The idea to use cells from the nose to treat knee injuries came up in 2000 and the BIO-CHIP project is testing the formulated hypothesis. "The results of the phase I clinical trial show that the treatment is safe and feasible. For the phase II clinical trial, we are teaming up with three other hospitals to increase the number of patients and test the efficacy of the treatment", says Ivan Martin from the University of Basel/University Hospital Basel. For him, dealing with all the regulatory aspects is the biggest challenge. "Not only do rules in Switzerland differ slightly from EU regulations but different national rules also apply and all these requirements need to be adhered to, while at the same time maintaining one study protocol for all centres." Next to the regulatory challenge, being the project coordinator also means he has to deal with administrative and management tasks. However, Ivan Martin is happy to have the responsibility and to take the lead in the implementation.

"By receiving input from different perspectives, we were better able to address the proposed goals and develop new ideas for future projects."

New ideas for future projects

"I like the enthusiasm and determination of the partners and the many new proposals for collaborations", says Martin. "Partner ECRIN made valuable suggestions for the design of the clinical studies, whereas the Swiss company Medacta brought in the industrial perspective and helped us to plan ahead. By meeting new people and by receiving input from different perspectives, we were better able to address the proposed goals and develop new ideas for future projects."

High responsiveness of Euresearch

"Euresearch helped us a lot during the proposal phase, with the preparation of the grant agreement and with the project itself", says Martin. "The input consisted of workshops as well as direct help with financial and administrative issues." He continues: "The personal contact, expertise in critical factors of the review process, and the high responsiveness and scientific input from the Regional Office Basel and the Head Office in Bern made it possible to meet the sometimes challenging timelines."
“The high responsiveness and scientific input from the Regional Office Basel and the Head Office in Bern made it possible to meet the sometimes challenging timelines”

Prof. Ivan Martin
Department of Biomedicine,
University of Basel/
University Hospital Basel

**CONTENT SUMMARY**

The Horizon 2020 project BIO-CHIP aims to demonstrate the therapeutic efficacy of a new treatment for knee cartilage injuries using engineered grafts based on autologous nasal chondrocytes. For this project, coordinated by the University of Basel, 7 partners in 5 countries work together to carry out a multicentre phase II clinical trial, to extend the range of clinical indications of untreatable pre-osteoarthritic lesions, and to prepare commercial exploitation.

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

- **Project Name**: BIO-CHIP – Bioengineered grafts for cartilage healing in patients
- **Research Area**: Clinical research on regenerative medicine
- **Organisations**: University of Basel, Switzerland (Coordinator) and 6 partners
- **Start Date – End Date**: 01.11.2015 – 31.10.2019
- **Duration**: 4 years

**Project Cost**: €5.11 million
**Project Funding**: €5.11 million
**Programme**: Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge: Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing


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