MINI BIOGRAPHIES

PhD Candidates, Postdocs and Researchers 2021

ANANDAN, SHAMUNDEESWARI

MS in biotechnology and a PhD candidate in the Bjørge and McCormack groups until she completed her PhD in September 2021. Her PhD focused on using single cell mass cytometry by time of flight (CyTOF) to mine the ovarian tumor microenvironment with prospective exploration of novel biomarkers and developing preclinical animal models towards precision medicine in ovarian cancer. Currently, she is working as a head engineer at Neuro-SysMed.

BAYSAL, EYLEM

MS in stem cell sciences from Hacettepe University, Turkey, and currently a PhD candidate at the Immune-Driven Regeneration research node at the Tissue Engineering Group and the Costea group. During her masters, Eylem examined the effect of melatonin on the Hippo signaling pathway in dental pulp stem cells. Her PhD project is focused on deciphering the molecular mechanisms involved in the crosstalk between regulatory T cells and bone marrow-derived mesenchymal stem cells in the context of bone regeneration.

ASKELAND, CECILIE

MD from the University of Bergen and works as a senior pathologist at the Department of Pathology, Haukeland University Hospital. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Akslen group, studying tissue-based biomarkers in aggressive subgroups of breast cancer with emphasis on immune responses, tumor-stroma crosstalk, and BRCA1 germline mutations, by using the imaging mass cytometry (IMC) Hyperion Imaging System.

BENTSEN, PÅL TORE

MD from the University of Bergen and currently a PhD candidate in the Gjertsen group. His research is focused on acute graft-versus-host disease (aGVHD) after allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, with emphasis on corticosteroid resistance. Using high-dimensional single cell analysis, the aim is to gain insights into basic disease biology and mechanisms of treatment responses.

BERG, HEGE FREDRIKSEN
MS in molecular medicine from the University of Essex and is currently a PhD candidate in the Krakstad group, working on endometrial cancer. Her main focus is establishment of advanced preclinical model systems to improve our understanding of endometrial cancer biology and identify new therapeutic strategies.

BJØRNSTAD, OLE VIDHAMMER
MS in biomedicine from the University of Bergen and currently a PhD candidate in the Akslen group, supervised by Heidrun Vethe and Lars A. Akslen. His PhD project focuses on different aspects of breast cancer stem cell biology and tumor microenvironmental interactions, with special emphasis on nerves.

BREMER, ANNE (NÉE BLANCHARD)
PhD in science and technology studies focusing on interdisciplinarity related to climate change and has a particular interest in the complex science policy interface and the role of science in society. She was a postdoc in the Strand group, focusing on ethical, legal and societal aspects of cancer biomarkers. Bremer is currently a researcher in the same group, continuing her postdoc work and aiming to create reflexive and dialogic spaces within CCBIO to discuss issues related to precision oncology. In particular, she has co-organized the CCBIO903 PhD course, and edited together with Roger Strand the book "Cancer Biomarkers: Ethics, Economics and Society" (Megaloceros Press, 2017). She has co-edited the follow-up volume, to be published by Springer in 2022: "Precision Oncology and Cancer Biomarkers: Issues at stake and matters of concern".

BØRRETZEN, ASTRID
MD from the University of Bergen. She was a PhD candidate in the Akslen group (main supervisor Professor Ole J. Halvorsen) until she completed her degree in October 2021. Her research project focused on epithelial-mesenchymal transition, angiogenesis and molecular markers in aggressive prostate cancer.

CARRASCO, MANUEL

PhD from the Andalusian Molecular Biology and Regenerative Medicine Centre (CABIMER), focusing on how transcriptional networks control pancreas embryonic formation and adult pancreatic function. He thereafter did a postdoc at the University of Bergen, unveiling the importance of spatial organization to determine the mechanisms behind genetic diabetes. Carrasco is currently a researcher in the Akslen group, working with organoids as a model system for microenvironmental interactions in breast cancer, combining his experience as a developmental biologist and a pharmacist to understand mutual interactions between tumor cells and nerves in breast cancer.

CHEN, YING

MD, pathologist and currently medical director at Fürst Medical Laboratory (Oslo). She is since 2015 a part time PhD candidate in the Akslen group, supervised by Lars A. Akslen, Tor-Audun Klingen, and Elisabeth Wik. Her PhD project focuses on breast cancer stroma and aims to identify the interplay between tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes, vascular invasion and stromal elastosis.

D'MELLO, STACEY

PhD in molecular medicine from the University of Auckland. She is currently a postdoc in the Lorens group. Her research focuses on tumor cell plasticity in malignant melanoma and its role in therapy resistance with a particular focus on AXL receptor kinase mechanisms.

DAS, RIDHIMA

Certified dental surgeon from India with an MS in experimental oral pathology from Queen Mary University London, UK. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Costea group, and her research project is focused on novel methods and sources for regeneration of oral mucosa.

DHAKAL, SUSHIL

MS in biomedical sciences from the University of Bergen. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Lorens group, with a project that aims to understand the immune interplay between type 1 interferons and the receptor tyrosine kinase AXL in tumor cell plasticity and immunotherapy resistance.

DHAKAL, SUSHMA PANDEY

MDS in oral medicine and radiology from MCODS, Manipal University, Karnataka, India and BDS from BPKIHS, Nepal. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Oslo, jointly with the Costea group. Her research project aims to identify prognostic biomarkers in oral cancer and precursor lesions, particularly focusing on the prognostic significance of proliferation- and differentiation-related proteins in oral leucoplakia and oral squamous cell carcinoma.

DILLEKÅS, HANNA

PhD from the University of Bergen in 2020, focusing on tumor dormancy and how tissue trauma and wound healing can stimulate escape from dormancy to produce overt metastatic disease in breast cancer. She is currently a guest researcher in the Straume group and is coordinating the CCBIO Junior Scientist Symposia together with Maria Lie Lotsberg.

DONGRE, HARSH

PhD from the University of Bergen focusing on the role of microRNAs in progression of squamous cell carcinomas. Since November 2020, he is a postdoc in Costea and Bjørge groups on differential mechanisms of tumor-stroma interactions in human papilloma virus (HPV) positive and HPV negative carcinomas.

DOWLING, TARA HELEN

MS in biomedicine from the University of Bergen. Since 2016 she is a PhD candidate in the McCormack and Gjertsen groups, focusing on development of a novel humanized bone marrow stem cell derived scaffold model in mouse. This bone marrow model will help to identify potential biomarkers, facilitating development of new therapeutic modalities for myeloid leukemias.

DYBVIK, JULIE

MD from the University of Bergen and has been working as a resident in radiology at the Department of Radiology, Haukeland University Hospital. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Krakstad group, working on functional imaging for individualized treatment of uterine cancer.

EHSANI, REZVAN

PhD in bioinformatics from NTNU Norway, focusing on computational methods on gene regulation at the level of transcription. Currently he is a postdoc at the Computational Biology Unit (CBU) and CCBIO in the Jonassen and Akslen groups. He is focusing on analyzing tumor microenvironment data from the Hyperion Imaging System to generate spatial information on sub-cellular resolution on protein abundance in and around tumors.

ELDEVIK, KRISTINE FASMER
MS in physics from the University of Oslo and works as a medical physicist at the Department of Radiology, Haukeland University Hospital. She is since 2017 a PhD candidate in the Krakstad group, working on functional imaging for individualized treatment of uterine cancer.

FORSSE, DAVID
MD, a gynecologist and a PhD candidate in the Krakstad Group until he completed his PhD in October 2021. His PhD work was on novel preoperative biomarkers and evaluation of altered treatment strategies to improve outcome for endometrial cancer patients, studying tissue biomarkers in endometrial and cervical cancer.

ENGELSEN, AGNETE
PhD in biomedicine from the University of Bergen, focusing on intra-tumoral heterogeneity in glioblastoma and implications of immature phenotypes for tumor growth and resistance to treatment. Since 2013, she has been affiliated with CCBIO, first as a postdoc in the Lorens group, and later as a visiting researcher at the Gustave Roussy Cancer Center Grand Paris (France). Agnete is currently a researcher in the Lorens group, establishing a non-small cell lung cancer patient derived organoid model recapitulating the complex tumor-immune microenvironment.

GABRIEL, BENJAMIN
PhD from the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin, and a doctorate from Freie Universität in Berlin, followed by a 5-year postdoctoral residency at the University of Rhode Island, with a focus on the T-cell repertoire in the context of HIV. Gabriel is currently a researcher in the Kalland group, where he is involved in the development of cell-based therapeutic strategies for the treatment of cancer.

ESPEDAL, HEIDI
PhD in neuro-oncology from the University of Bergen. She is since late 2018 a postdoc in the Krakstad group, with a focus on functional imaging of endometrial cancer mouse models..

GELEBART, PASCAL
PhD in the field of immune oncology from the University of Paris, Hospital Saint-Louis Research Institute. He is currently a researcher in the McCormack group, working on the Prelim project towards the development of novel preclinical models of leukemias and lymphomas as well as identification of novel targeted and immune therapies for hematological malignancies.

GISSUM, KAREN ROSNES
MS in evidence-based practice and an oncology nurse. She is since March 2020 a PhD candidate in the Bjørge group with Line Bjørge as main supervisor and Roger Strand as co-supervisor. The focus of her PhD project is to reveal the association between cytoreductive surgery, inflammatory processes, and patient-reported outcomes in epithelial ovarian cancer patients, and to use the knowledge obtained to identify biomarkers for disease management.

GJERDE, CHRISTIANE HELGESTAD
MD from the University of Bergen. She is now pursuing her PhD in the Bjørge and McCormack groups. Her research focuses on the development of better preclinical models of ovarian cancer, through the establishment, characterization, and application of an organoid platform.

GRØNDAL, STURLA MAGNUS
MS in nanoscience from the University of Bergen and is currently a PhD candidate in the Lorens group. His PhD project is focused on how AXL signaling can lead to immune dysregulation in cancer and fibrotic diseases.

GULATI, ANKUSH
MD and a specialist in Nuclear Medicine. Currently a PhD candidate researching on FDG-PET/CT of endometrial cancers as part of the Krakstad group at the Mohn Medical Imaging and Visualization Centre, including radiomics analysis.

GULLAKSEN, STEIN-ERIK
PhD from the University of Bergen in 2018 on single cell signaling and immune profiles in chronic myeloid leukemia. He is currently a researcher in the Gjertsen group, where his work revolves around single cell profiling of changes in immune cells and signal transduction in blood cells from patients with chronic myeloid leukemia enrolled in clinical trials.

HA, TRUNG QUANG
MD from Vietnam and an MS in medical biology from the University of Bergen. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Gjertsen group. His research focus is on developing p53-independent and p53-dependent novel therapies for the treatment of acute myeloid leukemia.

HALLE, MARI KYLLESØ

PhD from the University of Bergen on molecular alterations suggesting new treatment strategies in uterine carcinomas. She is currently a researcher in the Krakstad group, working on gynecological cancer. Her main focus is to characterize targetable molecular alterations driving aggressive cervical carcinoma.

HUGDAHL, EMILIA

PhD from the University of Bergen focusing on biomarkers for aggressive cutaneous melanoma. She is currently working as a dermatologist at Bryggen Hudlegesenter and as a researcher in the Akslen group, exploring markers of immune cells and angiogenesis to define subgroups of aggressive melanoma using imaging mass cytometry (IMC).

HELLESØY, MONICA

PhD in biomedicine from the University of Bergen, and currently a postdoc in the Gjertsen group. Her research is focused on investigating targeted therapies in acute myeloid leukemia with the aim of characterizing therapeutic effects and understanding therapy resistance mechanisms. This involves high resolution single cell analyses of clinical trial samples from AML patients treated with targeted therapies directed towards the AXL and FLT3 tyrosine kinases.

HØIVIK, ERLING

PhD in molecular biology from the University of Bergen. He is currently a researcher in the Krakstad group. His research is particularly focusing on endometrial cancer with emphasis on metastatic spread, using genetics and genomics analysis.

HUA, YAPING

PhD from the University of Bergen focusing on the discovery of leading compounds and their molecular targets in prostate tumor-initiating cells as well as STAT3 inhibitors in autologous immature dendritic cells. She is currently a postdoc in the Kalland group, focusing on next generation AR modulators and STAT3 inhibitors in prostate cancer cells and therapeutic immune cells.

INGEBRIKTSEN, LISE MARTINE

MS in biomedicine from the University of Tromsø. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Akslen and Wik groups, with Elisabeth Wik as main supervisor. Her PhD project focuses on identifying biomarkers with clinical relevance, explaining some of the increased tumor aggressiveness seen in breast cancer of the young, with potential for improving individualized treatment and outcome.

JACOB, HAVJIN
MS in molecular medicine from NTNU and a PhD from the University of Bergen. She was until 2021 a postdoc in the Krakstad group. Her research focused on molecular markers in endometrial cancer and their association with functional imaging parameters for individualized cancer treatment.

KALIYUGARASAN, SATHESHKUMAR
MS in Software Engineering from HVL and UiB, and currently a PhD candidate in the Krakstad group and the machine learning group at Mohn Medical Imaging and Visualization Center, Department of Radiology, Haukeland University Hospital. His PhD project is mainly related to machine learning and medical image analysis, with a particular focus on design methodologies in deep learning for efficient use of data with a special focus on gynecological cancers.

KANG, JING
MS in dermatology and venereology from Shandong University, and another MS in biomedicine from the University of Bergen. Until 2021 she was a PhD candidate in the Lorens group, focusing on the role of AXL signaling in cancer, with the overall aim to study TAM receptor dynamics in melanoma therapy resistance. She explored how GAS6-mediated AXL receptor clustering activate unique cell signaling pathways underlying EMT and metastasis, and whether the role of AXL receptors in SARS-CoV-2 infection implicates bemcentinib as a potential therapeutic.

KANG, JIYEON
PharmD and MS in global health from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is a PhD candidate in the Cairns group at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, supervised by John Cairns and focusing on how real-world data could be utilized in Health Technologies Assessment and especially related to targeted cancer treatments.

KJØLLE, SILJE
MS in molecular biology from the University of Bergen, and currently a PhD candidate in the Akslen group. Her research is focusing on hypoxia patterns in breast cancer. The project aims to explore the hypoxia responses at the proteomic level and effects of hypoxia on the tumor microenvironment and processes involved in tumor progression.

KLEFTOGIANNIS, DIMITRIOS
PhD in bioinformatics, focusing on computational identification of enhancers and promoters from genomic and epigenomic datasets. Currently he is a postdoc with the Jonassen and Akslen groups, where he is developing computational methods for single cell spatial analysis, combined with machine learning algorithms to gain insights into cancer progression mechanisms.

KLEINMANNS, KATRIN

PhD from the University of Bergen and currently a postdoc in the McCormack and Bjørge groups. Her research focuses on the development of immunocompetent patient-derived xenograft models of ovarian cancer to improve therapeutic interventions through novel immune therapies and targeted fluorescence image-guided surgery.

KLINGEN, TOR AUDUN

PhD from the University of Bergen focusing on vascular invasion by tumor cells and other prognostic factors in a population-based breast cancer study. He is currently senior consultant in pathology (Tønsberg) and a researcher in the Akslen group, focusing on immune cells and vascular biology in breast cancer. He is a co-supervisor for PhD candidate Ying Chen.

KNUTSVIK, GØRIL

PhD from the University of Bergen focusing on biomarkers in breast cancer and in particular tumor cell proliferation. She is currently a senior consultant in pathology at Haukeland University Hospital, and a researcher in the Akslen group, working on biomarkers of aggressive breast cancer.

KTORIDOU-VALEN, IRINI

MD from the University of Semmelweis, Budapest. She joined the Gjertsen group in March 2021 as a PhD candidate, working on precision haemato-oncology. Her project focuses on biomarkers in the repurposing of known drugs for clinical trials for the treatment of acute myeloid leukemia.

LEITCH, CALUM

MS in molecular and cellular biology from the University of Glasgow. Throughout 2021 he was a PhD candidate in the Gjertsen group, aiming to defend in February 2022 with the project "Identification and development of small molecule therapies for the treatment of acute myeloid leukemia". His project focuses on the identification and repurposing of approved medicines for therapy development in AML, with particular emphasis on mechanistic studies to determine likely responders in patient sub-groups.

LELLAHI, SEYED MOHAMMAD

PhD from the University of Tromsø and currently a postdoc in the Kalland group, studying whether two dendritic cell subpopulations, conventional type 1 DCs and conventional type 2 DCs, are a better alternative for moDC in cryo-immunotherapy (CryoIT) treatment. He will also develop an "Organoid and DC co-culture model system" to study immune cells and cancer material in a more complex environment using the Hyperion Imaging System platform.

LIEN, HILDE
MS in biomedicine from the University of Bergen on Helios CyTOF analysis of intra-tumoral immune cells in obese mice. Hilde is currently a PhD candidate in the Krakstad group where she is using imaging mass cytometry to investigate tumor heterogeneity and prognostic markers in endometrial cancer.

LOTSBERG, MARIA LIE
PhD from the University of Bergen, focusing on how the tumor microenvironment and cancer cell plasticity contributes to acquired therapy resistance in non-small cell lung cancer models, with a special focus on the AXL receptor tyrosine kinase. She is currently a postdoc in the Lorens group, working on imaging mass cytometry and high dimensional analysis of the tumor microenvironment. She is also coordinating the CCBIO Junior Scientist Symposia together with Hanna Dillekås.

LUÍS, ANA BEATRIZ MATEUS D'AVÓ
MS in economics from the Nova School of Business and Economics, Portugal. She completed her PhD in February 2021 in the Health Economics Group of CCBIO, focusing on the cost-effectiveness of biomarkers in the Norwegian health care system and on the incentives of pharmaceutical companies to invest in R&D of drugs with companion biomarkers.

LURA, NJÅL GJERDE
MD with background in internal medicine and radiology. He is currently working on a PhD project in the Krakstad group, featuring precision imaging in patients with uterine cervical cancer. The project aims to explore potential imaging biomarkers that predict advanced tumor stages, metastases, and reduced survival in uterine cervical cancers.

MADELEINE, NOËLLY
PhD in bioinformatics from the University of la Réunion. She was a postdoc in Lorens' group until February 2021, where her research focused on tumor cell plasticity in malignant melanoma and its role in therapy resistance with a particular focus on AXL receptor kinase mechanisms.

MARIN, ORIOL CASTELLS
MS in biomedical research at the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. He is currently a PhD student in the Gjertsen group. His project focuses on the immune analysis and signaling profiling of blood cells at a single-cell level by using mass cytometry. The aim is to assess mechanisms of response to treatment in acute myeloid leukemia clinical trials.

MATO, RAÚL PÉREZ
MS in molecular biomedicine from the Autonomous University of Madrid. Currently he is a PhD candidate in the Gullberg group. His PhD project deals with basic mechanisms occurring in the stromal compartment of the tumor microenvironment, focusing of integrin α11β1 as a regulator of interplay between tumor and stromal cells.

MESQUITA, ÂNGELA
MS in molecular genetics, and in health sciences, both from the University of Minho. Since October 2021, she is a PhD candidate in the Precision Oncology Research Group, under the supervision of Emmet McCormack and Dr. Pascal Gelebart. Her PhD research project focuses on the development new humanized mouse patient derived xenograft (PDX) models of myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) to assess their ability to maintain the disease phenotype and cellular complexity for the pre-clinical evaluation of new innovative drugs.

MILOSEVIC, VLADAN
PhD in molecular medicine from the University of Turin, Italy, where he investigated the potential role of malignant pleural mesothelioma stem cells in the development of the chemo resistant and immune resistant phenotype of this highly aggressive tumor. He is currently a researcher in the Östman and Akslen groups, aiming to identify novel biomarkers and therapeutic targets of aggressive breast cancer through high-multiplex profiling of the tumor microenvironment using the Hyperion imaging mass cytometry platform.

MOHAMED, HASSAN ABDEL RAOUF-ALI
BDS from the University of Science and Technology in Sudan, and an MPhil in oral sciences from the University of Bergen, focused on the expansion of mesenchymal stem cells under different expansion conditions. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Mustafa and Costea groups. His PhD project is focused on analysis of induced pluripotent stem cells generated from fibroblasts of different sources.

MOHAMED, NAZAR
PhD in oral sciences from the University of Bergen, focused on oral mycobiome in oral cancer as a source for prognostic biomarkers. Since June 2020 he is a guest researcher in the Costea group, working in multidisciplinary projects related to oral cancer, with specific focus on cancer microbiome.

MOHAMED, NUHA
MS in periodontics from the University of Khartoum. She is since August 2016 a PhD candidate in the Costea group. Her PhD project focuses on prognostic biomarkers in oral squamous cell carcinoma patients with specific focus on the inflammatory host reaction and its correlation to survival of oral squamous cell carcinoma patients from Sudan.

MOTZFELDT, INGA KRISTINE FLAATEN
MS in Biomedicine from the University of Bergen, and a PhD candidate in the Gjertsen group. Her PhD project involves precision haemato-oncology and FLT3 mutations in acute myeloid leukemia. A specific focus is the biology connected to the various sequence lengths of the mutations, and how it affects response to targeted therapy.

MUSIIME, MOSES
MS in biomedicine from the University of Bergen and a PhD candidate in the Gullberg group until he gained his PhD in September 2021. His PhD work focused on the role of integrin α11 in fibrosis and characterization of new tools for anti-fibrotic research. He is currently a postdoc in the same group, focused on the analysis of the cooperative roles of integrin α11 and syndecan-4 in fibroblasts using the fibrotic mouse heart as a model system.

MUSTAFA, RAMMAH
MS from the Karolinska Institute within the Cancer Proteomics Group. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Costea and Bjørge groups and also collaborating with the Kalland group. Mustafa's project focuses on the exploration of innovative approaches for the establishment of patient derived organoid (PDO) models which can be used to predict drug response in vulva cancer by using mass cytometry (CyTOF).

MOUTOUSSAMY, EMMANUEL EDOUARD
PhD in molecular modeling from the University of Bergen. He is currently a researcher in the Lorens group. His research project is focused on the role of the receptor tyrosine kinase AXL in the context of cancer.

NGINAMAU, ELISABETH SIVY
PhD in immunology from the University of Bergen focused on autoantigens in Sjögren`s Syndrome. She is a specialist in pathology and currently a consultant at the Department of Pathology, Haukeland University Hospital and a guest researcher in the Costea group. Her research focuses on oral cancer with a special interest on the impact of immune response on oral cancer's clinical behavior and immune response regulation.

OMSLAND, MARIA
PhD in medical cell biology from the University of Bergen. She is since august 2019 a postdoc in the Gjertsen group, where she focuses on cell-to-cell communication and signaling in the bone marrow compartment of chronic myeloid leukemia before and during treatment with tyrosine kinase inhibitors. The main methods will be imaging mass cytometry (IMC) and 2-photon microscopy of living organisms.

PARAJULI, HIMALAYA
PhD from the University of Bergen focused on integrin α11 in oral carcinogenesis. He was a postdoc in the Thorsen Lab from 2017 to August 2019, doing research on melanoma brain metastasis. Currently he is a guest researcher in the Costea group, working on oral carcinogenesis.

PILSKOG, MARTIN
PhD from the University of Bergen focused on the roles of interleukin 6 and interleukin 6 receptor as biomarkers of treatment response in relation to anti-angiogenesis treatment of metastatic renal cell carcinoma. He is currently working as consultant at the Department of Oncology, Haukeland University Hospital and is responsible as PI and co-PI in clinical studies in breast cancer and renal cancer in the Straume group.

RAJTHALA, SAROJ
MS in medical cell biology from the University of Bergen. He is since 2015 a PhD candidate in the Costea group. His research focuses on the identification of micro-RNA signatures in the tumor stroma that can be used as prognostic factors and for therapeutic intervention in oral squamous cell carcinoma.

RAMNEFJELL, MARIA
PhD from the University of Bergen focusing on molecular and clinico-pathologic characteristics of non-small cell lung cancer, exploring novel biomarkers and potential treatment targets, with focus on the tumor microenvironment including activated angiogenesis. She is currently a senior pathologist at the Department of Pathology, Haukeland University Hospital, and a researcher in the Akslen group focusing on lung cancer biology, also collaborating with Dr. Agnete Engelsen.

RANA, NEHA
MS in biochemistry from India. She is since 2018 a PhD candidate in the Mustafa and Gjertsen groups, where her project explores immune interactions in mesenchymal stem cell based regenerative therapies with special focus on liquid biopsy approaches.

RANE, LALIT SHIRISH
PhD within immunology and IL-7 isoforms from the Karolinska Institute. He started working with the Gjertsen group as a postdoc in 2015, investigating p53 isoforms in AML. Currently he is a researcher in the same group, investigating novel small molecule CSF1R and FLT3 inhibitors in AML.

RAYFORD, AUSTIN
MS in biomedical sciences from the University of Bergen. He is currently pursuing a joint industrial PhD with the Lorens group and BerGenBio, where he plays a key role in identifying clinical and translational biomarkers in a majority of BerGenBio's clinical trials of AXL-inhibitors, with an emphasis on highly multiplexed datasets and development of imaging mass cytometry-based approaches.

RØSLAND, GRO VATNE
PhD in molecular cell biology from the University of Bergen. Her PhD project focused on molecular mechanisms involved in glioblastoma progression, with an emphasis on stem cell markers and the epidermal growth factor system. As of 2021, she is a researcher in the Lorens group, where she works on AXL-mediated immunotherapy resistance, using high dimensional analysis tools and super resolution microscopy to characterize how AXL receptor signaling regulates tumor intrinsic resistance to immunotherapy.

SAND, LOUISE BERGSJØ
MS in chemistry from the University of Bergen and since August 2017 a PhD candidate in the in the Haug and McCormack groups with Emmet McCormack and Ole Heine Kvernenes as co-supervisors. Her PhD project focuses on making peptides for PET, with an aim to develop a new method for radiolabeling of bioactive molecules.

SCHUSTER, CORNELIA
PhD on predictive markers in metastatic melanoma from the University of Bergen and Dr. Med from the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen. She is currently a postdoc in the Straume and Akslen groups. Her research focus is on biomarkers in melanoma treatment, and she is a co-investigator in a clinical trial for patients with metastatic melanoma. In 2020 and 2021 she also coordinated the CCBIO Junior Scientist Symposia together with Maria Lie Lotsberg.

SEFLAND, ØYSTEIN
MD from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. He initiated his PhD work in the Gjertsen group in the fall of 2019, focusing on the use of dendritic cells as a therapeutic option in the treatment of the myeloid malignancies.

SIRAJI, MUNTEQUA ISHTIAQ
MS in biomedical sciences from the University of Bergen and currently a PhD candidate in the Lorens group. His PhD project is titled "High-dimensional analysis of AXL-signaling in cancer therapy resistance". The rationale of the project is that understanding of the molecular mechanisms underpinning GAS6-AXL-mediated cell plasticity will offer unique therapeutic opportunities to improve cancer treatment
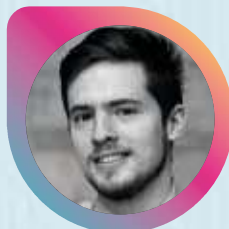

SLETTA, KRISTINE
MS in biomedicine from the University of Bergen. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Gjertsen group, working on tumor-stroma interactions and employing different *in vitro* and *in vivo* models for the preclinical development of small molecule kinase inhibitors towards CSF1R (colony stimulating factor 1 receptor) in acute myeloid leukemia.

SMELAND, HILDE YTRE-HAUGE
MD from the University of Bergen. She was a PhD candidate in the Akslen group with Linda Stuhr as her main supervisor, until she completed her PhD in September 2021. Her project focused on the role of integrin α11β1 expression in breast cancer, in experimental models and in human breast cancer cohorts.

SÆLE, ANNA KRISTINE MYRMEL
MD at the Department of Pathology, Haukeland University Hospital, and currently a PhD candidate in the Akslen and Wik groups, with Elisabeth Wik as main supervisor. Her project is focused on hormone receptor regulators and immune responses in primary and metastatic breast cancer.

TANDARIC, LUKA
MS in molecular biology from the University of Zagreb, Croatia. He joined the INOvA group in 2020 as a PhD candidate, with Line Bjørge and Emmet McCormack as main supervisors. His project aims to describe the value of combined CD73 and PD-L1 blockade in patients with relapsed high-grade serous ovarian cancer.

THOMSEN, LIV CECILIE VESTRHEIM
PhD from the University of Bergen focused on the genetic background of complex diseases. She is currently a researcher in the Bjørge group, also associated with the Gjertsen group. Her main research focus is on mass cytometry (CyTOF) analyses, developing antibody panels for immune cells and checkpoint inhibitor responses in patient-derived materials. Thomsen also works on analyses of data from early phase clinical trials on prostate and ovarian cancer.

MINI BIOGRAPHIES: PhD Candidates, Postdocs and Researchers 2021

TISLEVOLL, BENEDICTE SJO
MD from the University of Bergen. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Gjertsen group, focusing on early therapy response evaluation in acute myeloid leukemia, using Mass Cytometry (CyTOF) to investigate signaling events in immune-phenotypical cell clusters to separate responders from non-responders.

TORKILDSEN, CECILIE FREDVIK
MD from the University of Bergen. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Bjørge group. Her focus is on surgical management of ovarian cancer with the aim to identify clinical and molecular predictors of successful surgery.

TORNAAS, STIAN
MS in biomedicine from the University of Tromsø. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Costea group, where his work aims to identify different CAF phenotypes in HNSCC by using Hyperion imaging mass cytometry, studying their role in resistance to therapy using cohorts of patient tissue.

TRANVÅG, EIRIK JOAKIM
MD from the UiB and a PhD candidate at the Bergen Centre for Ethics and Priority Setting (BCEPS) as part of CCBIO's ELSA team until he completed his PhD in September 2021 with Ole Frithjof Norheim as his main supervisor. His research focused on how cancer biomarkers can inform better and fairer priority setting decision and how personalized cancer medicine also may challenge the concept of fairness in priority setting. He now works as a senior advisor in the Norwegian Biotechnology Advisory Board.

VETHE, HEIDRUN
PhD from the University of Bergen on stem cells research and diabetes. She is currently a postdoc in the Akslen group, focusing on identifying protein biomarkers and novel targets in aggressive breast cancer, with special emphasis on the tumor microenvironment, using mass spectrometry-based proteomics, imaging mass cytometry, immunohistochemistry, and cell models.

VIÑEGRA, ELVIRA GARCÍA DE JALÓN
MS in organic synthesis and medicinal chemistry from the University of Bergen and a PhD candidate in the McCormack group until she completed her PhD in June 2021. Her research focused on the development and preclinical evaluation of site-specific dyes, allowing for accurate tumor development evaluation using optical and PET/CT imaging.

WAGNER-LARSEN, KARI STRØNO
MD and a PhD candidate in the Krakstad group, studying advanced MRI for developing more personalized treatment strategies in uterine cervical cancer. She is also a senior consultant in radiology at Haukeland University Hospital.

XENAKI, VICTORIA
DDS from the I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University. She is since 2016 a PhD candidate in the Costea group, where her project focuses on nanotechnology in dentistry, aiming to evaluate the attitude of dental health care workers towards using nanotechnology and assessing toxicity of nanoparticles used in dentistry in the context of nano-safety.

ÅSE, HILDEGUNN SIV
MD and a radiologist who also holds an MS in health economics from the University of Bergen. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Krakstad group with Solveig Hofvind as her main supervisor. Her PhD project focuses on digital breast tomosynthesis (3D-mammography) in breast cancer screening, with data from the Tomosynthesis Trial in Bergen (the ToBe-trial), focusing on detection rates, reading times, doses, breast density and mammographic features, comparing results after screening with digital mammography (2D) versus digital breast tomosynthesis.