WFN Working Group ALS / Motoneuron diseases

Meeting December 5, 2023, 09:00 – 13:00 incl. break (ENCALS starts at 13:30 !)

ALS and related motoneuron diseases present with extensive heterogeneity regarding onset, spread and progression. To develop effective therapies, robust outcome parameters are needed to quantify these three domains.

This WFN meeting will engage with the fundamental question whether to

a) *stratify patients* by onset, spread, progression or surrogate markers to allow shorter and more efficient trials, or
b) *not stratify patients* in order to develop new therapies for all ALS patients

Schedule (Speakers must allow 5 mins of discussion)

09:00	Introduction and Welcome	Julian Grosskreutz	Lübeck, DE	julian.grosskreutz@uni-luebeck.de
09:05	Experience with ALS trial stratification	Jinsy Andrews	New York, USA	ja2289@cumc.columbia.edu
09:25	Surrogate marker stratification in ALS	Angela Genge	Montreal, CA	angela.genge@McGill.Ca
09:45	Coffee break			
10:00	PLS natural history studies: PLS – ALS	Hiroshi Mitsumoto Sabrina Paganoni	New York, USA Boston, USA	hm264@cumc.columbia.edu spaganoni@mgh.harvard.edu
10:30	Stratification by cognition - Pros and Cons	Sharon Abrahams Caroline McHutchinson	Edinburgh, UK	s.abrahams@ed.ac.uk caroline.McHutchison@ed.ac.uk
11:00	Subtype stratification	Jeffrey Rosenfeld	Loma Linda, USA	JRosenfeld@llu.edu
11:20	Stratification using Imaging	Senda Ajroud-Driss	Chicago, USA	s-ajroud@northwestern.edu
11:40	Electrophysiology stratification in ALS trials	Markus Weber (tent) Julian Grosskreutz	St. Gallen CH Lübeck, DE	markus.weber@kssg.ch julian.grosskreutz@uni-luebeck.de
12:00	Stratification by the ENCALS prognostication tool	Leonard van den Berg	Utrecht, NL	L.H.vandenBerg@umcutrecht.nl
12:20	Lunch			
12:20 – 13:00	Lunch with Panel discussion Stratify or NOT	Moderation: Angela Genge and Leonard van den Berg		

Biosketches

Jinsy Andrews

Jinsy Andrews is the Director of Neuromuscular Clinical Trials at Columbia University Medical Center in New York. In addition to overseeing neuromuscular clinical trials, she cares for people with neuromuscular disorders, primarily amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Dr. Andrews has experience conducting human clinical trials in neuromuscular disorders from phase 1 to phase 3 in both academic and industry settings. Her focus has been on clinical trial design and outcomes. She is currently the elected co-chair of the Northeast ALS Consortium (NEALS), elected National Bord of Trustee for the ALS Association, and appointed Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN). More recently, she has worked with US government entities including US Congress, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Institute of Health (NIH) to help increase funding for research, set priorities for research and improve efficiency for drug development in ALS. She is appointed to the UK MND Research Institute Oversight Committee and has been awarded Muscular Dystrophy Association's Diamond Award for ALS research and International Prize for Innovation in ALS.

Leonard van den Berg

Leonard van den Berg is professor of neurology and chairman of TRICALS. He is also director of The Netherlands ALS Center, which aims to improve the diagnosis, treatment/care and scientific research for ALS in the Netherlands. As chairman of the European Network to find the Cure for ALS (ENCALS), as initiator of the worldwide ALS genetics research Project MinE and as coordinator of awarded EU grants FP7 Euro-MOTOR (systems biology) and JPND SOPHIA (biomarkers), he is strongly committed to international collaborations on ALS research. He has been the principle investigator of multiple multicenter clinical trials and in 2015 he established the Treatment Research Initiative to Cure ALS to accelerate the search for a cure.

Hiroshi Mitsumoto

Hiroshi Mitsumoto, MD, DSc is a Wesley J. Howe Professor of Neurology at Columbia University Irving Medical Center since 1999 and the Director Emeritus of the Eleanor and Lou Gehrig ALS Center. In 1968, he graduated from Toho University School of Medicine, Tokyo. From 1972, he pursued further medical training in the USA as a medical intern (Baltimore City Hospital and Johns Hopkins), neurology residency at Case Western Reserve University, Neuropathology fellowship at Cleveland Clinic, and ALS clinical and basic research at Tufts University. In 1983, he began working at the Cleveland Clinic as the Director of the Neuromuscular Section and ALS Center. He has since been involved with extensive research in ALS, including improving patient care/management and end of life issues, multiple clinical trials, biomarker development, and multisite epidemiological studies. He organized several large national and international ALS Conferences and has developed new International ALS Clinical Trial Guidelines based on the Delphi method with international ALS experts. Dr. Mitsumoto also organized an International PLS conference in 2019, out of which a new PLS Diagnostic Criteria was developed and published. Currently, he is conducting a 29-multisite PLS Natural History Study in the USA and Canada. He is now also involved with AAN ALS Practice Guidelines.

Sabrina Paganoni

Sabrina Paganoni, MD, PhD, is an Associate Professor of PM&R at Harvard Medical School / Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. She is also the Co-Director of the Neurological Research Institute at the Massachusetts General Hospital and physician scientist at the Healey & AMG Center for ALS. Her research focuses on clinical trials and therapy development for ALS. She has served as PI of several ALS clinical trials and has been using novel trial designs, novel endpoints, and digital technology tools to innovate the way investigational products are tested in ALS. She is the co-PI of the HEALEY ALS Platform Trial, the first platform trial for ALS in the world. She recently reported the positive results

of the CENTAUR trial and is the co-Chair of the global PHOENIX trial. Her research has been funded by the NIH, non-profits, and industry; she published more than 100 peer-reviewed manuscripts and received several awards for her work including the 2021 Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Award.

Jeffrey Rosenfeld

Jeffrey Rosenfeld is a Professor of Neurology at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, as well as the Associate Chairman of that Department, and Director of the Neuromuscular ALS/MND Program at Loma Linda since June 2015. He established the Center for Restorative Neurology at Loma Linda University where he serves as the medical director. In addition, Prof. Rosenfeld is the founding director for the fellowship in Neurotherapeutics at Loma Linda University Health. Formerly Dr. Rosenfeld was Chief of Neurology at University of California, San Francisco (UCSF Fresno Program) and Director of the Neuromuscular and ALS Programs at UCSF Fresno. He has over 25 years of experience treating neuromuscular patients with extensive efforts in ALS. He has previously established one of the most extensive and largest multidisciplinary clinical and research programs in North Carolina and continues to maintain a large subspecialty, multidisciplinary practice, serving patients throughout California as well as those patients travelling from multiple other states

Sharon Abrahams

Sharon Abrahams is a world leading researcher on cognitive, behavioural and cerebral changes in neurodegenerative disease. She focusses on investigating memory and executive dysfunction in patients with Motor Neurone Disease and Frontotemporal Dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis. Her research uses experimental and clinical neuropsychological techniques and brain imaging to explore cerebral correlates of cognitive dysfunction. She plays a leading role in the Euan MacDonald MND Research Centre in Edinburgh which she cofounded in 2008, and is a member of the CCACE and the Centre for Clinical Brain Sciences. She received her First Class B.Sc. Honours Degree Psychology from the university of Reading in 1988 and her Ph.D. at the institute of Psychiatry in London in 1993. She was Programme Director of the MSc Human Cognitive Neuropsychology from 2006 to 2014 and leads her own Interdisciplinary Research Group Neurodegeneration since 2014.

Caroline McHutchinson

Caroline McHutchinson is a neuropsychologist with over 10 years of experience in research and strong UK and International collaborations. She is passionate about understanding the onset and progression of cognitive and behavioural dysfunction across the disease course in motor neuron disease, frontotemporal dementia, and other neurodegenerative disorders and how these relate to clinical factors including gene status and psychiatric symptoms. She has experience in teaching undergraduate and postgraduate student's methods of advanced neuropsychological assessment, statistical analysis, and statistical programming, and she provides mentorship to MSc students on dissertation projects and training and support to research staff at collaborative sites in the USA and South Africa.

Senda Ajroud-Driss

Senda Ajroud-Driss received her MD from the Medical School of Tunis, Tunisia, completed her neurology residency at the University of Illinois in Chicago and her neuromuscular fellowship at northwestern University. She joined the department of Neurology at Northwestern right after the fellowship. She is currently the director of the Lois Insolia ALS clinic, the MDA clinic and the neuromuscular fellowship program. She has been the PI on numerous ALS and neuromuscular clinical trials.

Markus Weber

Markus Weber is Professor of Neurology at the University of Basel and serves as chief of the Neuromuscular Diseases Unit/ ALS Clinic at the Kantonsspital St.Gallen in Switzerland. He received his medical degree from the University of Bonn in Germany and Diploma in Clinical Neurology from the University of London, Queen Square. Following completion of his residency at various academic hospitals in Germany and clinical fellowship in neuromuscular disorders at University of British Columbia in Vancouver , Canada (1997-2000) he founded the Neuromuscular Diseases Center/ALS Clinic in St.Gallen Switzerland. His main research interests cover outcome measures, clinical neurophysiology, trial designs and cannabinoid research. His work was crucial in developing a motor unit estimation technique called MUNIX as a biomarker for ALS trials. Dr. Weber has participated in several EU-funded projects and has received numerous grants from national funding bodies and various foundations. He has published well over 100 peer-review publications and book chapters. He has also served on many scientific advisory boards for various biotech companies. Dr. Weber is a member of the ENCALS executive committee and co-chair of the European Academy of Neurology scientific panel on ALS and FTD.

Julian Grosskreutz

Julian Grosskreutz is the Chair of Precision Neurology, Neuromuscular and Motoneuron Diseases at the University of Lübeck, Germany. He leads the neuromuscular center Schleswig-Holstein with the main focus on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis basic and translational research, biomarker research, clinical trials and regional care concepts. He has coordinated the global MRI repository of the Neuroimaging Society in ALS and cooperates on a national, European and global level with motoneuron disease researchers and clinicians to model disease progression and biomarker/neuroimaging driven stratification to facilitate clinical trial development.

Angela Genge

Angela Genge is recognized internationally for her work in clinical trial design and execution in the field of rare disease, particularly Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Myasthenia Gravis, and FSHD. Currently the Executive Director of the ALS center of excellence at the Montreal Neurological Institute, McGill University, she recently stepped down from executive director of the MNI's clinical trial unit after a 20 year tenure. She serves as scientific advisor for a number of clinical trial networks including ENCALS , CALS and is a member of the executive committee of the WFN ALS section. Her current activities include CMO of Quralis, Global PI of AL-S Pharma and serves as an advisor to sponsors for ALS, FTD, Myotonic Dystrophy, FSHD and Myasthenia Gravis among many others. A regular invited speaker on many topics from novel therapies in neuroscience to regulatory challenges internationally she has received a number of awards including the Forbes Norris Award, the Wings over Wall Street award, the YWCA woman of distinction, and a founder award from Community Cares. She advocates tirelessly for therapeutic innovation in neuroscience and access to therapeutics for the rare disease community.