

SAMS Stern-Gattiker Prize

Recognising female role models in academic medicine

The SAMS is launching a new prize to recognise women in academic medicine and to motivate early-career female scientists. The prize is named after two women with distinguished medical careers: Lina Stern, who in 1918 was the first woman to hold a professorship at the Faculty of Medicine in Geneva, and Ruth Gattiker, who in the 1970s was among the first female professors appointed at the Faculty of Medicine in Zurich. The SAMS Stern-Gattiker Prize is to be awarded to female role models.

In Switzerland, around 10 per cent of medical graduates pursue an academic career; this group includes significantly fewer women than men, even though women now account for almost 60 per cent of all medical students. Only 10 to 15 per cent of professorships in medicine are currently held by women. To ensure that sufficient medical scientists are available over the medium and longer term, more women will need to pursue a career in academic medicine.

In 2016, an Oxford University study¹ explored the question of why, when entry to medical schools is evenly split between men and women, those working in university medical departments are predominantly men. One of the main factors cited was a lack of role models for women. This provides the rationale for the Stern-Gattiker Prize², which is to be awarded each year to a female medical scientist who:

- has obtained her postdoctoral qualification within the past ten years,
- holds a permanent position as a senior hospital physician, and
- is suitable, for reasons to be explained in each case, to act as a role model.

The Prize carries an award of CHF 15,000. Following the panel's decision, the recipient may name an individual within their personal circle and/or an institution that made a substantial contribution to her career development. In such cases, additional prizes each worth CHF 5,000 may be awarded. The panel comprises three members of the SAMS Executive Board, Professor Ruth Gattiker and three female junior or senior physicians.

Nominations may be submitted either by individuals (in particular, female junior and senior physicians) or by institutions. Self-nomination is not possible. Institutional nominations must be signed by the management.

Information on the documents required, the online registration form and the contact for queries can be found on the SAMS website at: sams.ch/stern-gattiker-prize

The deadline for submissions is 15 April 2018.

¹ University of Oxford. What are the factors affecting whether women choose a medical research career: Team review whether commonly cited factors are supported by evidence. ScienceDaily, 19 April 2016. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/04/160419214200.htm.

² The Prize is named, firstly, after Professor Lina Stern – a Russian emigrant who studied medicine at the University of Geneva at the beginning of the 20th century and was appointed as Professor of Physiological Chemistry in 1918 – and, secondly, Professor Ruth Gattiker, one of Switzerland's first female professors of medicine, who as a cardiovascular anaesthetist was involved in the first heart transplantation performed at Zurich University Hospital and now, a nonagenarian, lives in Davos.