



Press release, January 15, 2021

## **Thomas Sauter receives an endowed professorship in emergency telemedicine**

**Thomas Sauter, Head of Education, eHealth and Emergency Telemedicine at Bern University Hospital's emergency center has been appointed by the University Executive Board for an endowed professorship in emergency telemedicine. The assistant professorship was established thanks to the support of the Touring Club Switzerland (TCS). It deals with "eHealth" in the field of emergency medicine and is one of the very few of its kind in the world.**

Emergency telemedicine is considered to be an important medical model of the future. It integrates electronic aids such as mobile communication and transmission systems that can send data over long distances using video cameras, among other things, for the diagnosis and treatment of emergency patients. This should enable emergency patients to be treated more quickly and safely. It helps close gaps in medical coverage at home and abroad and provide patients with round-the-clock care regardless of their location using modern technologies.

The TCS-endowed Assistant Professorship in Emergency Telemedicine was established at the University of Bern in 2019. It is based at Bern University Hospital's emergency center (UNZ) and is scheduled to run for four years. The professorship has now been filled with the University Executive Board having appointed Thomas Sauter as Assistant Professor for Emergency Telemedicine as of December 1, 2020.

### **Expert with extensive experience in digitization**

Thomas Sauter has been the Head of Education, eHealth and Emergency Telemedicine at Bern University Hospital's emergency center since 2018 and qualified as a university lecturer in Emergency Medicine at the University of Bern in 2019. He is committed to innovative teaching for medical students in emergency medicine and promoted the topic of digitalization in emergency medicine on various national and international boards. His research focuses on digital triage and decision making, virtual reality in clinical practice and education, and application research on the opportunities and risks of digitalization in acute care. "With Thomas Sauter we are appointing an experienced and very innovative researcher and lecturer," says Christian Leumann, Rector of the University of Bern. "He has not only promoted the advancement of emergency medicine in Bern at the UNZ but throughout Switzerland, and has excelled in emergency telemedicine education."

### **Equipping emergency medicine for the future**

The endowed professorship made possible by TCS in collaboration with the University of Bern and Bern University Hospital's emergency center is the first of its kind in the German-speaking world. Among other things, it aims to educate and train future generations of physicians in this increasingly important field and to provide them with state-of-the-art technological solutions. With its academic links to a medical faculty and establishment as an endowed professorship, there are very few comparable professorships in emergency telemedicine worldwide. Another unique feature is the cooperation of Bern's emergency telemedicine with the recently founded [CAIM](#) (Center for Artificial Intelligence in Medicine) at the University of Bern and Bern University Hospital.

TCS General Director Jürg Wittwer is convinced that with the appointment of the endowed professorship, the ideal framework has now been created to achieve major progress in this important, promising area of medical consulting: "We are delighted to further strengthen emergency telemedicine in Bern to provide students with the best education and training as well as state-of-the-art technological solutions. The bottom line is that the general public benefits from the pioneering work that is being done here." The support of a professorship for emergency telemedicine is also intended to counteract the increasing shortfalls in Swiss emergency care that are exacerbated by the aging population and the shortage of physicians. TCS has been successfully operating a telemedical assistance service for TCS members for years. Six TCS physicians already carry out around 5,000 medical examinations every year.

The endowed professorship will also be used to conduct research on "best practice" in Emergency Telemedicine, says Aris Exadaktylos, head of the UNZ: "That means figuring out in which cases Emergency Telemedicine can be used appropriately and in which cases it cannot. In doing so, it should support, not replace, personal care in the relationship between physicians and patients – and Thomas Sauter's research addresses just that."

**You can find more about Thomas Sauter and the contacts on the next page.**

**About Thomas Sauter**

Thomas Sauter began his training at Eberhard Karls University in Tübingen, Germany, and continued it at various hospitals in Bern and Solothurn. He joined Bern University Hospital's emergency center as a senior physician in 2012, and after a year of scientific work at the Charité in Berlin, he worked as a senior physician at the UNZ. In addition to his work at Bern University Hospital, he obtained a Master's degree in Medical Education from the University of Bern and the University of Illinois at Chicago. In 2017 he was awarded the SIWF Award for Special Commitment to Medical Further Training. He was appointed Head of Education, eHealth and Emergency Telemedicine in 2018 and qualified as a university lecturer at the University of Bern in 2019. Thomas Sauter is committed to innovative teaching for medical students in emergency medicine, among other things using virtual reality simulation training, and promoted the topic of digitalization in emergency medicine on various national and international boards. He is founder and chairman of the European Society of Emergency Medicine (EUSEM) and the Swiss Society for Emergency and Rescue Medicine (SGNOR) working groups on digitalization as well as founder and congress president of the Swiss Congress for Emergency Telemedicine and eHealth. In addition to medical education, Thomas Sauter is involved in the interprofessional training of paramedics, in the Swiss military and in nursing education. His research in the relatively new field of emergency telemedicine focuses on digital triage and decision making, virtual reality in clinical practice and education, and application research on the opportunities and risks of digitalization in acute care.

**Experts:**

Prof. Dr. med. Aris Exadaktylos

Director of the University Emergency Center, Bern University Hospital, and University of Bern

Prof. Dr. med. Thomas Sauter

Endowed Professor for Emergency Telemedicine

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