



2024 EIM European Emerging Leader Programme

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Description

The European Emerging Leader Programme is a project of Exercise is Medicine® (EIM) in collaboration with the European Initiative for Exercise in Medicine (EIEIM) to promote the development of new leaders, support EIM National Centre capacity building and enhance the long-term sustainability of EIM in Europe. The two-year programme is designed for early or mid-career professionals (making a career transition). Participants will receive advanced training on integrating physical activity into health care settings and insights into the numerous aspects of EIM, as well as become acquainted with EIM leaders and physical activity experts from around the world. The goal is to create a community of highly trained emerging leaders who collaboratively work together as part of multidisciplinary teams to advance EIM across Europe.

Objectives:

- Train individuals to take on leadership roles and responsibilities for their respective EIM European National Centres.
- Increase the visibility of EIM emerging leaders as physical activity specialists in Europe.
- Enhance international exchange and collaboration between early and mid-career professionals.
- Increase the capacity and long-term sustainability of EIM European National Centres.
- Increase collaboration amongst EIM European National Centres.
- Support the development of new EIM National Centres in other European countries.

Program leads:

- Daniel Neunhäuserer, M.D., Ph.D., P.D.
Specialist in Sports and Exercise Medicine
Assistant Professor in Exercise and Sport Sciences, Sports and Exercise Medicine Division
Department of Medicine, University of Padova
- Mark Stoutenberg, Ph.D., MSPH, FACSM
Professor, Head of Department, Sport and Exercise Sciences, Durham University
ACSM Consultant/EIM Global Program Officer

Honorary Faculty:

- Rebecca Battista, Ph.D.
- Alberto Casna, MSc
- Liz A. Joy, M.D., MPH, FACSM
- Sandra Mahecha Matsudo, M.D., Ph.D.
- Maijastiina Rouhiainen-Neunhäuserer, Ph.D.
- Johannes Hans Zwerver, M.D., Ph.D.



Andrea Bickerdike

Ph.D., M.B., B.Ch., BAO

Lecturer in Sport, Exercise & Health

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A medical alumnus (University College Cork [UCC], First Class Honours), Andrea Bickerdike is a lecturer in sport, exercise & health at Munster Technological University (MTU), academic lead of the health strand of the MTU's Health, Exercise & Sport Sciences (HEX-SPO) Research Group and MTU director of an inter-institutional M.Sc. programme in health and well-being (delivered jointly between MTU and the College of Medicine & Health at UCC). Andrea's Ph.D. research constituted a mixed-methods baseline needs analysis to inform MTU's Healthy Campus entity, which encompassed an investigation into the determinants of physical activity. She participated in the early co-creation process of what would later evolve into the Irish Healthy Campus Charter and continues to serve as MTU's representative on the Irish Healthy Campus Network. Since commencing her MTU faculty position, Andrea has successfully secured €596k in research funding and has disseminated 15 conference and 9 peer-reviewed publications. Previously featured as a role model for Irish women in research as part of the Technological Higher Education Association's celebration of International Women's Day, Andrea continuously endeavours to advocate and drive community outreach initiatives as an adjunct to academic activities. She has extensive experience in event management, serving annually on the cross-university MTU International Women's Day Conference Organising Committee and on the 2023 Executive Organising Committee for the All-Ireland Post-Graduate Conference in Sport Sciences, Physical Activity and Physical Education.



Federica Duregon

M.Sc., Exercise Professional

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Federica Duregon is an exercise professional in the Sports and Exercise Medicine Division, Department of Medicine, University of Padova, Italy. She has a master's degree in preventive and adapted physical activity (University of Padova). Federica is involved in the planning, coordination and evaluation of adapted physical activity for patients with noncommunicable chronic diseases in the hospital gym of the Sports and Exercise Medicine Division, University Hospital of Padova. She is also involved in research and project advancement activities focused on public health promotion. Additionally, she is an adjunct lecturer in the master's degree program of Preventive and Adapted Physical Activity. Through previous research grants, she has worked on adapted physical activity in disabilities and investigated physical activity interventions in onco-hematology and cirrhotic inpatients in real clinical settings. Currently, Federica is engaged in training on enhancing active learning through innovative strategies and simulation activities that can be utilised with students and trainees. Federica has been working with EIM Italy since 2021, specifically with their educational initiatives, and has participated in several national and international EIM events.



Ole Dalene Holst

Health and Exercise Physiologist
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Ole Dalene Holst is a 27-year-old health and exercise physiologist born and raised in eastern Norway. He pursued his initial education at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH), with an exchange semester at the University of Queensland (Australia). He is currently growing his expertise through a master's degree program in sports medicine, concentrating his work on pulmonary variations and changes experienced during the postpartum period in pregnant women. Alongside his academic responsibilities, Ole is the sitting chairman of Start NIH, an umbrella organization dedicated to enhancing student education through different initiatives on campus. Currently, Ole is a sitting board member of the NIH Student Council, Studentklinikken (a student clinic at NIH), and is part of the EIM Norway steering committee. His vision is for health and exercise physiologists, with their expertise and knowledge in exercise medicine, to contribute significantly to the Norwegian health care system and become integral to the treatment processes for individuals with various noncommunicable conditions.



Carolin Knoke

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Carolin Knoke is a sports scientist (M.Sc.) with three years of professional experience in the field of sport and health. She has been working as a research assistant in the health sector since June 2021 and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in sports science at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), where she is doing her doctorate on the topic of "ealth promotion in physical education with digital media" while working on health promotion in school settings.

Carolin is currently working at Ulm University Hospital as project manager of a multi-centre study. Prior to this role, she worked for 1.5 years with the European Initiative for Exercise in Medicine (EIEIM) based in Ulm, Germany, under the direction of Prof. Dr. Jürgen Steinacker. Through this role, she has gained deeper insights into EIMin Europe and the overall the goals and procedures of EIM. She has connections with many EIM stakeholders and members globally and has twice participated in the annual EIMcongress hosted by the American College of Sports Medicine®. Additionally, she helps organise Exercise is Medicine Days at the world's largest fitness trade fair (FIBO) in Cologne every year and helped organize and the EIM Europe Congress in Padua in October 2022.



Matina Koutroumpi

M.Sc., Ph.D.

Clinical Exercise Physiologist &
Lecturer

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Matina Koutroumpi is an ACSM Clinical Exercise Physiologist® with extensive clinical experience organising, supervising and prescribing exercise programmes for patients with chronic diseases. She holds an M.Sc. in health sports and exercise sciences from the University of Bristol (U.K.) and a Ph.D. in clinical exercise physiology from the Medical School of the University of Athens. Her Ph.D. research, conducted under the supervision of Prof. Pavlos Toutouzas in collaboration with Prof. Peter Kokkinos (Department of Cardiology, U.S. Veteran's Affairs), focused on the effect of exercise on left ventricular hypertrophy.

As an accredited lecturer at the University of Derby's Athens campus and visiting lecturer at the University of Thessaly's medical school, Matina has delivered a wide array of modules, such as exercise physiology, testing and assessment, and the use of new technologies for exercise rehabilitation. In the realm of clinical practice, Matina has organised, managed, supervised and prescribed exercise programmes for major hospitals in Greece, in both the private and public sector, such as the Hygeia and Evangelismos hospitals. Motivated by a commitment to improving the quality of life of patients and improving access to individualised exercise, she founded the company Balanced to provide online clinical exercise services to patients across Greece.



Andreas Mavrommatis

M.Sc., Clinical Exercise Physiology

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Andreas Mavrommatis graduated with first-class honours from Bangor University with a bachelor's degree in sports science in 2019. He proceeded to attain a master's degree in exercise as medicine (clinical exercise physiology) from Loughborough University in 2022. Upon returning to Cyprus, Andreas began his professional career in the personal training industry, leveraging his expertise of exercise in clinical populations to make a tangible impact on individual health and wellness. Simultaneously, he began his doctoral studies at the University of Nicosia, marking a significant step in his academic pursuit. As part of his doctoral research, he has designed a randomized controlled trial focusing on investigating the effects of long-term intradialytic exercise on cognitive function among patients diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease in Cyprus. In addition to contributing novel insights to the consensus of end-stage kidney disease research, Andreas aspires to attain national recognition for clinical exercise physiologists through his involvement in this pioneering emerging leader programme. He aspires to integrate exercise into medical practice within the Cypriot General Health Service, thereby enhancing overall public health outcomes.



Ciara McCormack

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Ciara McCormack is an assistant professor in the Department of Sport Science and Nutrition's Faculty of Science and Engineering at Maynooth University (MU) in Kildare, Ireland and is currently embedded in the health care setting at Mater Misericordiae University Hospital (MMUH), leading a strategic transformation of pulmonary hypertension research and services in Ireland, with a focus on improving patients' quality of life and access to services.

Ciara holds a B.Sc. in sport science and health and a Ph.D. in clinical exercise physiology from Dublin City University (DCU). Her Ph.D. research, conducted under the supervision of Prof. Niall Moyna, FACSM, focused on developing and evaluating home-based physical activity (PA) interventions for pulmonary hypertension patients in collaboration with respiratory consultant physicians at MMUH in Dublin.

Ciara uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate the role of PA in preventing and managing chronic diseases, particularly cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. She is particularly interested in the design and delivery of patient-centred, theory-based delivery models of exercise prehabilitation and rehabilitation – including hospital, community and home-based programmes – and understanding the putative mechanisms that underpin the beneficial effects of acute and chronic bouts of exercise across the lifespan and in individuals living with chronic disease.



Noa Oselka

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Noa Oselka is a medical doctor specializing in childhood obesity and cardiovascular risk factors while also studying for her master's degree in public health at Tel Aviv University. She has a deep-seated commitment to promoting holistic well-being and addressing critical health challenges through innovative solutions. From a young age, she has been actively involved in sports and embracing the principles of body cognition from an early age. This enduring passion for physical activity and its profound impact on health has fuelled her desire to explore avenues for integrating physical activity as a cornerstone of preventive medicine.

Throughout her medical education, Noa has dedicated herself to accompanying patients on their journey towards lifestyle modification, with a focus on dietary changes, physical activity promotion and smoking cessation. She recently completed a certificate program in nutrition to equip her with knowledge and tools to better guide patients, particularly those recovering from prolonged hospitalization. Witnessing the transformative outcomes of these interventions has reaffirmed her commitment to pursuing a career as a lifestyle medicine physician.



Marieke van Vessem

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Marieke van Vessem is a newly graduated sports medicine physician, having finished her five years of specialty training in December 2023. During her training she joined the EIM expert panel within the Dutch Association for Sports Medicine (VSG) to gain knowledge and contribute to the promotion of EIM in the Netherlands. Marieke currently works at the Department of Sports Medicine at Maxima Medical Centre (Veldhoven, The Netherlands) and at DeSportarts Utrecht (The Netherlands). Marieke is an all-round sport medicine physician, but has a focus on EIM (e.g., oncology, post-COVID, heart and pulmonary rehabilitation) and mountain medicine. In her work as a sports medicine physician, EIM is part of every consultation. One of the reasons Marieke is so enthusiastic about EIM is that it provides an opportunity to coach patients to regain autonomy and trust in their bodies. She believes that both values are important for a good quality of life. Her current research focuses on implementation of a program for oncology patients (fit with cancer), physical fitness post COVID and mountain medicine.



Marco Vecchiato

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Marco Vecchiato earned his B.S. in biotechnology (2011) and M.D. in medicine and surgery (2017) from the University of Padova. As a sport and exercise medicine specialist, Marco's clinical activities involve the functional evaluation of patients with chronic diseases, pre-participation screening in athletes, exercise prescription, sports injuries rehabilitation and musculoskeletal ultrasound. Marco's research activities involve the investigation of the benefits of exercise training in patients with chronic diseases, cardiopulmonary exercise testing, sports cardiology and mountain medicine. His current research focuses on the safety of outdoor activities for individuals with chronic diseases and the implementation of a tool to reduce risks and offer guidance to the hikers. He has been an invited speaker at several national and international conferences and has published more than 40 scientific works in international journals. Marco is also actively involved in the development of the EIM Italy initiative and is responsible for the development of their website. He has created the graphical and communication content on the EIM Italy website and social media pages, and he has participated in several national and international EIM-related events as part of an effort to actively spread the initiative across the country.



Christina Yfanti

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Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research
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Christina Yfanti obtained her master's degree in exercise physiology from the University of Thessaly, Greece. After receiving funding from the Greek State Scholarship (IKY Foundation), she completed her Ph.D. studies in health sciences at the Centre for Inflammation and Metabolism at the University of Copenhagen (Denmark) under the supervision of Prof. Bente K. Pedersen, focusing on the effects of chronic aerobic exercise with concomitant antioxidant supplementation on performance, insulin sensitivity and inflammation. She then moved to University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas, where she continued her academic work in human metabolism, specifically on brown adipose tissue metabolism.

Between 2012 and 2022, Christina worked as a project manager and clinical scientist in multiple clinical research organisations in the Netherlands where she expanded her skills and knowledge with regards to initiating and monitoring multinational clinical trials. In 2022, Christina received the Marie Curie Individual Fellowship to work at the Centre for Physical Activity Research, Rigshospitalet, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, where her work focuses on the use of exercise as adjunct therapy in chronic diseases, and especially in cancer. Via application of different modes and doses of exercise, her research interests include the elucidation of the underlying mechanisms responsible for the beneficial effects of exercise in cancer disease, such as epigenetic mechanisms and mechanisms related to cancer cachexia.



Thomas Yvert

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Thomas Yvert is an associate professor in the Department of Health and Human Performance of the Faculty of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences-INEF of the Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM; Spain). He earned his master's degree in genomics and sports biology from the University of Évry Val d'Essonne (France) and his Ph.D. in physical activity and sport sciences from the European University of Madrid (UEM; Spain). He is a member of the ImFINE research group on nutrition, exercise and healthy lifestyle led by Prof. Marcela González Gross at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. He is a collaborator in the ESBIDA research group on exercise, health and associated biomarkers. His main areas of research include exercise as a preventive factor for health and as a clinical treatment for different pathologies, especially for patients with cystic fibrosis, genetic variations related to physical capacity and elite athlete status, genetic variations related to ageing and life expectancy, and genetic variations related to sport injuries.



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