

Prof. Valentin Djonov, MD

Prof. Valentin Djonov is the co-founder and owner of SPME, Director of the Institute of Anatomy at the University of Bern, President of Swiss Clinical Anatomy, and a medical advisor at the translational research center sitem-insel, Switzerland.

General Information

After a few years of surgical training and clinical work, in the 1990s Valentin Djonov entered a research position at the University of Bern, Switzerland. In November 2002, he became a Privatdozent (Assistant Professor) for Gross Anatomy, Histology, and Embryology, and in March 2006, he was appointed Associate Professor at the Institute of Anatomy, University of Bern. In September 2007, Valentin Djonov was promoted to Full Professor and Co-Director at the Institute of Anatomy in Fribourg, Switzerland. In 2010, he returned to Bern as the Director of the Institute of Anatomy.

Science

The main scientific interests of his group are physiological and tumor angiogenesis, and, over the last decade, the radiobiological effects induced by Spatially Fractionated Radiation Therapy (SFRT). Djonov's group was the first to describe how the microvasculature mediates SFRT effects and how SFRT boosts the host's anti-tumor immune system—a process he termed “in situ vaccination.” The completely novel radiobiological mechanisms induced by SFRT result in unique radiation-tissue interactions. These expand the therapeutic index of radiation therapy by increasing tumor control (including that of radioresistant malignancies) while simultaneously exhibiting remarkable sparing of normal tissue.

For his scientific achievements, he has received multiple honorary doctorates (*Doctor honoris causa*), was appointed Visiting Professor at the Mayo Clinic (USA), and became an Honorary Member of the Swiss Society of Radiooncology in 2026.

Valentin Djonov has an H-index of 85. He is the author of more than 300 scientific papers with over 25,000 citations and holds numerous patents. He is ranked among the top 100 scientists (currently 66th) in the field of biomedical sciences in Switzerland and is considered one of the top anatomists in Europe.

Supervision of Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows

Altogether, Valentin Djonov has supervised more than 100 PhD, Master, and MD theses. In 2003, he became the youngest "Teacher of the Year" in the history of the University of Bern. More than 25 young professors, as well as currently renowned researchers and physicians, started their careers under his supervision.

Every year, he offers four one-month stipends—the so-called “Djonov Fellowship”—for young physicians and researchers from abroad to visit the University of Bern.

Postgraduate Training

More than two decades ago, Valentin Djonov founded two Centers for Clinical Anatomy at the University of Bern and the University of Fribourg. They were the first of their kind in Switzerland, offering medical postgraduate training and advanced education in close cooperation with scientists, clinicians, and the medical industry. Currently, his facility offers more than 170 days of postgraduate courses per year. As President of Swiss Clinical Anatomy, Valentin Djonov has spent the last 20 years organizing and coordinating postgraduate courses utilizing human material in Switzerland. He also supports many universities worldwide in establishing and managing similar facilities.

Charity Projects and Honors

Over the last three decades, Valentin Djonov has sent every year 15 to 25 large trucks filled with humanitarian goods to Eastern Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia. The recipients include universities, hospitals, elderly care homes, and orphanages.

For his activities, he has received numerous honors and awards, including: Gold Medal of the Bulgarian Red Cross: The highest honor of the Bulgarian Red Cross, awarded for his outstanding contribution to the Bulgarian healthcare system and his voluntary work (2024); Annual Award of the Fondation Katarov, Geneva (2024): For his scientific achievements, development of Swiss-Bulgarian relations, and humanitarian projects; Honorary Citizen of the City of Vidin, Bulgaria (2021); “Golden Laurel Branch”: The highest award of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for developing Swiss-Bulgarian relations in the fields of medicine and biomedical sciences (2020), “Doctor of the Year” in Bulgaria: For the development of Swiss-Bulgarian scientific connections and charity projects (2019) and many more.

His motivation for postgraduate education stems from a desire to pass on his extensive clinical and research experience to colleagues, thus helping to shape the future of modern, quality-driven medicine and biomedical science.