internal control system, as well as inquiries and further testing procedures to detect fraud or other legal violations, are not within the scope of this examination.

Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not comply with Swiss law and the articles of association.

Bern, 16 March 2026

BDO Ltd

Laurence Gilliéron

Auditor in Charge
Licensed Audit Expert

i.V. Dimitri Bretting

Enclosure
Financial statements

BDO Ltd, a limited company under Swiss law, incorporated in Zurich, forms part of the international BDO Network of independent member firms.

The auditor's report is published in full on our website.
Follow the link below to read the document:
www.spog.ch/medien-downloads/





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SPOG in Publications in 2025

Below is a list of the publications that appeared in peer-reviewed scientific journals in 2025 in which staff members of SPOG member hospitals were actively involved. Publications by individuals from the wider SPOG network are not listed.

Publications with a green background are directly related to studies in which SPOG was involved.

Publications involving contributions from Young Investigator Award winners are highlighted in blue.

Publications cited in PubMed or in peer reviewed journals

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- 9 Bertacchi M, Vasey L, Wilhelm-Bals A, Rougemont AL, **Baleyrier F**, Parvex P. Primary renal diffuse large B-cell lymphoma presenting as new-onset kidney failure. *Pediatr Nephrol*. 2025 Oct;40(10):3181-3186. doi: 10.1007/s00467-025-06833-y. Epub 2025 Jun 10.
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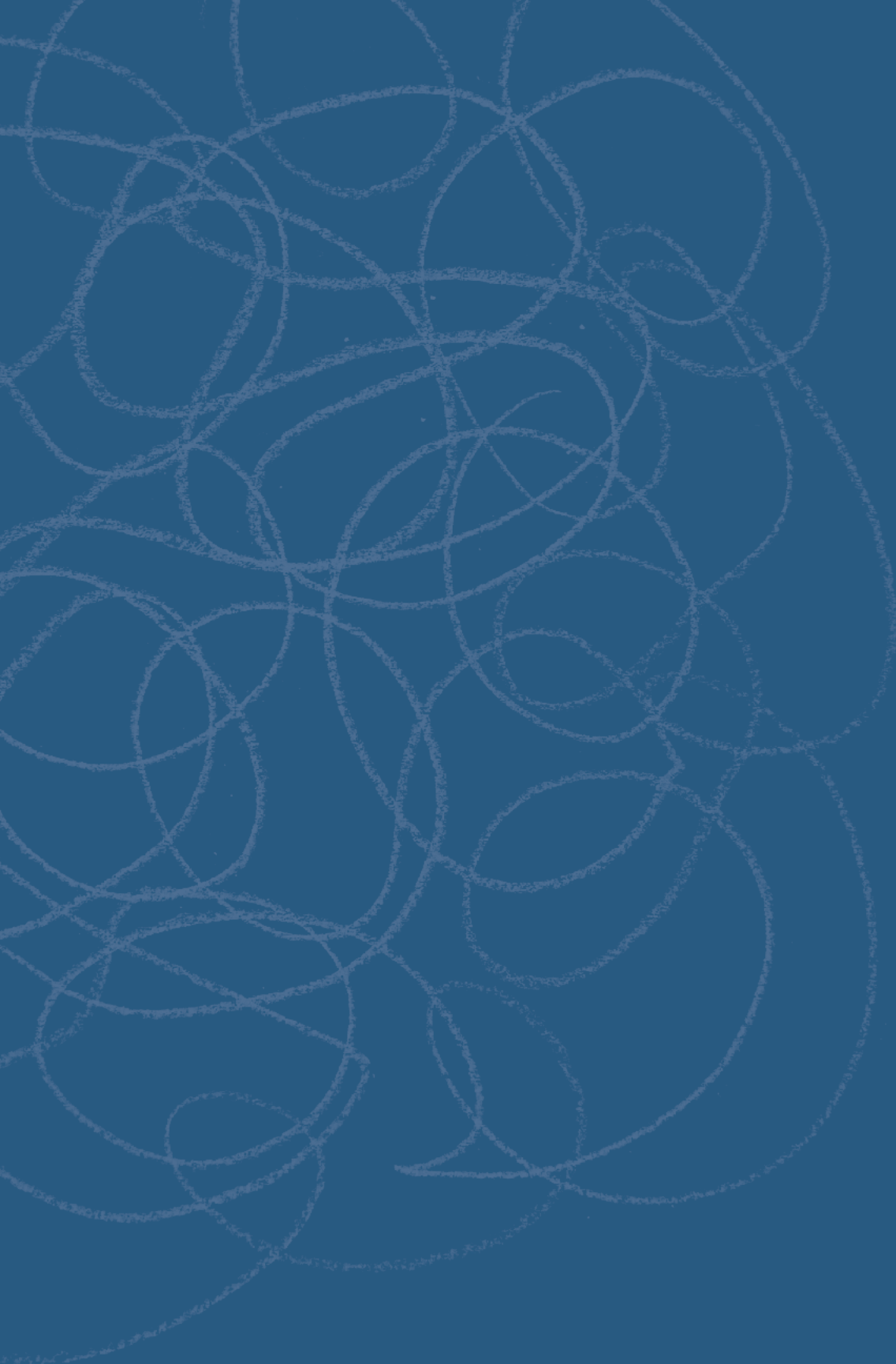
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