

PRESS RELEASE

Future-oriented surgical training Federation to support 12 million franc project

Zurich, 17 Mai 2022 – The Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse) is supporting the PROFICIENCY project with 6 million Swiss francs. The project constitutes a paradigm shift in education and training for surgeons. Innovative, simulator-supported practical training will replace advanced training in the operating room.

State-of-the-art technological developments make it already possible to simulate many surgical procedures in a true-to-life manner. However, a large part of the surgical education still happens in the operating room and during patient treatment. The PROFICIENCY project will enable a critical paradigm shift: Future surgeons will be able to learn and improve their surgical skills through highly-realistic simulator-supported training – without compromising patient safety. PROFICIENCY is built upon two columns. On the one hand, a modular curriculum will be developed that will be accessible on a digital learning platform. On the other hand – and this is very important – cutting-edge digital technologies will be developed to make surgical training more realistic, immersive and effective. The Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse) supports the project, which has a total volume of 12 million Swiss francs, with a total of 6 million Swiss francs over the next four years.

Prof. Dr. sc. Philipp FÜRNSTAHL, principal investigator at Balgrist University Hospital, explained the significance of «PROFICIENCY» for surgical training: «The use of artificial intelligence and augmented reality heralds the dawn of a new era for highly specialized surgical training. In just a few years, the first prototypes can be integrated into highly modern learning centers such as the OR-X at Balgrist University and made available to young surgeons.»

Researchers and developers from Balgrist University Hospital and the Balgrist Campus have researched, developed and tested the surgical innovations behind «PROFICIENCY». These innovations stem from the SURGENT (Surgeon Enhancing Technologies) project and also forms the basis for the new, translational OR-X teaching and research center. The OR-X center is currently under construction and will be brought into operation at Balgrist University Hospital next year.

«PROFICIENCY» is a cooperation between Balgrist University Hospital, Zurich University, ETH Zurich, Cantonal Hospital of St. Gallen, the Centre hospitalier universitaire vaudois (CHUV), Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) and the four companies VirtaMed AG, Microsoft Schweiz GmbH, ORamaVR S.A. and Atracsys LLC.

More information can be found under:

www.surgicalproficiency.ch

www.innosuisse.ch

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About Balgrist University Hospital

Balgrist University Hospital is a highly specialized center of excellence for the diagnostic work-up, treatment, and follow-up care of damage to the musculoskeletal system. Interdisciplinary services combine the fields of orthopedics, paraplegiology, rheumatology and physical medicine, sports medicine, neuro-urology, chiropractic, radiology, and anesthesiology.

The broad spectrum of interlinked medical treatment is complemented by nursing care, social, insurance-legal and psychological counselling as well as integrated measures for rehabilitation and return to work. All these activities aim to provide our patients with the best possible support.

Balgrist University Hospital and the Balgrist Campus set internationally recognized standards in orthopedic research and education.

The privately owned Balgrist University Hospital is operated by the Balgrist Association.

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