



EU-LIFE Woman Postdoc Mentoring Programme

Short bios of mentors



Gabriele Bergers

Group leader

VIB-KU Leuven (Vlaams instituut voor Biotechnologie)

Leuven, Belgium

Dr. Gabriele Bergers is a Professor of Oncology at the University of Leuven and a group leader at the Vlaams Instituut Voor Biotechnologie (VIB)-Center for Cancer Biology in Leuven since 2016. Prior, she followed the faculty rank at the University of California, San Francisco, and was a Professor in the Department of Neurological Surgery and a PI in the Brain Tumor Research Center (BTRC) at the Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of California, San Francisco until 2016.

The overall research interest of her group relates to the tumor vasculature, which entails an integral and critical component of the tumor microenvironment and closely interacts with distinct cell constituents of the heterogeneous tumor community. Such crosstalk is pivotal not only for the genesis and progression of a tumor but also for the tumor's ability to resist therapeutic elimination. Besides the expanding ability of tumor vessels to fuel tumors sufficiently with oxygen and nutrients, they hinder immunosurveillance and provide a protective niche for tumor and other stem cells, thereby regulating their maintenance and propagation. Due to the substantial plasticity of tumor endothelial cells, her lab recently identified mechanisms to reinstate the vasculature's immune-supportive functions and help invigorate anti-tumor immunity.

Over the years, her group has made seminal discoveries about the function of the tumor vasculature, with its different vascular tumor niches in regulating neovascularization, inflammation, immunity, and invasion in cancer and in understanding intrinsic and adaptive resistance mechanisms of tumors to antiangiogenic and immunotherapies. For her research, Dr. Bergers has received several awards, including the Sidney Kimmel, the Sandler Opportunity, UCSF Breakthrough Biomedical Research, and the Judah Folkman award. She has been an External Advisory Board member for various universities and pharmaceutical companies. Dr. Bergers was the co-director of the U54 Tumor microenvironment Brain Tumor Center at UCSF until 2016. She is a Scientific co-founder of Oncurious.