



# CCBIO Newsletter

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### The nine Principal

#### Investigators:

[Lars A. Akslen](#)

[Bjørn Tore Gjertsen](#)

[Donald Gullberg](#)

[Anne C. Johannessen](#)

[Karl Henning Kalland](#)

[James Lorens](#)

[Rolf Reed](#)

[Helga B. Salvesen](#)

[Oddbjørn Straume](#)

## Coming CCBIO events:

- 18 Dec. CCBIO seminar, Arne Østman
- 16-20 Jan., CCBIO Research School - Cancer Research; Ethical, economic and social aspects
- 22 Jan., CCBIO seminar, John Cairns
- 12 Feb., Junior Scientist Symposium
- 19 Feb., CCBIO seminar, Anne Christine Johannessen

## Director's comments

**When 2014 is coming to an end, CCBIO is gaining significant momentum. Core personnel have been efficiently recruited, and project activities are proliferating.**

In June, the CCBIO Junior Scientist Symposium (JUSS) series was initiated, and the CCBIO Research School for Cancer Studies was opened in September, with Anne-Lise Børresen-Dale (UiO) as our guest and keynote speaker. The first CCBIO course 903 (January 2015) will focus on the ethics and economics of biomarkers and translational oncology. I encourage all to participate - these are very important and timely aspects of our activities. The course will be given by Roger Strand, Anne Blanchard, and John Cairns. In September, CCBIO had its first site visit by the Research Council of Norway. They were impressed by our setup and range of projects and activities. As one reflection of this, Geir Olav Løken and Marion Solheim were invited to present for the RCN and 20 other centres of excellence at the annual SFF-Forum in Oslo. Do not forget to attend this week's CCBIO seminar on 18.12.14 at 14:30 given by Prof. Arne Østman (Karolinska institutet). Finally, I would like to thank you all – administrative and scientific personnel – for your efforts during 2014. Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2015!

Best regards, Lars A. Akslen, Director

## CCBIO receives significant funding

**The Helse Vest Strategic Program has granted 15 mill NOK to CCBIO in collaboration with Helse Bergen and Helse Stavanger for the project "Personalized cancer therapy – biomarkers in clinical trials" (2015-2019).**



CCBIO recently also received funding for several individual projects: two with funding from the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and three Helse Vest grants from Samarbeidsorganet.

CCBIO Centre of Excellence in collaboration with Helse Bergen and Helse Stavanger Health Trust has qualified to a strategic regional health grant for development and establishment of more precise diagnostics for individualized therapy of cancer patients in 2015-2019. The project, coordinated by CCBIO PI Bjørn Tore Gjertsen, will support ongoing and planned clinical trials in advanced cancer, and intend to facilitate availability for early phase clinical studies with novel therapeutic concepts for patients in our region. Biomarkers in liquid biopsies will be tested and established for detection and surveillance of tumors and tumor heterogeneity, providing our cancer patients with diagnostics for more accurate therapy at diagnosis and relapse.

[Read more here.](#)



## Research of the highest quality

**5 of CCBIO's PIs received recently 9 million NOK in total from the Norwegian Cancer Society.**

The Cancer Society has distributed 173 million NOK to research this year. Anne Lise Ryel, Secretary General at the Cancer Society, has travelled around the country and surprised researchers who has applied for funding for their research. - The most important criterium to be awarded funding is the quality of the research. This is a recognition of the fact that the research is of the highest quality, says Ryel to Bergens Tidende.



CCBIO's Helga Salvesen was allocated the largest funding, of almost 5 million NOK. Her group is mapping different tumor types of gynaecologic cancer, to be able to provide better and more targeted treatment to the affected women. [Read more here.](#)

## CCBIO collaboration project achieved EU funding

**The TRANSCAN program (European Research Area Network on Translational Cancer Research) has announced their allocation of funding.**



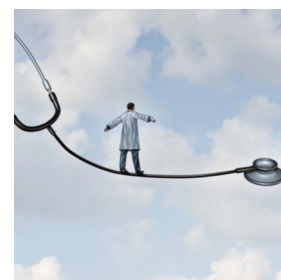
A project that CCBIO's Professor Lars A. Akslen participates in were among the ten projects that were singled out. Norway contributes as a partner in three of these. The Bergen project focuses on genetics of malignant melanoma and is titled "Identification of genetic markers involved in development of metastasis and second cancers in melanoma." [Read more here.](#)

## Focus on Ethics and Prioritization in new PhD course

**The CCBIO Research School's new PhD course on the Ethical, Economic and Social Aspects of Cancer Research, CCBIO 903, has now been launched and is open for enlistment.**

How do I assess the cost-effectiveness of cancer biomarkers, how do I make medical decisions when surrounded by risks, uncertainties and even ignorance, what does the 'good life' actually mean, and what might the future may hold for cancer research?

As the course is designed to be participatory, PhD candidates will be invited to reflect upon the ethical, economic and social aspects of their own research, in interaction with scholars and other students. [Read more here.](#)



## Recent CCBIO in the media



- 20.11.14, Dagens Medisin, "[Gensignatur er "motorvei" for spredning](#)", Lars Akslen, Monica Mannelqvist.
- 16.11.14, BT, "[Derfor går kreftcellene berserk](#)", Lars Akslen. Also [pdf-version.](#)
- 30.10.14, Hubro, "[Angriper kreftens kommandosenter](#)", Xisong Ke from Karl-Henning Kallands research group.
- 30.10.14, BT, "[Ble overrasket med 33 millioner](#)", Helga Salvesen, Lars Akslen, Bjørn Tore Gjertsen, Karl-Henning Kalland, James Lorens.

## Next CCBIO seminar, Arne Östman



Remember the next CCBIO seminar with pizza get-together afterwards, **Thursday, 18 December, 14.30, Auditorium 4, BBB** Speaker: **Arne Östman** from the Department of Oncology-Pathology, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden. Title: **Impact of PDGFR-regulated fibroblasts and pericytes on tumor progression, prognosis and drug response.** [Abstract](#)

## Next CCBIO Junior Scientist Symposium

Next Junior Scientist Symposium is **12 February**. Contact person is Elisabeth Wik. See overview of the [CCBIO Junior Scientist Symposia here](#).



## Recent publications



You can find the last publications [on this link](#).

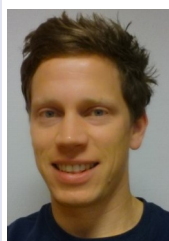
## International Conference, “The tumor stroma- friend or foe?”, October 22-23

The Marie Curie ITN Network CAFFEIN, [caffein.ku.dk](http://caffein.ku.dk), arranges it conclusive international conference in in Bergen 22nd-23rd October 2015.

The conference is titled “The tumor stroma- friend or foe?” and all are welcome to attend. The following international and national speakers have confirmed their attendance: [Eric Sahai](#), [Arne Östman](#), [Cedric Gaggioli](#), [Ryan Driskell](#), [Lars Akslen](#), [Bjørn-Tore Gjersten](#), [Marion Kusche-Gullberg](#), [Emmet McCormack](#), [Helga Salvesen](#). Save the dates, further information will follow!

## CCBIO Mini-biographies

In the following newsletters, CCBIO will present its junior researchers (PhDs and PDs) with short biographies. The aim is to increase knowledge about CCBIOs junior staff and their research focus, the latter also reflecting the research of CCBIOs various groups. In this first issue of the series, we will present the PhDs and PDs that have been recruited on the basis of CCBIOs RCN and UiB core funding. We have included the three new senior engineers that were recruited to support each of CCBIOs three main programs.



**Martin Pilskog**, age 32, M.D. from UiB, has been training at Department of Oncology, Haukeland University hospital, until he in 2014 commenced upon his PhD position in CCBIOs Program 3, with Oddbjørn Straume as his main supervisor. Martins research project is about biomarkers and mechanisms of angiogenesis in relation to metastatic renal cell carcinoma.

**Anne Blanchard**, age 29, from France, has a background in earth sciences and ecological economics. Anne did her PhD on interdisciplinarity related to climate change, and her interests since then have been the complex science-policy interface and the role of science in society. Anne is a post-doctoral researcher at CCBIO based at the Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities (SVT), in the group of Roger Strand. She looks at ethical, legal and societal aspects of cancer biomarkers.

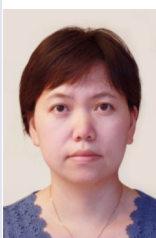
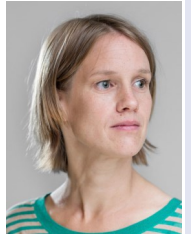






**Maria Ramnefjell**, age 39, M.D. from UiB, certified in surgical pathology (2011). Maria is a PhD student in CCBIOS Program 2 with Lars A. Akslen as her main supervisor. Marias project focuses on molecular and clinico-pathological characteristics of non-small cell lung cancer. The aim is to explore novel biomarkers and potential treatment targets in this disease, with focus on the tumor microenvironment including activated angiogenesis and epithelial-mesenchymal transition.

**Monica Mannelqvist**, age 39, M.S. in molecular biology from Umeå University, Sweden. Monica got her PhD at UiB on a study of angiogenesis and biomarkers in endometrial cancers, and she subsequently had a post-doc period in Akslens group focusing on breast cancer studies. In 2014 she commenced her current position as senior engineer and lab manager in Akslens group and CCBIOS Program 2.



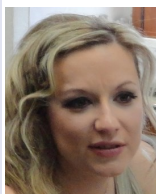
**Ning Lu**, age 40, from China, M.S. in molecular virology (2001) at Medical College of Qingdao University, China. In 2002, she joined Donald Gullberg's research group at Uppsala University and subsequently moved to Bergen in 2004. She obtained her Ph.D. at UiB in 2008. Currently, she is a senior engineer in CCBIOS Program 1 and is mainly working on projects to study the role of integrin  $\alpha 11\beta 1$  in tumor-stroma interaction and its role in epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT) during tumorigenesis.

**Reidun Kopperud**, age 45, M.S. in 1994 at UiB (HIV virus). Reidun got her PhD and post-doc at UiB working on cAMP signalling (Døskeland's group). In 2014 she started as a senior engineer in CCBIOS Program 3 working on biomarkers and molecular alterations in gynaecologic cancers. She is also involved in biobank work.



**Tina Fonnes**, age 26, got her veterinary degree from the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science in 2013. From 2014 she is a PhD student in CCBIOS Program 3 with Helga Salvesen as her main supervisor. Tina's PhD work will be based on cell lines, clinical samples, and mouse models of endometrial cancer, and her focus will be on imaging protocols and therapeutic studies.

**Waqas Azeem**, age 29, is of Pakistani origin and has a degree in veterinary medicine from Pakistan and a Masters in molecular biology from Sweden. From 2014 he is a PhD student in CCBIOS Program 1 with Karl-Henning Kalland as his main supervisor. His research project is on the identification of molecular therapeutic targets in prostate cancer cell sub-populations.

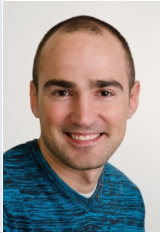


**Konstantina Dimitrakopoulou**, age 31, is of Greek origin and received her M.S. in biomedical engineering (2007) and a PhD (2014) from University of Patras in Greece. Her doctoral thesis focused on complex disease analysis through systems biology approaches (supervised by Prof. A. Bezerianos). From 2014 she is a post-doc at CC BIO, collaborating closely with Prof. Inge Jonassen (CBU, Department of Bioinformatics, UiB), and Lars A. Akslen, on systems biology studies of the breast cancer microenvironment.



**Agnete Engelsen**, age 36, M.S. in cell and developmental biology from UiB. Agnete received her PhD at UiB on studies of brain tumor biology (2013). Since 2013 she is a post-doc at CCBIO's Program 2 working on Axl and tumor-stroma interactions in the group of James Lorens, focusing on breast and lung cancer models.

**Jessica Furriol**, age 33, from Spain, M.S. in physiology from the University of Valencia. In 2013 she finished her PhD on NF-KB in breast cancer (group of Prof. Ana Lluch). From 2013 Jessica is a post-doc in CCBIO's Program 2 (Akslens group). She is currently working on genetic variants related to tumor-stroma interactions and protein expression patterns in breast cancer.



**Sébastien Bougnaud**, age 31, is of French origin and holds a M.S. in biology (neuroscience) from the University of Strasbourg. He did his PhD on brain tumor biology in Luxembourg. Sébastien is from 2014 a post-doc in CCBIO's Program 2 (Lorens group) and works on the development and characterization of animal models of tumor-stroma interactions in breast and lung cancer.