

C L I N I C A L
R E S E A R C H

Why Your Support Matters

Vascular Surgery
Ensemble Hospitalier de la Côte

*A research programme built on
conviction, rigour, and impact*

Department of Vascular Surgery – EHC, Morges, Switzerland
www.ehc.vd.ch

THE CASE FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH IN A COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

“Every patient deserves to benefit from the advances of science – regardless of where they are treated.”

Clinical research is most commonly associated with university hospitals. They have dedicated infrastructure, earmarked public funding, and generations of academic tradition. Yet it is in community and regional hospitals that the vast majority of patients receive their day-to-day care. It is there that the diversity of real-world clinical practice unfolds: the elderly patient with multiple comorbidities, the working mother whose symptoms are dismissed for years, the man too

embarrassed to discuss his condition. These patients rarely find their way into the carefully selected cohorts of academic trials.

The Department of Vascular Surgery at the Ensemble Hospitalier de la Côte (EHC) in Morges, Switzerland, treats hundreds of patients each year for arterial and venous diseases – conditions that can lead to heart attacks, strokes, amputations, chronic debilitating pain, and profound loss of quality of life. Our team has made a deliberate choice: not merely to treat, but to generate knowledge. We have built a structured clinical research programme that now encompasses six active projects, each approved by the Canton of Vaud Ethics Committee (CER-VD) and conducted in strict compliance with Swiss data protection law.

This is not a symbolic exercise. It is an act of conviction and a response to a genuine gap in the evidence base.

SIX PROJECTS, ONE AMBITION: BETTER OUTCOMES FOR EVERY PATIENT

Our research programme spans the full breadth of vascular pathology from the arteries of the legs to the veins of the pelvis, from the aorta to the vascular causes of erectile dysfunction. Each project addresses a concrete clinical question where evidence is lacking.

ARTERIA – Arterial Disease Registry

Peripheral arterial disease affects millions worldwide. Treatment options range from medication to catheter-based intervention to open surgery, yet robust data to guide the choice of strategy for individual patients remain scarce. ARTERIA systematically collects clinical, radiological, and surgical data from every patient

treated in our department. Over a minimum of five years, with 450 to 600 patients enrolled annually, we aim to identify the predictive factors that determine favourable or unfavourable outcomes – and thereby personalise therapeutic decisions at the bedside.

EPIC – Prehabilitation Before Surgery

Patients undergoing major surgery are often weakened by diabetes, anaemia, malnutrition, and physical deconditioning. Our EPIC programme – the first comprehensive surgical prehabilitation programme in Switzerland actively prepares patients before their operation through optimised blood management, nutritional support, and tailored physical conditioning. Data collection has been ongoing since November 2023, with 54 patients already identified. The goal: demonstrate scientifically that structured preoperative preparation reduces complications, shortens

hospital stays, and improves the patient experience.

PEARL – Chronic Pelvic Pain in Women

Up to 25% of women suffer from chronic pelvic pain. In a significant proportion, the cause is pelvic congestion syndrome, varicose veins around the uterus and ovaries causing persistent pain, heaviness, and discomfort during intercourse. Endovascular embolisation is the treatment of choice, but clear evidence-based selection criteria are still lacking. PEARL collects detailed data before, during, and after the procedure, including validated quality-of-life questionnaires, to determine which patients respond best.

EveR – European Venous Registry

Deep venous diseases are a major public health burden across Europe. In 2024, the European Society for Vascular Surgery (ESVS) launched the EveR registry to gather treatment and outcome

data on a continental scale. Our department has been selected as a participating centre, a recognition of the quality of our clinical practice. By contributing data including validated quality-of-life instruments (VEINES, EQ-5D), we are helping to build the evidence that will harmonise venous care across European borders.

HERCULES – International Randomised Controlled Trial

Abdominal aortic aneurysm with a wide infrarenal neck poses a particular challenge for endovascular repair: the risk of endoleak, graft migration, and aneurysm growth is substantially higher. HERCULES is the first international randomised trial comparing endosuture aneurysm repair (ESAR, using Medtronic's Heli-FX EndoAnchor system) to standard endovascular repair. Up to 300 patients are being enrolled across 40 centres in Europe and the United States. EHC is the only

participating centre in Switzerland, a distinction that reflects the technical expertise and procedural volume of our team.

CureVASC – Vascular Erectile Dysfunction Registry

Erectile dysfunction of vascular origin affects a large number of men with cardiovascular risk factors, yet it remains under-investigated and poorly documented. CureVASC, approved by the CER-VD in January 2025, is a dedicated research registry that systematically collects clinical data to characterise the vascular mechanisms of erectile dysfunction, evaluate treatment outcomes, and improve patient care through evidence-based decision-making. This is a field where structured data collection can transform both clinical understanding and the quality of life of patients who often suffer in silence.

THE CHALLENGE: EXCELLENCE

WITHOUT EQUAL RESOURCES

University hospitals benefit from substantial public research funding, institutional grants, and large teams of dedicated research personnel. Community hospitals do not. At EHC, our clinical research programme relies on resources that we must finance independently:

- **A clinical research assistant** who coordinates data collection, ensures quality control, and manages regulatory compliance across all six projects.
- **Secure digital infrastructure** (REDCap platform) for the collection, storage, and management of sensitive patient data in compliance with Swiss law.

- **Statistical expertise** for the rigorous analyses that underpin scientific publication and peer review.
- **Ongoing training** to keep our team current with evolving research methodologies, Good Clinical Practice, and regulatory requirements.
- **Conference participation** to present our findings to the international scientific community and to bring the latest evidence back to our patients.

These are not optional extras. They are the essential infrastructure of credible clinical research. Without them, the data we collect would lack the scientific rigour required for publication and, ultimately, for changing clinical practice.

The annual cost of maintaining this infrastructure is significant, and unlike our university counterparts, we cannot draw on dedicated state research budgets. The gap between what we need

and what institutional funding covers must be bridged by external support.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT

Supporting clinical research at EHC is not philanthropy in the abstract. It is a direct investment in the quality, safety, and personalisation of care for patients in the Lake Geneva region and beyond.

Real-world evidence. Our registries generate data from everyday clinical practice , the kind of evidence that is directly applicable at the bedside, not just in the pages of a journal.

Better outcomes. By identifying the factors that predict success or failure, we can match each patient to the treatment strategy most likely to benefit them.

International visibility. Through HERCULES and EveR, our department participates in global research networks that set tomorrow's standards of care. This benefits not only our patients but the reputation and attractiveness of EHC as a centre of excellence.

Innovation in a community setting. Programmes like EPIC and CureVASC are pioneering in Switzerland. They demonstrate that a community hospital, when properly resourced, can generate the same calibre of evidence as a university centre.

“Every franc invested in clinical research at EHC helps close the gap between what we know and what we do and it does so for the patients who need it most.”

HOW TO SUPPORT US

We welcome contributions from private donors, foundations, and corporate partners who share our conviction that clinical excellence has no institutional boundaries.

Individual donations from CHF 10 upwards, with no upper limit. Every contribution matters.

Corporate partnerships for sustained research funding, equipment, or in-kind support.

Foundation grants to support specific projects or the programme as a whole.

For more information or to discuss a partnership, please contact:

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