

ARVO-SWISS Plenary Symposium 2025

Collaboration as a Key to Progress

Sitta Föhr

On August 28, 2025, the 6th ARVO-SWISS Plenary Symposium was held in Basel as part of the Annual Congress of the Swiss Society of Ophthalmology (SOG-SSO). Once again, the symposium offered an inspiring platform for the exchange of ideas and the presentation of innovative research. This year's theme, «Collaborative Research in Ophthalmology: Achievements and Challenges», highlighted how cooperation across institutions, disciplines, and national borders drives progress in vision research.

As in previous years, ARVO-SWISS invited distinguished experts whose work is shaping the future of ophthalmology.

Swiss Retina Research Network (SRRN)

After a warm welcome by **Prof. Carlo Rivolta**, President of ARVO-SWISS (IOB, Basel), and **Dr. H. Viet Tran**, Vice President (Hôpital ophtalmique Jules Gonin, Lausanne), the scientific program began with **Dr. Gábor Márk Somfai**, MD, PhD (Stadtspital Zürich & Spross Research Institute). In his presentation, «Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno: The Concept and the First Two Years of the Swiss Retina Research Network», Dr. Somfai introduced the Swiss Retina Research Network (SRRN – an initiative

connecting clinical and academic centers across Switzerland. He emphasized the growing importance of real-world evidence for evaluating treatment outcomes and improving patient care, and he underlined the power of collaboration as the foundation for sustainable scientific advancement.

European Vision Institute (EVI) Survey of Genetic Testing

Prof. Hendrik Scholl (European Vision Institute (EVI); Pallas Klinik Zürich & Medical University of Vienna) followed with the talk «Genetic Testing of Patients with Inherited Retinal Diseases in the European Countries: An International Survey by the European Vision Institute.» He introduced the mission of the EVI and

presented a roadmap for more coordinated ophthalmic research across the continent. Prof. Scholl emphasized how collaboration and shared standards can strengthen genetic testing for inherited retinal diseases and illustrated how harmonized data, improved infrastructure, and closer cooperation among research networks can enhance the current system

Research Networks for Rare Eye Diseases

The third presentation, by **Dr. Serene Siying Lin**, MBBS, PhD, FRCOphth (University of Manchester; Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust & Moorfields Eye Hospital, London), was titled «Progress through Collaboration: Overcoming Challenges in Rare Eye Dis-



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Dr. Serene Siying Lin, MBBS, PhD, FRCOphth (University of Manchester; Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust & Moorfields Eye Hospital, London),

ease through the ERDC and Genomic Networks.» Dr. Lin demonstrated how international cooperation within the European Retinal Disease Consortium (ERDC) and in global genomic research networks is helping to overcome diagnostic and therapeutic barriers in rare eye conditions. She highlighted the global impact of collaborative genomics research, showing how shared data and coordinated expertise are accelerating the translation of discoveries into real-world benefits for patients.

The symposium concluded with an engaged discussion between speakers and audience, underscoring the vivid interest of participants in collaborative research and the exchange of new ideas in ophthalmology.

Mapping the future – Projects and initiatives

Soon after its inception, ARVO-SWISS established the General Membership Meet-

ing, which – like the Symposium – is held annually in conjunction with the SOG-SSO Congress and invites all members to share ideas that advance the organization's mission. This year, again, the meeting reviewed past activities, discussed ongoing projects, and outlined future initiatives, once more reflecting the strong engagement of Switzerland's vision-science community.

Looking ahead, the next ARVO-SWISS Symposium will take place in 2026 and will, for the first time, include the ARVO-SWISS Award Ceremony, where the winners of the ARVO-SWISS Travel Grants will be honored and given the platform to showcase their work. These grants provide financial support to young researchers to participate in the annual ARVO Meeting in the United States, enabling them to present their research internationally and establish valuable scientific connections while advancing their career.

ARVO-SWISS was established in 2020 as a sub-group of the Swiss Society of Oph-

thalmology (SOG-SSO) and serves as the Swiss Chapter of The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO). As a national platform, ARVO-SWISS promotes and connects vision and ophthalmic research throughout Switzerland. Its goals include strengthening exchange between clinical and experimental science, supporting early-career researchers, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration on both national and international levels. •

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