

MEDIA RELEASE

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HIRSLANDEN REINFORCES INTERDISCIPLINARY LUNG CANCER TREATMENT AND THORACIC SURGERY WITH MULTI-SITE COLLABORATION

In the Hirslanden Group, the Bern and Zurich sites will collaborate in lung diseases and, in particular, thoracic surgery, in the future. This brings about a broad, interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge and experience, which will significantly reinforce the highly specialised medical specialty of thoracic surgery. The next step will be to expand the collaboration with other Hirslanden locations to form a Switzerland-wide network for which Hirslanden has already been able to gain renowned experts in Swiss thoracic surgery.

The medical specialty of thoracic surgery, as a subarea of highly specialised medicine, requires close, interdisciplinary collaboration between numerous medical specialties in order to ensure that patients receive excellent care, particularly when treating lung cancer. On what is known as a thoracic tumour board, a broad panel of experts – consisting of respiratory physicians, oncologists, radio-oncologists, pathologists, molecular pathologists and thoracic surgeons – discusses the most promising treatment options for the respective patient and determines how to proceed.

The multi-site collaboration between Bern and Zurich – including the two thoracic tumour boards for complex medical cases – will lead to an optimal exchange of know-how based on extremely wide-ranging expertise. There are also plans to expand the collaboration between Bern and Zurich to other Hirslanden locations throughout Switzerland. Patients will thus gain local access to the thoracic surgery offered by Hirslanden throughout Switzerland as well as to integrated care across medical specialties and hospitals. The network ensures that the required specialist expertise is available, regardless of the location of the attending doctor, which will further boost the quality of treatment.

Prof. Dr. Ralph Schmid takes on consultancy mandate

Hirslanden has been able to bring Prof. Dr. Ralph Schmid on board as a consultant to expand this Switzerland-wide network. He was hospital manager and senior consultant at the University Hospital for Thoracic Surgery at Inselspital until the end of 2021. Within clinical research, he and his team have developed new surgical procedures in minimally-invasive and robot-assisted thoracic surgery and obtained important findings about lung cancer within basic research. The establishment of a research network for the thoracic surgery offered by Hirslanden throughout Switzerland will therefore also be one of his important duties. In addition, he will conceptually oversee the use of personalised medicine to treat and prevent lung cancer.

Since last year, the Hirslanden Group has boasted a centre of expertise for personalised medicine with its own genetics laboratory in the form of “Hirslanden Precise”. This offers advantages to patients as well as their relatives as new gene variants that play a role in the development of certain types of cancer are continually being discovered.

Certification of Lung Cancer Centres

The aims of Hirslanden’s Switzerland-wide thoracic surgery is to obtain certification from the German Cancer Society (DKG) for its lung cancer centres by 2024. The centres certified by DKG are networks of

inpatient and outpatient facilities where all the medical specialties involved in treating a cancer patient work closely together. The centres must demonstrate every year that they fulfil the specialist requirements for treating tumours. Dr. Roland Kuster, formerly the hospital manager at the University Hospital for Thoracic Surgery and coordinator of the University Lung Cancer Centre at Inselspital Bern, is joining Hirslanden and will be in charge of the certification strived for by the Bern Lung Cancer Centre.

Prof. Dr. Gregor Kocher and Prof. Dr. Ilhan Inci join Hirslanden

There are also new additions to the ranks of the practising thoracic surgeons. Prof. Dr. Gregor Kocher, a renowned expert with many years of experience, joined Hirslanden at the Bern location in the middle of March 2022. The thoracic surgeon, who until recently worked at the Lung Cancer Centre at Inselspital Bern, has since left the Inselspital and taken up his work as a partner doctor at Klinik Beau-Site. He joins Dr. Robert Stein and PD Dr. Beatrix Hokschi, who have already been working at Klinik Beau-Site for quite some time.

Prof. Dr. Ilhan Inci, formerly the senior physician at the Thoracic Surgery Hospital at University Hospital Zurich (USZ), also began working for Hirslanden at the Zurich site as of 1 May 2022. Together with Prof. Dr. Othmar Schöb, he will be responsible for thoracic surgery at the Surgical Centre at Klinik Hirslanden.

Research and further training as important pillars

The various partner doctors will look after their junior surgical colleagues and continue to be committed to further surgical training and research. Research and the further education of candidates hoping to obtain the specialist qualification in thoracic surgery traditionally hold great importance at Hirslanden, and established partnerships exist with university institutions in Switzerland. Thanks to the multi-site collaboration between Bern and Zurich, the Fellowship Programme will become more attractive. Both locations are currently accredited category-B further training facilities for the acquisition of the specialist qualification in thoracic surgery.

Hirslanden also hopes to promote the early detection of lung cancer particularly actively through an in-depth collaboration with the non-profit Stiftung für Lungendiagnostik (www.lungendiagnose.ch), which plays a leading role in Switzerland and runs the Nationales Programm zur Früherkennung von Lungenkrebs®. The aim is to detect lung cancer at a treatable stage within the high-risk group of smokers and ex-smokers who have regularly consumed tobacco for over 20 years.

The work in the field of early detection and the inclusion of genetic clarifications are in line with Hirslanden's strategy to be the medical partner of choice for people throughout the entire treatment and consultation spectrum: from prevention to aftercare, at all times – physically and digitally.

“We're delighted to bring together the various medical and surgical specialties within Hirslanden Thorax Switzerland. We aim to ensure high-quality care for our patients at a national level, while taking into account aspects of prevention via genetic clarifications and early detection. At the same time, we want to play a key role and make a valuable contribution towards research and the further training of the next generation,” says Dr. Daniel Liedtke, CEO of the Hirslanden Group.

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About Hirslanden

Hirslanden stands for high-quality, responsible, personalised and efficient, integrated healthcare. From birth to old age, from prevention to cure – any time, physically and digitally – the Hirslanden Group focuses, together with private and public cooperation partners, on the further development of the “Continuum of Care“.

As a system provider, Hirslanden stands out from the rest of the market with first-class medical and service care – provided by highly qualified medical specialists with many years of experience. Interdisciplinary medical centres of expertise, specialised institutes and cooperation partners enable it to offer the best possible individualised diagnosis and treatment, even in highly complex cases, both for inpatients and outpatients.

The Hirslanden Group operates 17 hospitals in 10 cantons, many of which have an emergency department. It also operates 4 outpatient surgical units, 18 radiology institutes and 5 radiotherapy institutes. The Group has 2,314 partner doctors and 10,711 employees, 479 of whom are permanently employed doctors. Hirslanden is the largest medical network in Switzerland. In the 2020/21 financial year, the Group generated a turnover of CHF 1,796 million (including CHF 12.6 million in cantonal COVID-19 compensation payments). As at 31 March 2021, the Group had treated 107,401 patients for a total of 461,004 inpatient days. In insurance terms, the patient mix consists of 51 % basic, 28.8 % semi-private, and 20.2 % private insured patients. The Hirslanden Group was formed in 1990 through the merger of several hospitals. Since 2007, it has been part of the international hospital group Mediclinic International plc, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange.