

SWISS FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION
AND TRAINING IN SURGERY



2025

Annual
report

Without its ecosystem of surgeons, operating theater professionals, partners, engineers, MedTech companies, Startups and suppliers, the SFITS would never have become such a leading institution in training, research and innovation.

Dr. Jelena Godjevac
CEO



To train, innovate, transmit, pass on knowledge, and prepare the next generation ethically and with a standard of excellence - an equilibrium both stable and rooted in perpetuity through the SFITS.

Prof. Pierre Hoffmeyer
President



As we enter the 10th year since our founding, we remain as enthusiastic as ever about carrying on the SFITS' mission and taking on new challenges.

Mrs. Fanny Keller
COO



IN-PERSON TRAINING COURSES

In 2025, the SFITS team facilitated 723 training sessions, totalling over 2'200 hours. The total attendees reached 5'841, including 4'677 learners and 733 faculty. 57 sessions of self-training allowed young doctors and students from the faculty of medicine to acquire skills in arthroscopy, laparoscopy, and microsurgery.

We organized this year:

- The 10th edition of the SFITS Academy Basic Training Course
- 28th practical session for the UNIGE course "Nutrition, Digestive and Metabolism Unit" for 2nd year medical students
- The 58th Sutura Class for the UNIGE 4th year medical students
- The 11th Edition of the War and Disaster Surgical Course for the Swiss Army

ONLINE TRAINING COURSES AND THE SFITS CALENDAR

Our digital library includes 77 e-learning modules in French and English.

Our e-learning modules are used both in Switzerland and abroad.

Our most popular module is the "Basics of Suturing" module, followed by "Temporal Bone – Beginner Course".

Our partnership with 2nd chance allows us to continue to create and translate ever-more relevant modules for hands-on work.

CONFERENCES

We have started a cycle of conferences on the challenges in the life of surgeons. The first two themes were stress and complication management.

In the context of our partnership with the Geneva Police, their experts hosted a conference on the tools for stress management.

This year, a two-day course for medical students was also put into place: "What if I became a surgeon...". Thanks to our professors in surgery and attending physicians who answered the call, a range of interactive roundtables, practical training, and formal lectures were organised.

A resounding success: 21 faculty, 36 participants, and excellent reviews.

EVENTS

Hospital directors, ministerial delegations, biomedical experts and different organisations came to visit the HUG and the SFITS (30 visits in total).

An immersive visit of the SFITS took place during the World Hospital Congress of the International Hospital Federation.

The SFITS team participated in the Medifuture exhibition and the *Cité des métiers* at Palexpo.

STUDENT COLLABORATION

We have the privilege to count on an excellent collaboration with students from the Faculty of Medicine of the UNIGE and the HES. 76 members of our pools help us in our daily activities. Without them, it would be difficult to provide service of such high quality.

INNOVATION PROGRAM

The initial results of the Innovation Program are both visible and tangible:

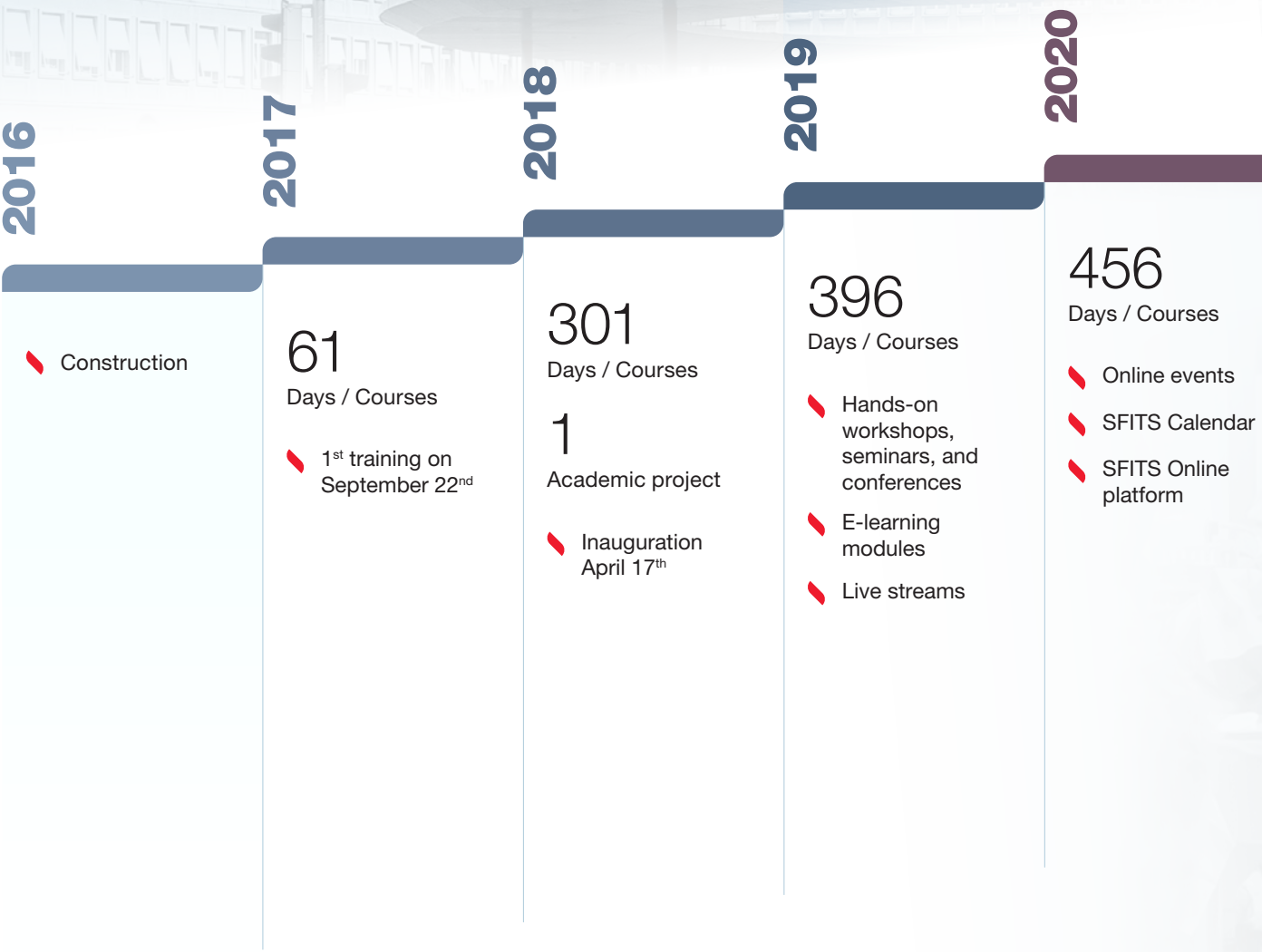
- 2nd edition of the Innovation Day with over 70 participants, 9 innovative research projects presented, interactive workshops and discussions
- 28 sessions of research and development
- 6 Startups boosted
- Multiple project sessions with professors from HUG, EPFL and HES
- Multiple projects in collaboration with HES and EPFL
- Partnerships confirmed with FONGIT, Inartis, GIH, and EPFL Innovation Park
- The SFITS was selected to participate in the selection process of startups in the "Future of Health Grant" programme.

THANK YOU TO

- The SFITS Team, a group of versatile, reliable and enthusiastic individuals, committed to carrying out our assignments successfully, and always with a smile on their faces,
- Our faculty, our participants and our students for their trust,
- Our industry sponsors, who contribute to our training programmes by providing their support and attending our courses,
- Our partners, our clients, our suppliers, for their continued loyalty!

2026 promises to be a big year for training and development.

Retrospective



535

Days / Courses

- Hybrid events
- Structured training programs
- Online library

559

Days / Courses

6

Academic projects

- Research projects platform
- Ecosystem of innovative partners
- Development of new techniques and technologies

457

Days / Courses

7

Academic projects

- Platform to create cooperation revolving around innovation and research
- Partner for testing, R&D and validation of new concepts

540

Days / Courses

7

Academic projects

- Center of excellence with training standards
- Ecosystem for innovative startups

537

Days / Courses

7

Academic projects

- Centre of Excellence, with training standards
- Testing and concept validation platform
- SFITS On-Demand

2021

2022

2023

2024

2025



SFITS is a center of excellence

RECOGNIZED FOR:

NEUTRALITY AND INDEPENDENCE

WIDE RANGE OF TOOLS FOR TRAINING

- Organic parts, inert and living
- Anatomical parts, embalming, and vascularization methods
- Synthetic parts
- Stimulators, Virtual reality, Augmented reality
- E-learning modules library (accredited)
- Instructional videos

DIGITAL COMMUNITY FOR MANAGING TRAINING ACTIVITIES

- Publication of courses, registration, hosting, evaluation
- Logbook of courses taught, centralized for faculties
- Logbook of training activities for participants
- Certificates

STATE-OF-THE-ART INFRASTRUCTURE: MODERN AND FLEXIBLE

- Very well connected
- Luminous, spacious and comfortable
- State-of-the-art equipment, modern training rooms

AUDIOVISUAL SERVICES

- Live streams, hybrid events
- Filming, editing of instructional videos
- E-learning modules
- Original anatomical illustrations

ETHICS AND EXCELLENCE

- Ethical management of anatomical specimens
- Flexibility to organize customized workshops
- Specific expertise and flexibility
- Procedure quality management, continuous improvement

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE TRAININGS

- Project management of events from A to Z
- Creation of custom-made courses
- Sponsor management
- Communication and accreditation
- Financial and administrative management
- Complete logistic management

FACILITATION OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Specific know-how
- Community of experts, networking
- Technical platform, equipped for research
- Proposal writing
- Reporting
- Fundraising

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES IN INNOVATION ACCELERATION

- Specific and unique know-how
- Community of experts, networking
- Technical platform for device testing and validation, as close to clinical conditions as possible

VENUE BOOKINGS IN 2025

HUG and other hospital establishments	522
Medtech	112
External courses	28
UNIGE	13
Medical associations	20
Accelerated startups	6
Academic projects	28
Immersive visits	30

723

venue
reservations

+2'200

hours of
teaching

4'677

in-person
participants (all
types combined)

241

distinct
faculty

66

Medtech
and Pharma
sponsors

November was the busiest month

81 courses

807 participants

4'901

people used the
SFITS Calendar

The Minister of
Health of North
Korea visited SFITS
in person.

Trottet's generous sponsorship
enables us to serve over

10'000 coffees annually

contributing to the welcoming
atmosphere at SFITS

cafés
TROTTET
Depuis 1947

We served the following

2'429 breakfasts

3'239 lunches

508 guests served during cocktail
receptions hosted at SFITS

in 3419
| 982
| 400
Followers



Satisfaction survey results from:

PARTICIPANTS

453 responses

Overall satisfaction with the course	3.86	/ 4.0
Quality of staff support	3.94	/ 4.0
Quality of on-site reception	3.70	/ 4.0
Quality of facilities	3.95	/ 4.0
Quality of educational materials	3.88	/ 4.0
Quality of course programme	3.88	/ 4.0
Quality of faculty teaching	3.86	/ 4.0
Quality of catering	3.63	/ 4.0
To what extent did the course meet your expectations?	3.85	/ 4.0
Would you be likely to recommend SFITS?	9.68	/ 10

FACULTY

53 responses

Overall satisfaction with the course	3.81	/ 4.0
Quality of staff support	3.84	/ 4.0
Quality of organisation and preparation	3.71	/ 4.0
Quality of facilities	3.82	/ 4.0
Quality of educational materials	3.71	/ 4.0
Quality of equipment	3.75	/ 4.0
Quality of catering	3.70	/ 4.0



As medical students, having the SFITS at the HUG is a true privilege: it's a modern, welcoming, and state-of-the-art facility. From lectures and workshops to hands-on practical sessions, everything is designed to help us grow. A special mention goes to the suture workshops led by Dr Murith and Prof. Cikirikcioglu, which are taught with genuine passion. What an incredible opportunity it is to learn surgery in an environment like this.

Yohan Candaux

SPECIAL MENTION

REVUE MÉDICALE SUISSE

In the *Revue Médicale Suisse's* (Swiss Medical Review) June 2025 editorial (No.922), Profs. David Fuks (CHUV) and Frédéric Triponez (HUG) speak of "building surgical excellence together in Western Switzerland" in which the SFITS is mentioned.

The articles addresses, among others, the challenge represented by surgical training, with surgical caseloads not always keeping pace with the increasing number of new doctors. It has become increasingly difficult to provide future surgeons with gradual, hands-on learning opportunities tailored to clinical realities. The professors reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening regional collaboration and coordination to "join forces to build the future of surgery in Western Switzerland." It is in this context that the SFITS and its activities were cited as a prime example of a dedicated training platform.



WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS TELL US

I now feel much more confident with different suturing techniques.

I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for this amazing experience at SFITS. Everything was extremely well organized and the entire team made this an unforgettable experience. They all were truly helpful and kind. Additionally, the lunch that we received was absolutely delicious. Thank you.

I would definitely say that this course has shown me that surgery always requires good preparation as well as a surrounding team, and, of course, solid technique.

I will feel more confident in emergency situations to do life-saving coniotomy, thorax drainage etc.

Having access to surgical loupes, real hearts, and 3D-printed realistic valves allowed us to practice as if we were in the OR with a real patient.

Consistently outstanding courses, a warm welcome, top-tier equipment at our disposal, and highly skilled instructors always on hand to guide us.

The outstanding quality of the teaching truly ensures high proficiency in every technique covered.

It was enthralling! We learned so many interesting things (about the laparoscopic exam, how to do different types of sutures), it was an amazing experience! It exceeded my expectations: we learned how to do stitches, and the doctors explained the techniques very clearly. Then they showed us individually how to improve and use the equipment correctly. The laparoscopy workshop was very educational and informative. It felt great to be introduced to clinical practice!

WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS SAY ABOUT OUR E-LEARNING MODULES

I'm really impressed by the platform.

Great microsurgery exercise! Highly enriching content!

It was well summarised and interesting.

The content of the material are simple and easy to remember.

Highly relevant topic, providing a great summary of the publication. The video was an excellent addition.

The e-learning module is really great, and the videos are very well produced.

WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY ABOUT US

Thank you for your availability and flexibility in the organization of this course.

I would like to thank the whole team for their warm welcome and for organising the three days of COLAFA training. It is always greatly appreciated by both the participants and the instructors. I am already looking forward to the next session.

Thank you and your team for a wonderful experience. It is a fantastic facility and was a perfect space for discussing and learning.

Thank you soooo much for your great support during our event. The place was amazing and all the staff very supporting and friendly.

Thank you to the whole SFITS team for their support during the workshops I've led over the past few years. Thank you also for your kindness and your smiles!

SPECIAL MENTION TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Prof. Philippe Sèbe, a regular speaker and Chair of the Scientific Committee of the SFITS, has received the 'Teacher of the Year Award' from the Swiss Residents in Urology







Training

Training in numbers

NUMBER OF
PEOPLE USING
SFITS CALENDAR

4'901

NUMBER OF
E-LEARNING MODULES
OFFERED BY OUR
ONLINE LIBRARY

77

68 modules in French
9 modules in English
The translation of modules into German is in progress

NUMBER OF
CERTIFICATES OF
COMPLETION SENT

962

NUMBER OF TRAINING
CREDITS GIVEN

1'200

HIGHLIGHTS - TRAINING

Certification



SFITS has been accredited by the Gynaecological Endoscopic Surgical Education and Assessment (GESEA) as a training centre.

GESEA is a structured training programme for gynaecological endoscopy, which enables participants to acquire and validate the knowledge and practical skills required before practising surgery. This is the official diploma programme of the European Society of Gynaecological Endoscopy (ESGE).

Starting in 2026, six practical sessions will be organised annually at the SFITS.

First editions

“WHAT IF I BECAME A SURGEON?”

Everything you’ve always wanted to know about this profession...

In July 2025, the SFITS organised two interactive days for students from the third year onwards at the Faculty of Medicine at UNIGE. They were invited to attend presentations and engage with professors and attending physicians from the HUG across all surgical specialities. They were also able to take part in practical workshops to learn about suturing, microsurgery and laparoscopy.



COLORECTAL RESECTION TECHNIQUES

The very first edition of the course on colorectal resection techniques took place in June 2025. Organised by Dr Marwan-Julien Sleiman, this training course aims to provide an introduction to colorectal oncological dissection techniques and is aimed at attending physicians and advanced-level residents.



Zoom trainings

ZOOM CLINICAL AUDIOMETRY

West Switzerland's course in clinical audiometry takes place every two years and is organised jointly by the Audiology and Vestibulometry Laboratory at the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG) and the SFITS. Spanning two days, this training course is recommended by the Swiss Society of Otorhinolaryngology (SSORL) and the Federal Social Insurance Office (OFAS). The aim of these sessions is to standardise the quality of hearing tests carried out in ENT practices.



HIGHLIGHTS - TRAINING

ZOOM SYMPOSIUM ON PROCTOLOGY

The Advanced Course in Proctology and Pelvic Floor Disorders took place in 2025, marking its 28th edition (the 5th hosted by the SFITS). Welcoming participants from all over Europe, this four-day symposium offers interactive case studies, demonstrations and presentations of techniques, amongst other things. Thanks to its growing success and to Prof. Frédéric Ris, director of the course, this training programme is recognised by the European Society of Coloproctology.



ZOOM OPHTHALMIC MICROSURGERY

In February 2025, two years after the first edition, the Fundamentals of Ophthalmic Microsurgery Course made a triumphant return. On this occasion, we welcomed around thirty participants: ophthalmic surgeons and veterinary surgeons eager to practise and refine their techniques. The aims of this two-day course are to impart basic anatomical and physiological knowledge relating to cataract surgery, pre-operative preparation and patient positioning for intraocular surgery.



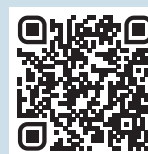
ZOOM LUNCH & LEARN IN SPINAL SURGERY AND SEPTIC ORTHOPAEDICS

Whether online or in person, it is now possible to attend a one-hour presentation on a specific topic. Participants attending the SFITS event are treated to a complimentary lunch whilst attending the session.

- Monday lunchtimes:
Dr. Dennis Dominguez
on spinal surgery



- Tuesday lunchtimes:
Dr. Domizio Suva and
Dr. Truong Thanh-Pham
on septic orthopaedics



HUG training programme

	FLAPS AND ANATOMICAL DISSECTIONS
SUTURES FOR THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT	
	DISSECTION IN HAND SURGERY
THORACIC DRAINING WITH SIMULATOR	
	THORACIC SURGERY (SCOPIC INSTRUMENTS, SUTURES)
SUTURES IN UROLOGY	
	SUTURES IN LAPAROSCOPIE (UROLOGY)
UROLOGICAL ENDOSCOPY WITH SIMULATOR	
	SPINAL ENDOSCOPY
GENERAL TRAUMA (DRYLAB)	
	NEUROSURGERY MASTERCLASS

HIGHLIGHTS - TRAINING

SCIENTIFIC DAYS OF THE
NEUROSURGERY DEPARTMENT

HANDS-ON FOR THE CARDIOVASCULAR SURGERY
DEPARTMENT

AIRWAY MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

STRUCTURED TEACHING OF THE KNEE TEAM

SURGICAL APPROACHES IN
MAXILLO-FACIAL SURGERY

SURGICAL APPROACHES IN
UROLOGICAL EMERGENCIES

RHINOPLASTY

SURGICAL APPROACHES IN ORTHOPEDICS
& TRAUMA (WETLAB)

BASIC IMPLANTOLOGY

PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS FOR CERTIFIED
OPERATING ROOM NURSES (IDDO)

PRACTICAL TRAINING DAYS OF THE LATIN
COMMISSION FOR ANESTHESIA TRAINING
(COLAFA)

HUG training programmes

OPEN TO PARTICIPANTS FROM OTHER HOSPITALS



BASIC SFITS ACADEMY COURSE



ACADEMIC MEETINGS IN
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING



SUTURES IN GYNECOLOGY



LAPAROSCOPY IN GYNECOLOGY



HYSTEROSCOPY





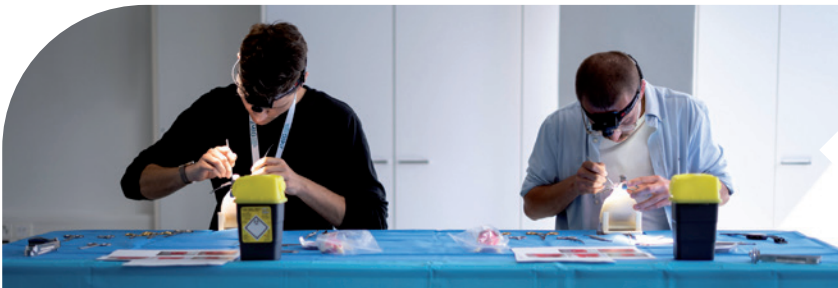
KNEE ARTHROSCOPY
(BASIC + ADVANCED)



WRIST ARTHROSCOPY



MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH
LABIO-MAXILLO-PALATIN CLEFT



BASIC MICROSURGERY



SURGICAL CURRICULUM



HUG training programmes

OPEN TO PARTICIPANTS FROM OTHER HOSPITALS



TEMPORAL BONE
BEGINNER COURSE



SHOULDER & ELBOW



AROUND KNEE OSTEOARTHRITIS



PAEDIATRIC MINIMALLY INVASIVE
SURGERY AND UROLOGY COURSE



INTERPROFESSIONAL TRAINING
DAY IN CARDIAC SURGERY





SURGICAL APPROACHES IN
CRANIO-MAXILLO FACIAL SURGERY



MANAGEMENT OF INTESTINAL
INFLAMMATIONS



MINIMALLY INVASIVE PROCEDURES



MULTIDISCIPLINARY MEDICAL AND
SURGICAL MANAGEMENT OF OSTE-
OPOROTIC VERTEBRAL FRACTURES



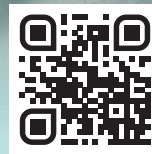
HIP SURGERY

Events in collaboration with the HUG



PALEXPO CAREERS CENTRE (GENEVA)

From 25 to 30 November, SFITS was at the Careers Centre (*Cité des Métiers*) at Palexpo, Geneva, alongside the HUG. It ran workshops with suturing pads and surgical simulators for a young, enthusiastic audience keen to discover the world of professional life.



MEDIFUTURE (BERN)

The SFITS attended the Medifuture conference in Bern on Saturday 8 November. Medifuture offers young medical students the opportunity to start building their network and to make initial contact with various organisations. They also have the chance to attend presentations by doctors talking about their experiences.

Together with the HUG team, the SFITS team on site highlighted the accessibility of surgical training and presented our activities through hands-on sessions such as tying surgical knots by hand, a suturing workshop and a laparoscopy simulator.

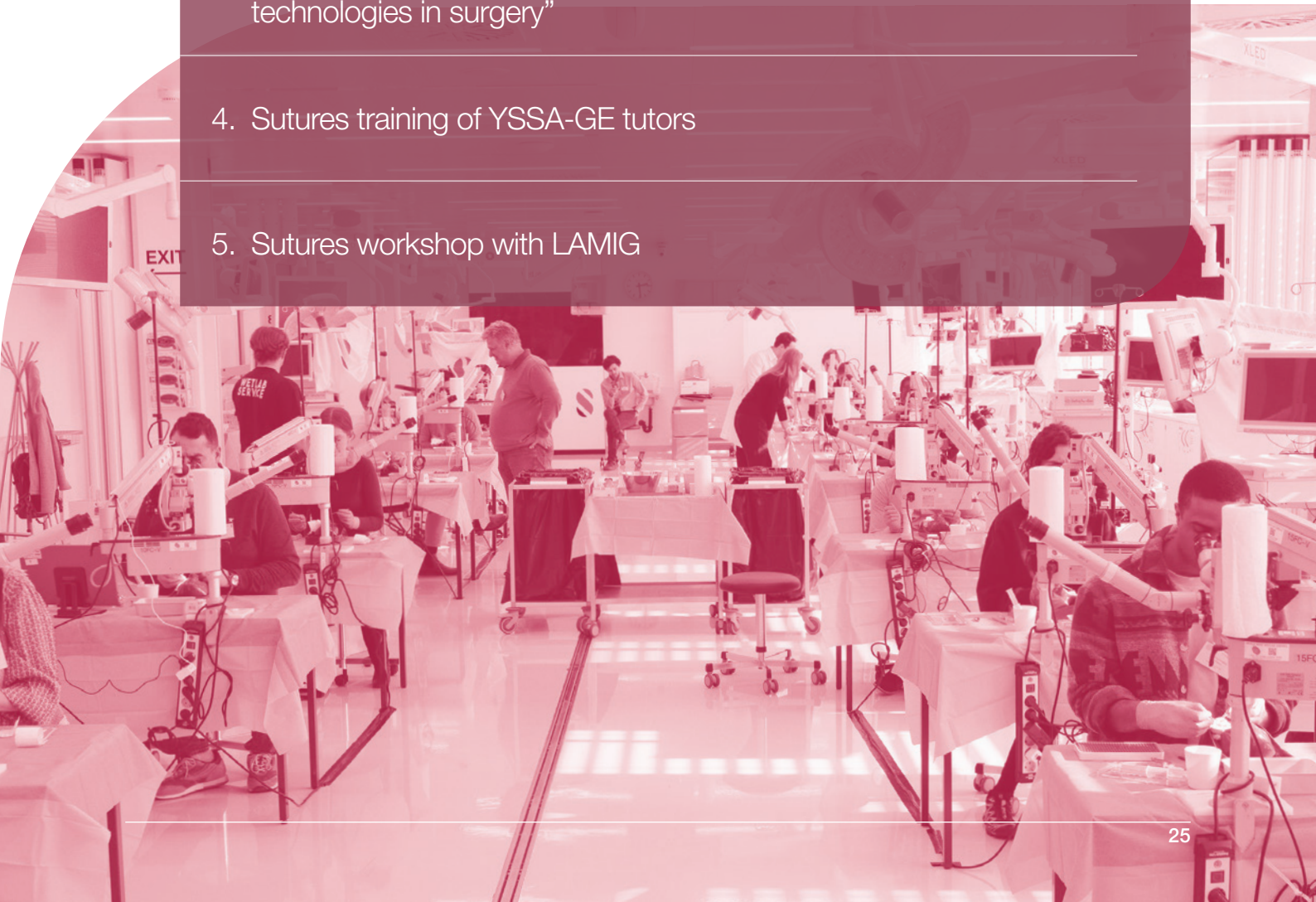


HIGHLIGHTS - TRAINING

Classes in collaboration with the University of Geneva



1. Nutrition, Digestion and Metabolism for 2nd year medical students
2. Sutura classes for 4th year medical students
3. Elective course “Introduction to new simulation and 3D visualisation technologies in surgery”
4. Sutures training of YSSA-GE tutors
5. Sutures workshop with LAMIG





A person is working on a robotic arm in a laboratory setting. The image is overlaid with a teal gradient and large circular shapes. The word "Innovation" is written in white text across the center.

Innovation



SFITS INNOVATION PROGRAM

The SFITS is running two initiatives aimed at supporting and accelerating the emergence and development of new interventional and surgical techniques and technologies.



CORPORATE R&D PROGRAM

The R&D program supports Medtech companies and R&D departments that wish to continue developing innovative solutions, to test them and to improve them in a clinical setting, thanks to the infrastructure and specialised services of SFITS.



STARTUP ACCELERATION PROGRAM

The startup acceleration programme aims to bring together the entrepreneurial, medical, industrial and financial communities, thereby creating a dynamic ecosystem conducive to innovation. By providing the resources, connections and expertise needed to commercialise innovative solutions, it represents a major opportunity for startups in the surgical and interventional technologies sector.



LET'S BRING YOUR INNOVATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

ZOOM Innovation Day 2025

As part of the SFITS innovation programme, this 2nd networking day with start-ups and large companies brought together more than 70 participants on the 29th of September. On this occasion, following speeches by Professor Pierre Hoffmeyer, Mr Pierre Maudet, Member of the Geneva State Council, and Dr Jelena Godjevac, the invited startups gave brief presentations on their innovations, followed by a tour of the stands in our conference rooms. The event concluded with a cocktail reception.

One of the aims of these events is to bring together key players in surgical innovation and hospital professionals, as well as to stimulate ideas and discussion.



ZOOM Partnership with the Future of Health Grant

SFITS and the "Future of Health Grant" programme are joining forces to accelerate digital innovation in surgical and interventional medicine.

This programme is an initiative aimed at accelerating the development of digital health, co-founded by the CSS and the EPFL Innovation Park.



TWO STARTUPS JOINED THE PROGRAMME IN 2025:



Their unique expertise, at the crossroads of clothing engineering and the science of anthropometry, has enabled them to develop flexible, anthropomorphic manikins that combine art, science and innovation.

Designed to faithfully reflect the body in motion, their mannequins serve as tools for training, development and realistic simulations that are customisable and inclusive, catering to two demanding sectors: fashion and medicine.

Through its collaboration with SFITS, the team at Made To Form benefits from:

- Connections with Subject Matter Experts
- Testing of their solution under real-world conditions



A medtech start-up specialising in ultra-high-resolution intraoperative imaging combined with artificial intelligence-assisted navigation.

Their mission is to redefine neuro-intervention by providing tools that enable safer, faster and more scalable brain surgeries, thereby improving patients' lives whilst meeting global surgical demands and ushering in a new era of highly targeted neurotherapies.

Through its collaboration with SFITS, the Cleo Medical team benefits from:

- Connections with Subject Matter Experts
- Exchanges and discussions with our ecosystem

OTHER STARTUPS INTEGRATED IN THE PROGRAMME:

evidone



AUGMEDI



REGENOSCA





A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark lab coat over a dark shirt, stands in a laboratory. He is holding a small, dark, curved object in his right hand. In the background, a person is seated on a treadmill, and a computer monitor is visible on the right. The image is overlaid with a teal gradient and large, overlapping circular shapes.

Expertise &
research

We wanted to draw on the expertise of our speakers to share an anecdote or surgical technique with the SFITS community.

These were posted on social media once a month.

Here are a few of them below. They are also all compiled on this page:



January 2025

SHOULD CLAMPS BE USED IN MICROSURGERY

By Dr. Nicolas Balagué

Head of the Department of Plastic surgery
at the Hospital of Sierre

Microsurgery combines vascular surgery with the use of a microscope. The microscope facilitates the suturing of vessels with a diameter of less than 3mm (and as small as 0.3 mm). For larger-calibre vessels, the use of magnifying glasses is often sufficient.

In 1966, Yoshikazu Ikuta, a Japanese surgeon, developed a metal vascular clamp that made it easier to position the vessels for suturing. Since then, many other clamps have been developed, some with variable pressure depending on the calibre of the vessel and its type (vein or artery). However, the use of these clamps varies from one speciality to another and from one hospital to another.

In that respect, most plastic surgeons use clamps to perform anastomoses of flaps, whilst hand surgeons (who often work on a flat surface with limited anatomical space) are accustomed to performing vascular sutures without clamps.

The use of a clamp also influences the suturing technique, as the inversion of the vessel required by the clamp necessitates a two-stage suture (according to Ikuta), whilst the inability to invert a vessel (on a finger, for example) requires the use of a different suturing technique, from deep to superficial (according to Comptet).

HIGHLIGHTS
– EXPERTISE & RESEARCH



February 2025

A NEW HOPE FOR PATIENTS WITH SYMPTOMATIC LEVATOR ANI AVULSION

By Prof. Frédéric Ris

Senior attending in colorectal et proctological surgery at HUG

Levator Ani Avulsion is a common pathology, occurring after delivery in 7% of the women population and up to 50% of forceps deliveries. This can lead to a wide variety of symptoms, with anal dyschesia or incontinence, urine incontinence, colpophonia (air from the vagina), pain during sexual intercourse, or loss/decrease of orgasm. It is often seen with a feeling of musculoskeletal unbalance and widening of the vagina. It is believed that this condition cannot be repaired by a classical urogynecological vision.

We developed in our Proctology Unit of the HUG a new operation to solve this issue in symptomatic patients with improvement or complete resolution of the symptoms in most of the patients. This intervention aims at restoring the anatomy of the pelvic floor, and the balance without foreign body, just simple stitches. Complication rate is low and patient can go home after a short hospital stay.

As a leading unit for this surgery, we tend to teach it in Switzerland or across countries in Europe or to welcome patients from all over the world.



March 2025

THE USE OF FLUOPTICS DURING MASTECTOMIES

By Dr. Dominik André-Lévigne

Attending physician in the Department of Plastic, reconstructive and aesthetic surgery at HUG

The use of Fluoptics during skin-sparing mastectomies or nipple-sparing mastectomies followed by immediate reconstruction using a prosthesis enables the relative vascularisation of the skin to be visualised during surgery through the injection of indocyanine green (fluorescence). It thereby helps to prevent implant exposure during immediate breast reconstruction by identifying the areas at risk of skin necrosis at an early stage.

It is possible to distinguish between well-vascularised areas, those showing delayed vascularisation, and those completely devoid of vascularisation. Dr André-Lévigne and his team are currently conducting a study on the usefulness of hyperbaric chambers in saving areas showing delayed vascularisation on fluorescence imaging.

This intraoperative visualisation of skin vascularisation enables precise excision of non-vascularised tissue, which optimises the aesthetic outcomes of immediate reconstruction and reduces the risk of revision surgery due to skin complications.





April 2025

SUBMUCOUS CLEFT PALATE

By Dr. Giorgio La Scala

Of the Unit of pediatric surgery at HUG, and
Dr. Igor Leuchter, of the Unit of phoniatrics at HUG

Some patients may have speech that sounds unusually nasal, which is often linked to a cleft palate - even when the palate appears normal. In some cases, the voice was normal until after an adenoidectomy. Other patients might only notice nasal air escape when blowing forcefully, such as when playing a wind instrument.

Although muscle weakness from certain neurological conditions can cause similar issues, the underlying problem can be an anatomical condition called occult submucous cleft palate, caused by malposition of the muscles in the palate. This condition can only be diagnosed with a nasofibroscopy. If the symptoms significantly affect quality of life, treatment options may include speech therapy or surgery. Surgical approaches vary depending on the severity and may involve fat grafting (lipofilling) to the back of the throat (posterior pharyngeal wall), reconstruction of the palatal muscles sling (palatoplasty), or even lengthening of the palate.

At the HUG, the ENT Phoniatriy Clinic and the Pediatric Plastic Surgery Clinic work together to offer specialized diagnosis and treatment for both children and adults affected by this condition.

HIGHLIGHTS – EXPERTISE & RESEARCH

June 2025

BREATHING WITHOUT BREATHING: HIGH-FLOW OXYGEN AND THE THRIVE TECHNIQUE

By Dr. Amaury Govaerts

Senior attending in the Unit of anaesthesiology at HUG

A major advance is the THRIVE technique (Trans-nasal Humidified Rapid-Insufflation Ventilatory Exchange), developed by Dr Anil Patel in 2015. THRIVE uses warm, humidified, high-flow oxygen to extend the apnoeic window - sometimes up to 30 minutes or more in carefully selected patients.

This has transformed how anaesthesiologists manage difficult airways and short ENT procedures, offering a clear, device-free field for the surgeon and giving teams more time in high-risk airway situations.

At the HUG, we use THRIVE routinely for ENT procedures requiring a device-free airway, providing a high level of safety for patients and excellent operating conditions for surgeons. This technique illustrates how innovation, physiology, and teamwork converge in modern anaesthesia to push the boundaries of what's possible in surgical care.



September 2025

THE RISE OF POCUS (POINT-OF-CARE ULTRASOUND)

By Dr. André Juillerat

Physician at the service of general internal medicine at HUG

For surgeons, POCUS could make a real difference in cases such as suspected cholecystitis, pleural effusion, or pneumothorax, to name just a few. In peripheral hospitals, where 24/7 access to radiology is not always guaranteed, equipping surgeons with ultrasound skills may prove particularly valuable.

Recently, the HUG established the Unit of Ultrasound in Medicine (U2M), led by Dr Olivier Groscurin, dedicated to research, teaching, and educational innovation in POCUS. Among its flagship projects, U2M has developed 3D-printed heart models, in collaboration with the Anatomy Unit of the Faculty of Medicine, to support focused cardiac ultrasound courses. These models help learners grasp the complex visuospatial orientation of echocardiographic views and accelerate their practical mastery. POCUS exemplifies how an accessible technology can strengthen clinical reasoning, enhance patient safety, and transform medical education.



Precision and personalisation in maxillo-facial surgery: an alchemy between art and science

(NOVEMBER 2025)



Maxillofacial surgery is currently undergoing a silent, almost seismic revolution that is profoundly transforming the way we understand and treat the human face. The emergence of virtual planning, 3D anatomical reconstructions, printed cutting guides, bespoke implants and sophisticated digital simulations have pushed the boundaries of what is possible.

Whereas, until very recently, the procedure relied on mental anticipation and an internal visualisation, it is now based on digital modelling of unrivalled precision.

Prof. Paolo Scolozzi

Head of the Department of maxillo-facial surgery at HUG

HIGHLIGHTS
– EXPERTISE & RESEARCH

These technologies have brought millimetre-level precision, a significant reduction in uncertainty, and an unprecedented ability to predict the impact of our actions. They have forged a new surgical grammar, in which three-dimensional space is manipulated even before it is exposed, in which the facial skeleton is understood in its entirety, and in which the consequences - both structural and aesthetic - of every movement can be anticipated.

They have undeniably opened therapeutic horizons that previous generations could not even have conceived of.

Yet, behind this triumphant sophistication, an immutable truth remains: medicine has always been – and remains – above all an art, tailored to the unique needs of each patient, long before it can be reduced to a purely technological dimension.

Personalised medicine is therefore not a contemporary revolution, but the resurgence of a timeless foundation: care that is individualised, contextualised, and deeply rooted in the history of healthcare since antiquity.

When we look at the long history of healthcare - from the Egyptians' prosthetic toe, fashioned to restore dignity and the ability to walk, to Justinian's golden nose, designed to restore not only form but also a political existence - we realise that whilst technology changes, the human purpose remains the same.

This common thread runs through the centuries: understanding the individual before restoring them.

Technology provides precision, but never meaning, on its own.

It measures, but does not perceive.

Science answers the *how*: how to move a jawbone with precision, how to perform a clean osteotomy, how to stabilise an occlusal plane. But only the art of medicine answers the *why*, the *to what extent*, the *for who*, and the *for what inner and outer face*.

Digital technology calibrates, standardises and organises.

The clinician, on the other hand, refines, corrects, rebalances and humanises.

No equation, no standard, no segmentation can capture the depth of a gaze, the gentleness of a smile, or the delicacy or strength of an identity.

No statistic takes into account the cultural, psychological, life experience, expressive or personal symbolic elements that shape a face.

No graph reveals what it means to project a chin, widen a jaw or reconstruct a zygomatic contour for the person wearing it.

That is why, beyond the figures, it is always the eye, instinct and experience that draw the precise line of an osteotomy, determine the appropriate projection of a profile, or decide on facial balance.

Digital tools allow us to operate with millimetre precision; clinical intuition allows us to operate in tune with the patient's deepest essence.

So-called 'personalised' medicine is not a modern invention: it has been the backbone of the medical profession since antiquity. It has simply changed its terminology. What was once intuitive, empirical, and based on a sensitive face-to-face interaction is now parameterised, simulated and visualised - yet intuition remains the invisible source that guides everything, from the initial diagnosis through to planning, and right into the silence of the operating theatre, where a millimetre more or less can change the course of a life.

Technology, however brilliant it may be, is never an end in itself: it is an extension of the surgeon's eye, not a replacement for it.

Machines can reproduce with fidelity; only the clinician can interpret accurately.

Machines offer precision; only the surgeon offers meaning. Machines have science at their disposal; the surgeon, for his part, possesses vision.

And it is in this subtle alliance - the rigour of science and the sensitivity of art - that the true modernity of maxillofacial surgery lies: a discipline where technological progress enhances the hand, but where clinical intuition remains the compass that guides decision-making, the treatment plan, and the face.

For ultimately, medicine is advancing.

Technology advances.

But the human element remains at the centre — indomitable, unique, essential.

And where there is humanity, there is *art*.

In conclusion, the dialectic between art and science finds its perfect synthesis in Osler's famous statement:

"If it were not for the great variability among individuals, medicine might as well be a science and not an art."



The Swiss Army's course on War and Disaster Surgery, held twice a year at SFITS

Special
projects

THANK YOU to our team



Great availability, strong work ethic, solution finding, a smile, highly specialized expertise - all the qualities that lead to excellence.

We are proud and grateful to be able to count on such a wonderfully dedicated and passionate team.

Not to mention our medical students, our TRM students, our videographers, our translators... who help us every day.

SUPPORTING CANSEARCH

Paul Muller, a student at the Faculty of Medicine at UNIGE, ran the Nice Ironman on June 28 to support childhood cancer research. By taking on this challenge, he raised over CHF 30,000 for the CANSEARCH Foundation in Geneva. The SFITS, moved by this initiative, was also keen to contribute to this project.

Paul is also a valuable asset to the team as a member of our *pools*.



HIGHLIGHTS – SFITS TEAM

Supporting the Digger Foundation

Founded in 1998, the Digger Foundation works to combat landmines by providing specialized machinery to assist with humanitarian demining.

In September 2025, the team travelled to Tavannes for a tour of the Foundation. Filled with numerous anecdotes, explanations, and demonstrations, the tour of the site was impressive.

We extend our warmest thanks to the founder and CEO, Frédéric Guerne, as well as his colleagues for their hospitality.



DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

A big thank you to Maeva Flury, who is always on the lookout for the latest brilliant ideas to showcase SFITS activities and share them on social media with humour, creativity, and style.

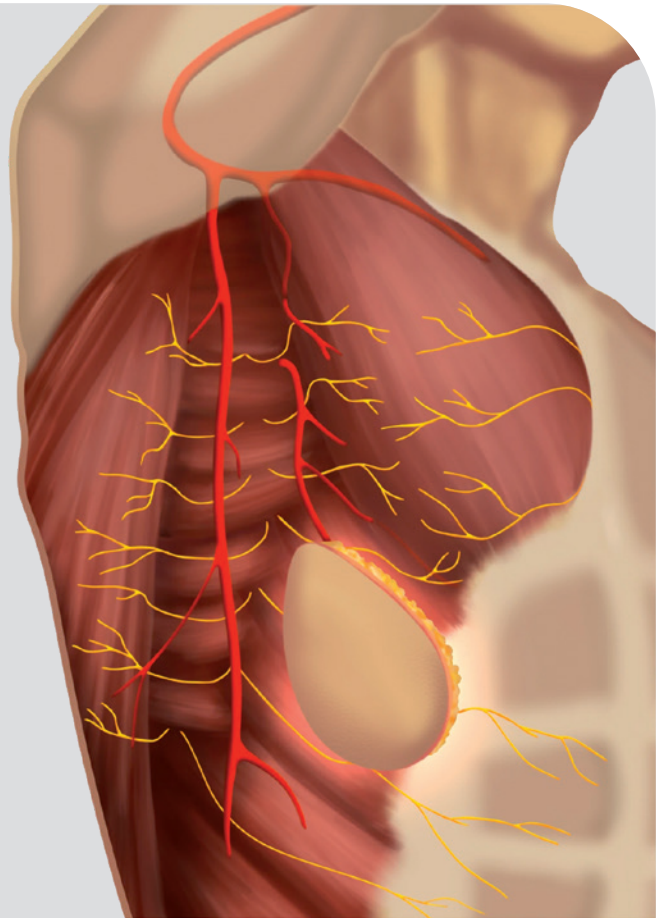
HIGHLIGHTS – AUDIOVISUAL CREATIVITY

ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS

A dedicated anatomical illustrator, Jess Sarceno uses her own style and distinctive touch to bring life to words, anatomical knowledge, and surgical procedures and techniques. Jess is also a photographer in her spare time.



Jess created our 2025 Christmas card:



STUNNING PHOTOS

Julien Busset, our talented biomedical engineer, is our photographer when he isn't in the control room, wearing a lead apron, working in the false ceilings, or sorting through the inventory files.

HIGHLIGHTS – AUDIOVISUAL CREATIVITY

VISUAL CREATIVITY

Posters, brochures, flyers, website, promotional items... All these wonderful creations come from our creative agency, Maxnova, which has been working with us since 2018.

Hvala!



To their
portfolio



To their
website



STREET ART ON OUR WALLS

Five years ago, Ardif, a French street artist, created some magnificent original paintings, blending medicine and mechanics, on the walls of SFITS. His illustrations can be admired in several places at SFITS, namely in the lounge and the auditorium.







New
developments

The names of our classrooms have changed!



8 years after our very first surgical training course, the SFITS has renamed its classrooms to ensure greater consistency across its activities.

Following careful consideration and discussions within the team, the decision was made to use the names of doctors and surgeons who have left their mark on the history of surgery.

The portraits created by our illustrator, Jess Sarceno.

“COLLOQUE ROOM 8” (FORMERLY B-LAB)

“PARÉ” ROOM FOR AMBROISE PARÉ (FORMERLY R-LAB)

Of French origin, former barber, became a legend of surgery.



“KOCHER” ROOM FOR EMIL THEODOR KOCHER

The first Swiss surgeon to win a Nobel Prize.
A new room for hands-on training using organic or synthetic materials.

“HALSTED” ROOM FOR WILLIAM STEWART HALSTED (FORMERLY S-LAB)

American and pioneer of asepsis and anaesthesia in modern surgery.



“COLLOQUE ROOM 7” (FORMERLY CONFERENCE ROOM)



“HUNTER” ROOM FOR JOHN HUNTER

(FORMERLY H-LAB)

Surgeon and pioneer of pathological anatomy in England.



“VÉSALE 1 & 2” ROOMS FOR ANDRÉ VÉSALE

(FORMERLY WETLAB 1 & 2)

Human anatomist and surgeon.







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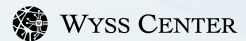


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