

# Microrobots for Medicine

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Associate Professor  
ETH Zurich



**MEDICAL  
MICROSYSTEMS**

## Interactive Sequence

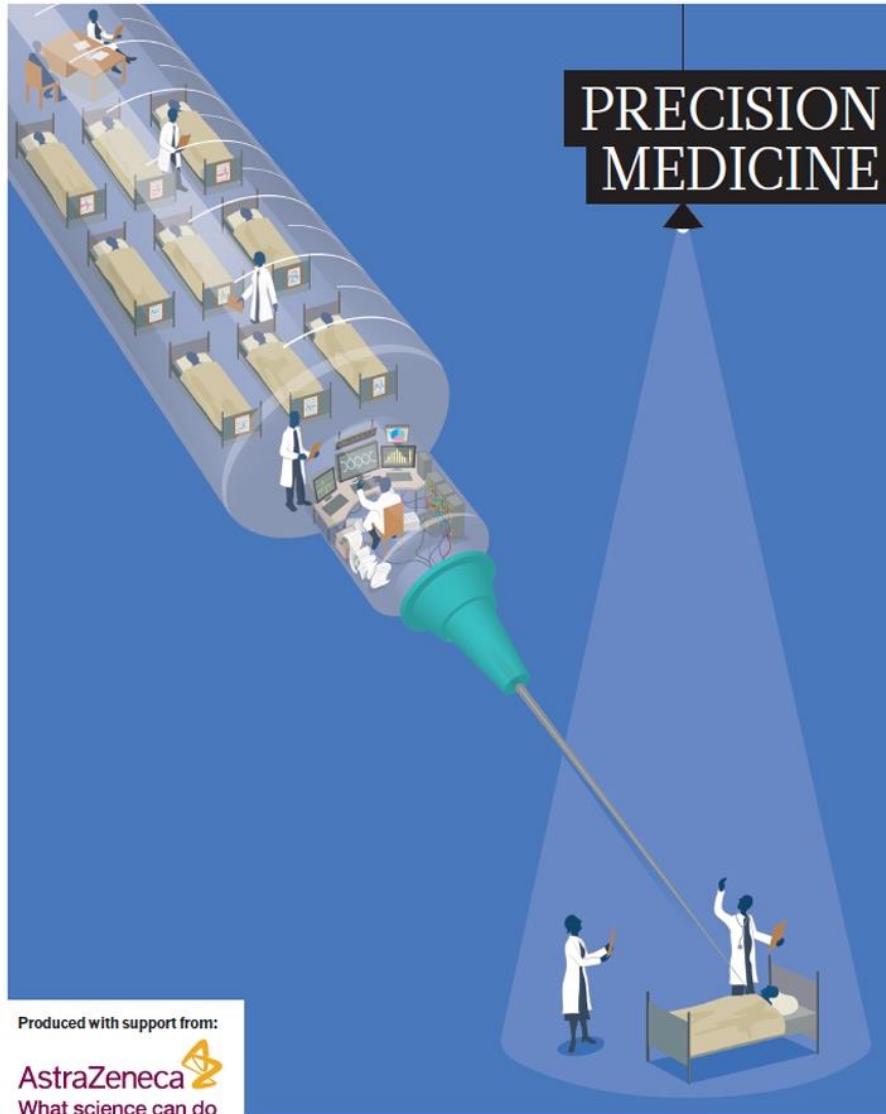


- What is your background?
- What comes to your mind when you hear about microorbots for medicine?



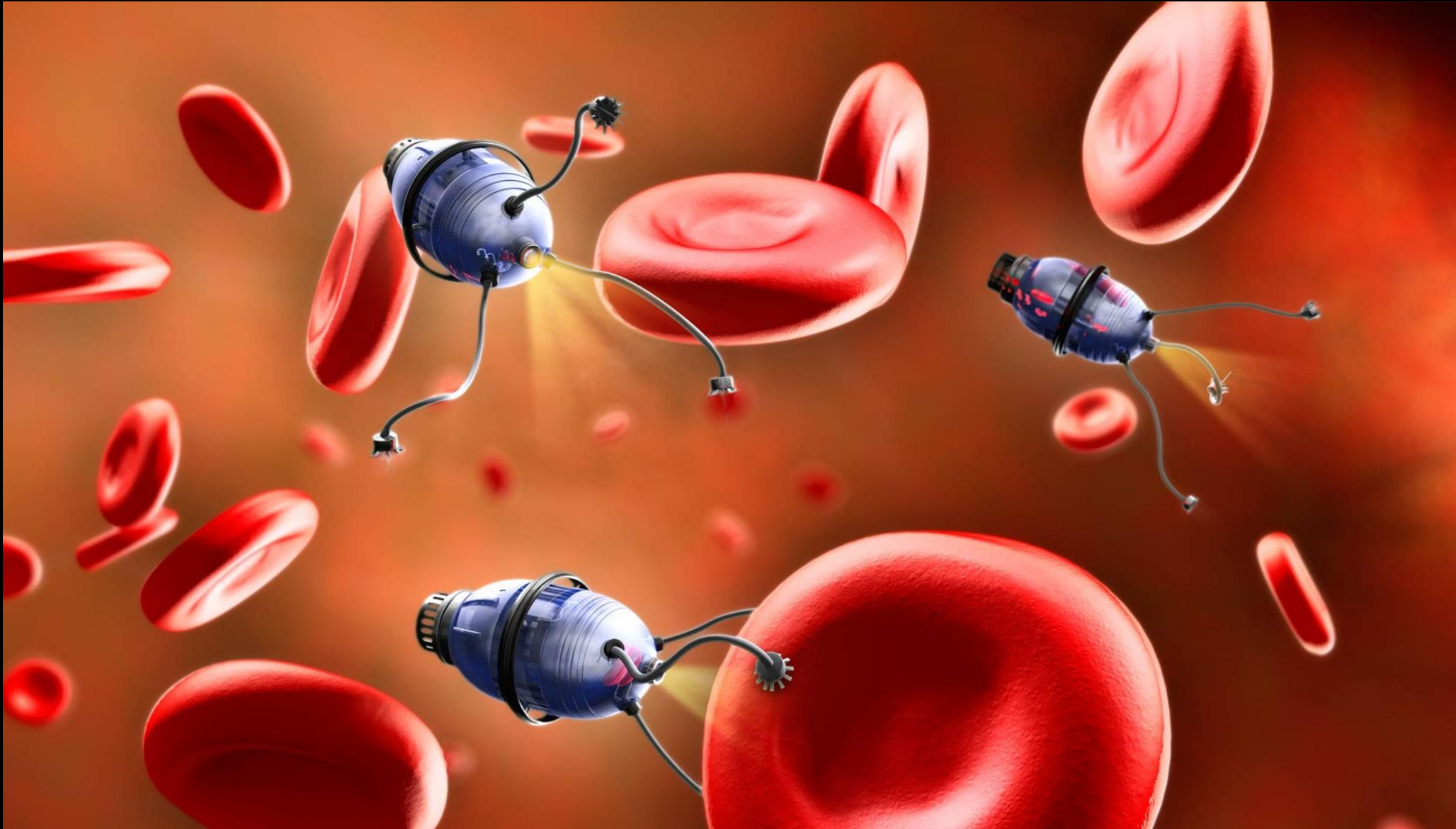
# Trend towards precision medicine

natureINSIGHT



**We need new tools to  
improve diagnosis at the  
point of care and treat  
diseases in a more  
targeted fashion**

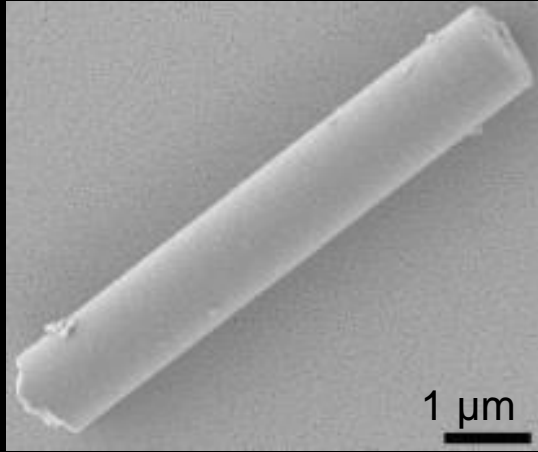
# Microrobots for medicine...



*Google search result for "microrobot"*

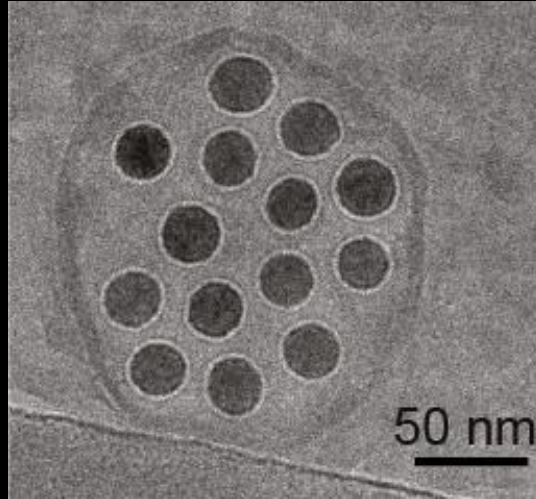


...might look more like that



**Synthetic  
inorganic**

*Assgeirsson et al, Lab Chip, 2021*



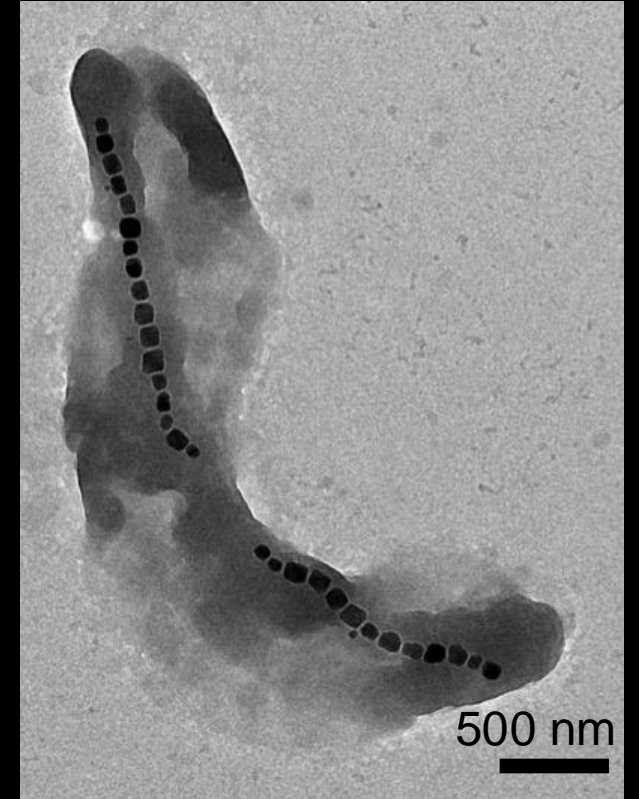
**Synthetic  
organic & inorganic**

*Schuerle et al, Nanoletters, 2016*



**Bio-inspired**

*Schuerle et al, Sci Adv, 2019*



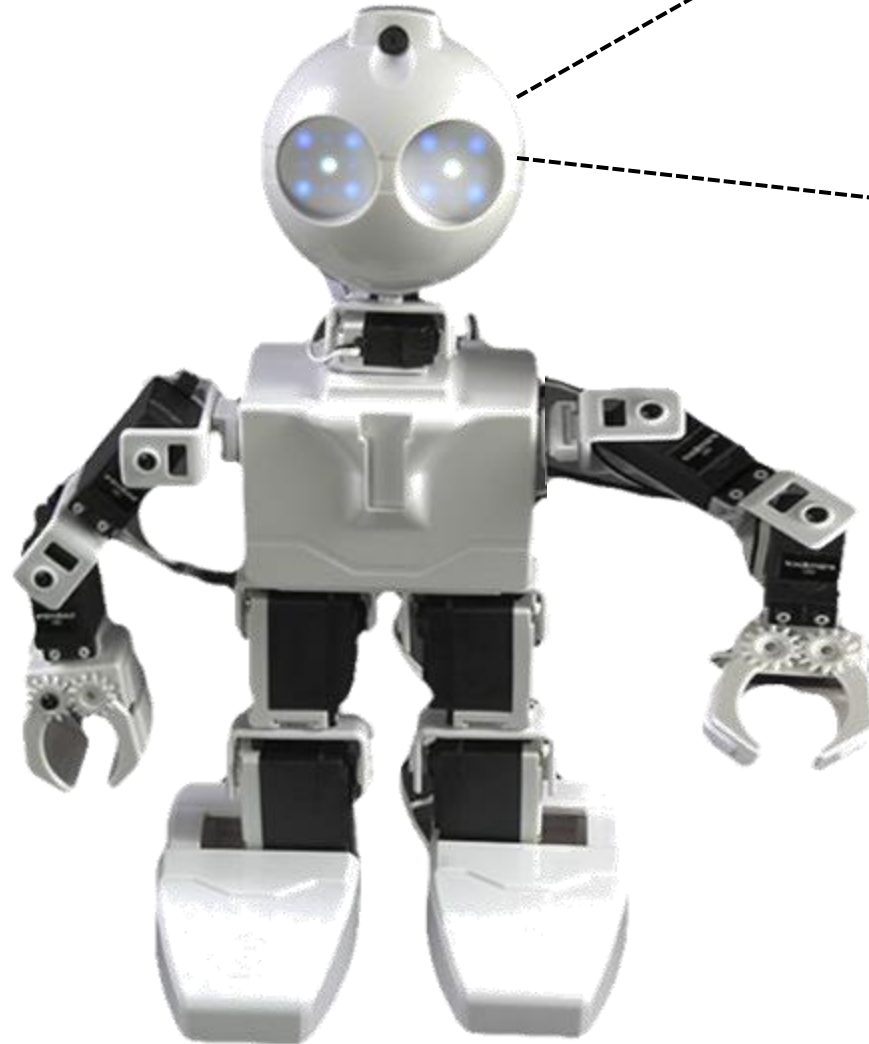
**Biological/Biohybrid**

*Schuerle et al, Sci Adv, 2019*

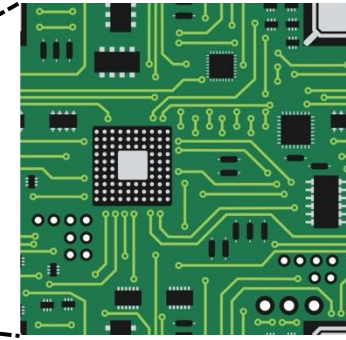
# Principles from robotics



**Input**

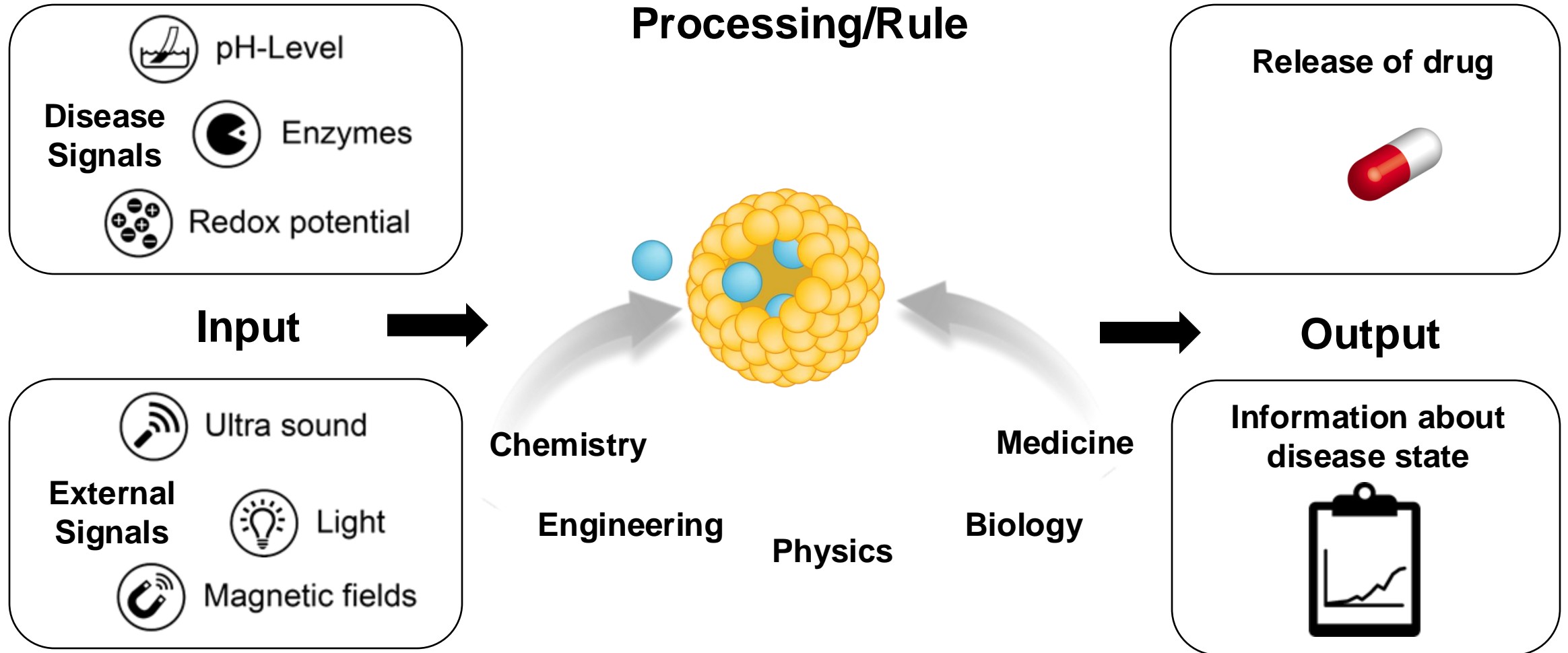


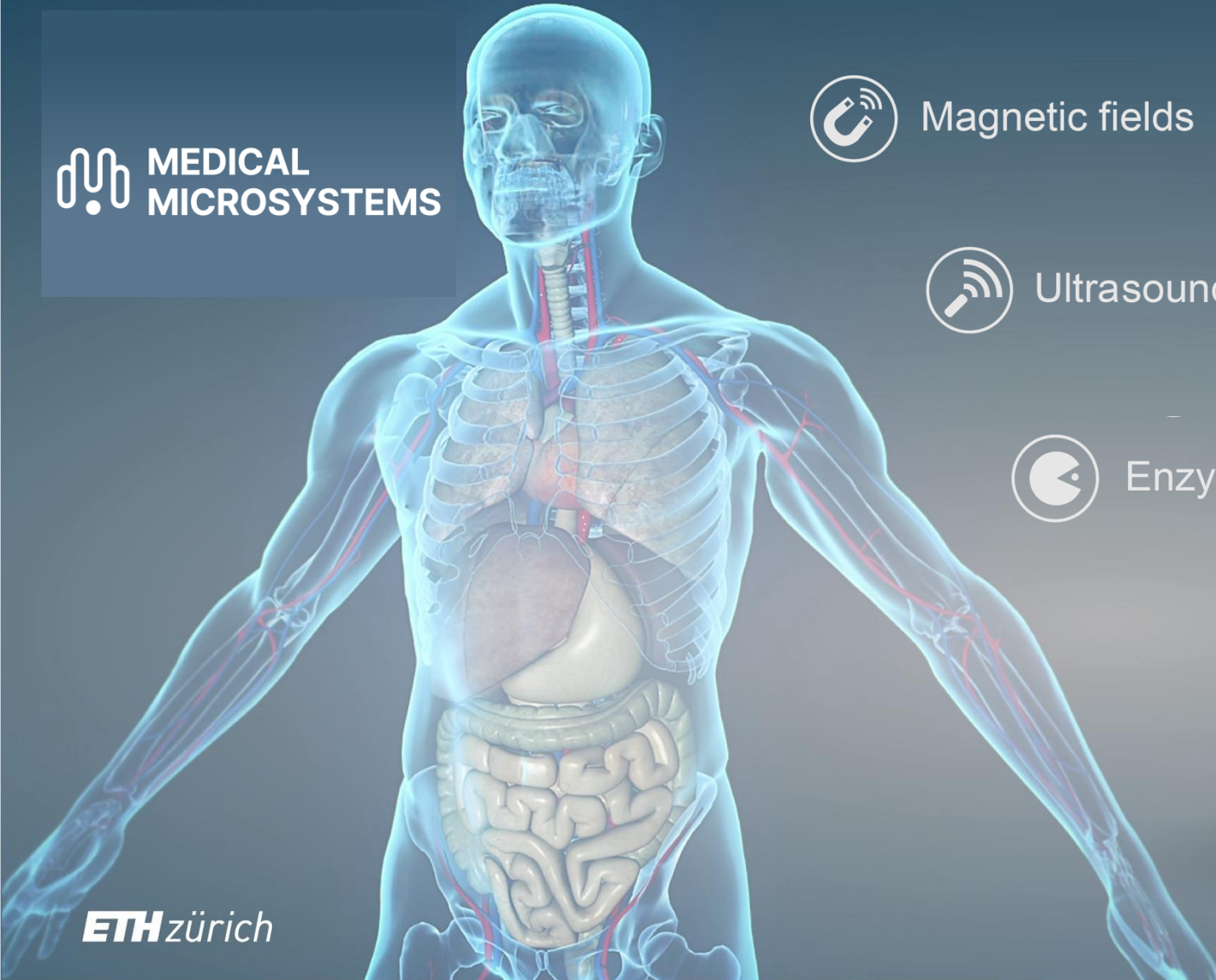
**Processing/Rule**



**Output**

# Principles from robotics





Magnetic fields



Ultrasound



Enzymes

## Microrobots for

- ① **Cell & tissue probing**
- ② **Biosensing & diagnostics**
- ③ **Drug delivery**



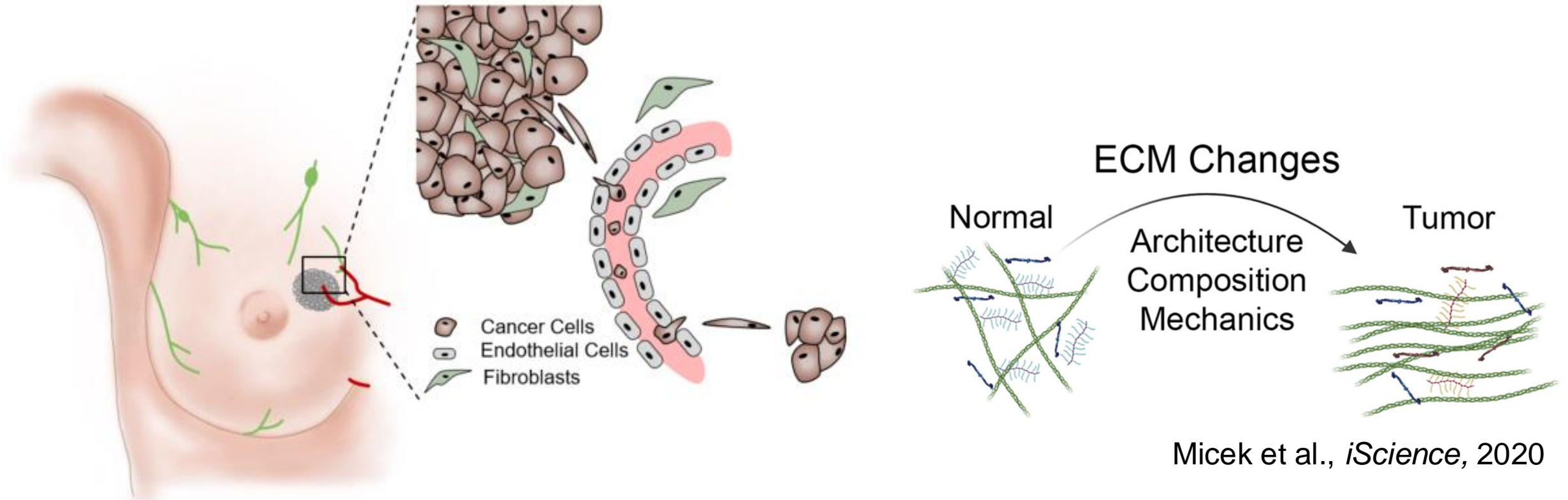


Magnetic fields

## Microrobots for

- ① Cell & tissue probing
- ② Biosensing & diagnostics
- ③ Drug delivery

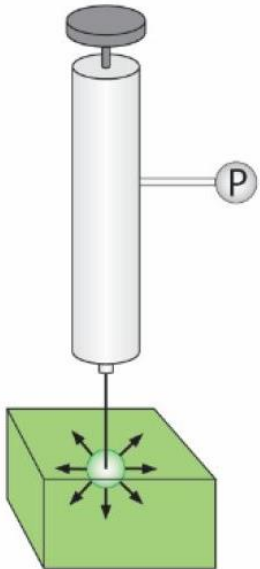
# Tissue stiffening as a driver in cancer progression



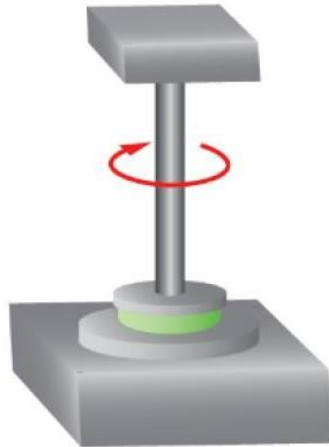
**Understanding and altering tissue mechanics at the microscale to inform drug development**

# Probing mechanical properties at the microscale

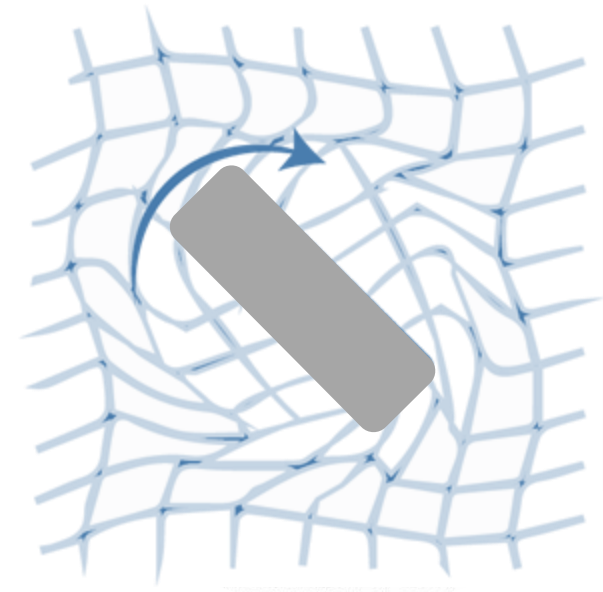
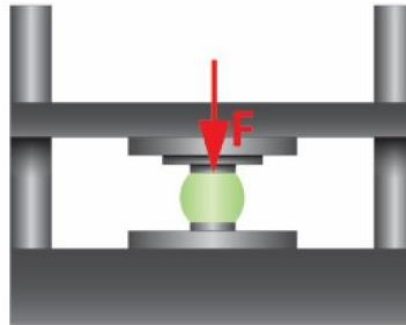
**Cavitation Rheology**  
Modulus: Pa-kPa



**Shear Rheology**  
Modulus: Pa-MPa

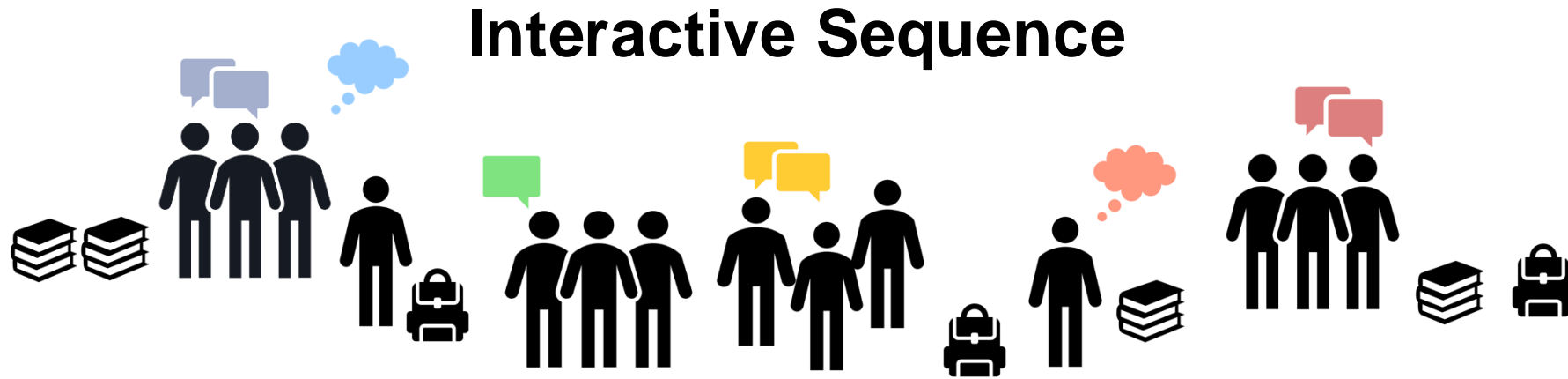


**Compression Testing**  
Modulus: kPa-GPa



*in situ* microprobe to infer  
local shear moduli

# Magnetism



- Form groups of 3-4 students
- Think about the following questions:
  - What do you know about magnetism?
  - Which classes of magnetism do you know?
  - To which category belongs human tissue?

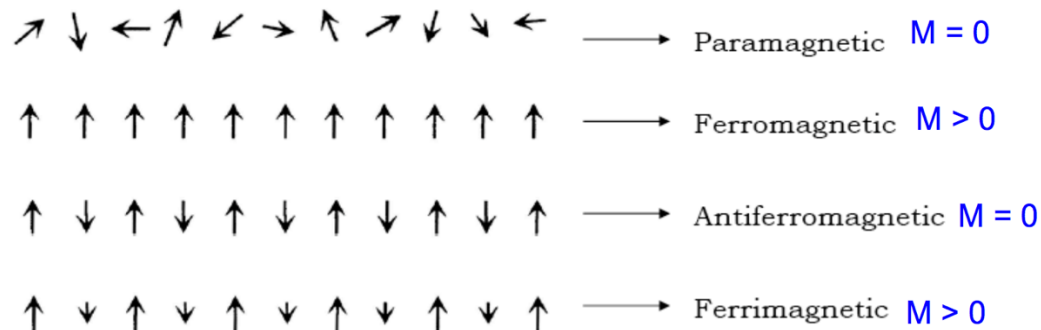
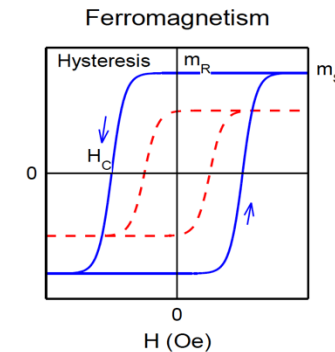
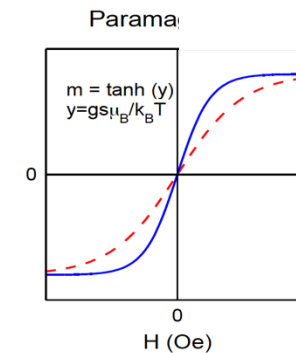
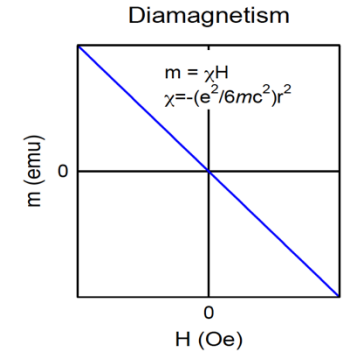




# Classes of magnetism

Can utilize the susceptibility to categorize types of magnetism  $\chi = \frac{\vec{M}}{\vec{H}}$

- $\chi$  is small and negative ( $\sim -10^{-5} - 10^{-6}$ ): DIAMAGNETIC  
examples: gold, copper, silver, bismuth, silica, many molecules (and superconductors)
- $\chi$  is small and positive ( $\sim 10^{-3}$  or  $10^{-6}$ ): PARAMAGNETIC  
examples: aluminum, platinum, manganese
- $\chi$  is large and positive ( $\gg 1$ ; 50 – 10,000): FERROMAGNETIC  
examples: iron, cobalt, gadolinium



# Levitating frog und strawberry

Levitating frog



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1vyB-O5i6E>

Levitating strawberry



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uY8btfJZ9Z8>

# Applying magnetic forces and torques

Magnetic Torque:

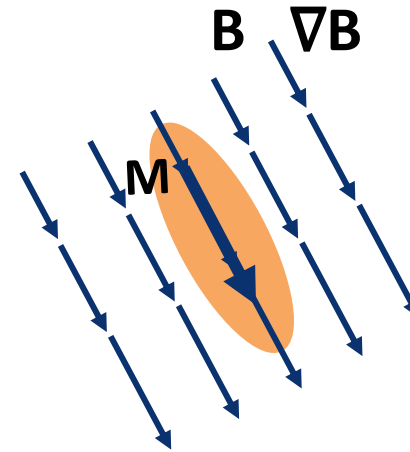
$$\mathbf{T} = \underbrace{\mu}_{\text{Object}} \underbrace{\mathbf{M} \cdot \mathbf{B}}_{\text{System}}$$

Magnetic Force:

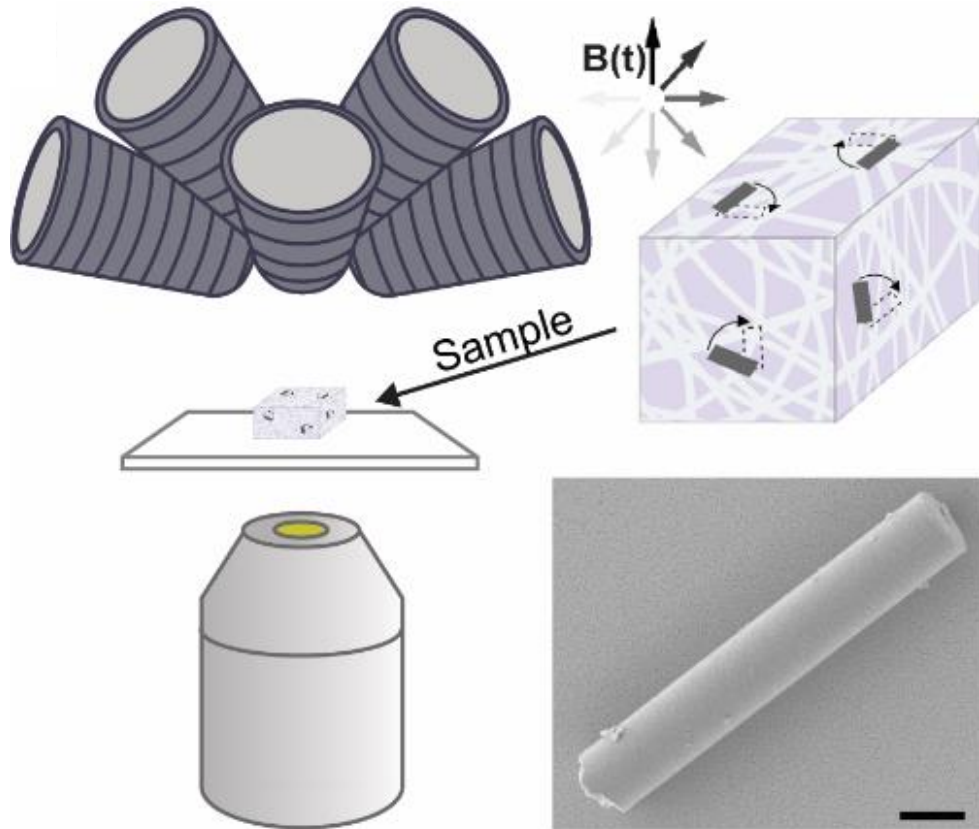
$$\mathbf{F} = \underbrace{\mu}_{\text{Object}} (\underbrace{\mathbf{M} \times \tilde{\mathbf{N}}}_{\text{System}}) \mathbf{B}$$

$$\downarrow \tilde{\mathbf{N}} \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0$$

$$\mathbf{F} = \underbrace{\mu}_{\text{Object}} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial}{\partial y} & \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} B_x \\ B_y \\ B_z \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{M}$$



# Microrobots for wireless *in situ* probing of tissues



Schuerle, Avalos, et al., *Sci Rob*, 2017

Kummer et al., *IEEE Transactions on Robotics*, 2010

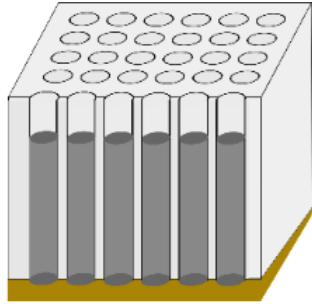
Schuerle et al., *IEEE Transactions on Magnetism and Magnetic Materials*, 2013

**Conflict of interest disclosure:**  
**Simone Schuerle is co-founder of Magnebotix AG**

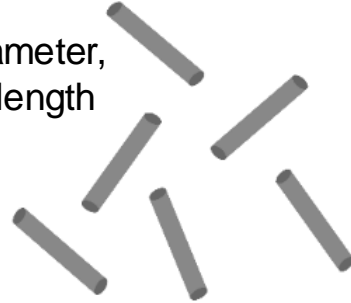


# Fabrication of magnetic microrobots for tissue probing

## Microrobot synthesis

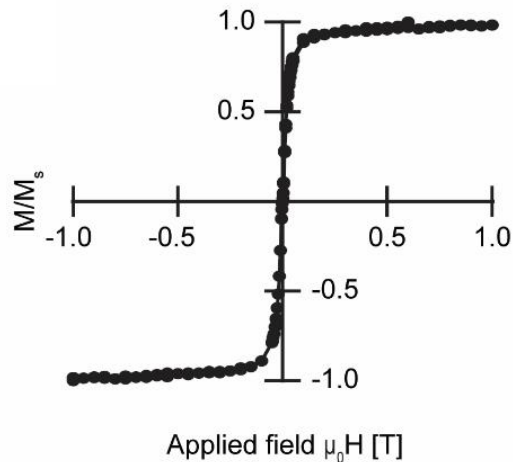
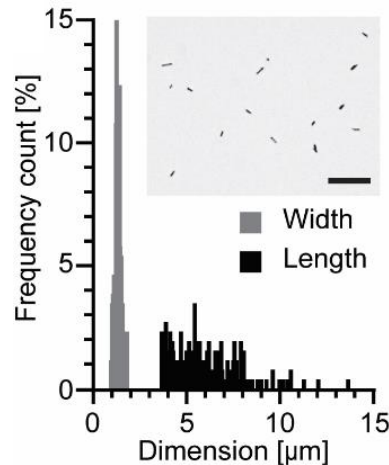


1-3  $\mu\text{m}$  diameter,  
10-20  $\mu\text{m}$  length

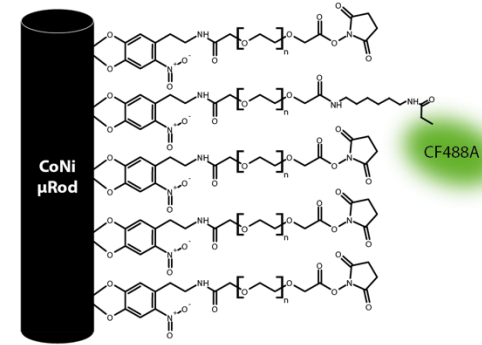


In collaboration by Prof. Salvador Pané, D-MATL

## Microrobot characterization

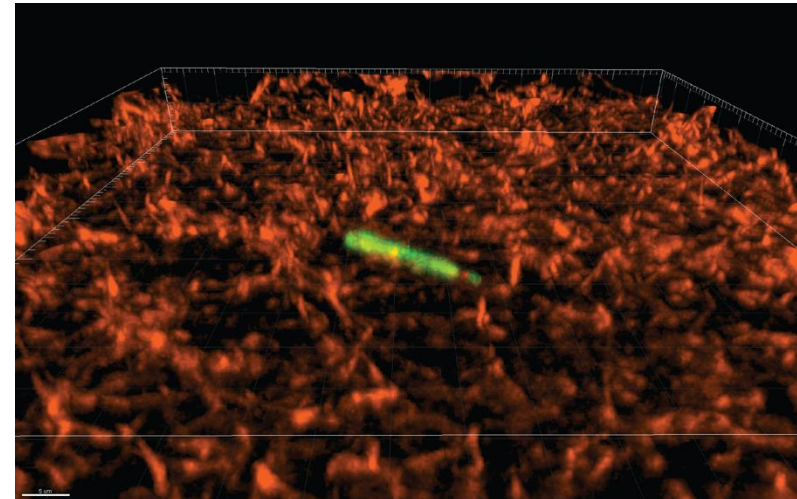


## Microrobot functionalization



20% ND-PEG-CF488A, 80% ND-PEG-NHS

## Microrobot embedding



Dr. Asgeirsson



Dr. Christiansen

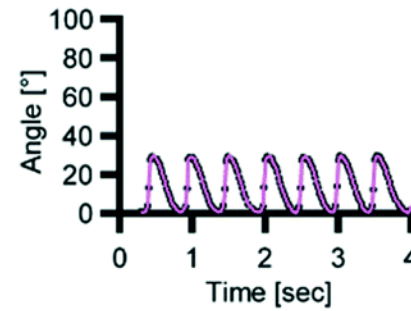
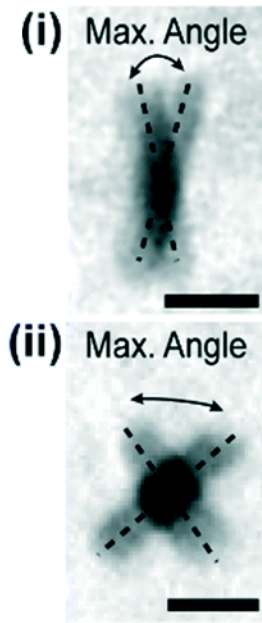
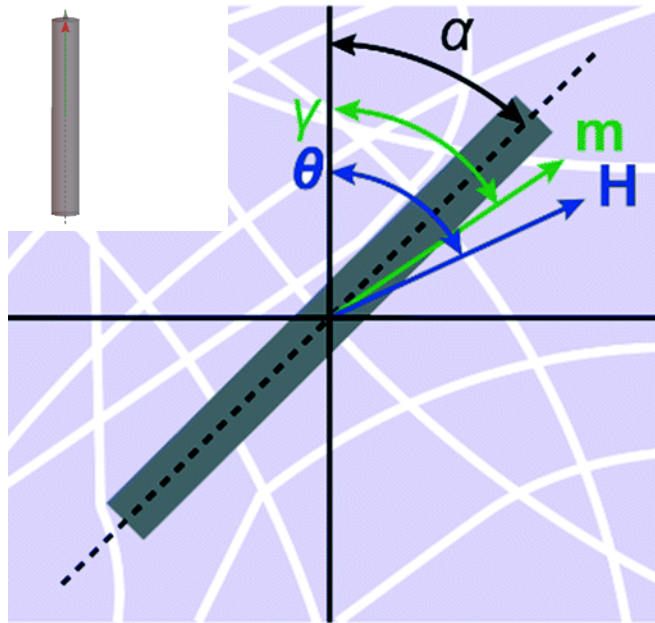


Dr. Valentin

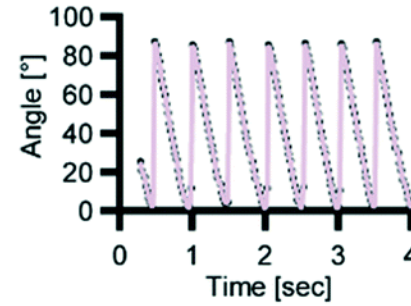


Dr. Nima Mirkhani

# Microrobot actuation and readout: extracting local estimated shear moduli



→ Stiff



→ Less stiff

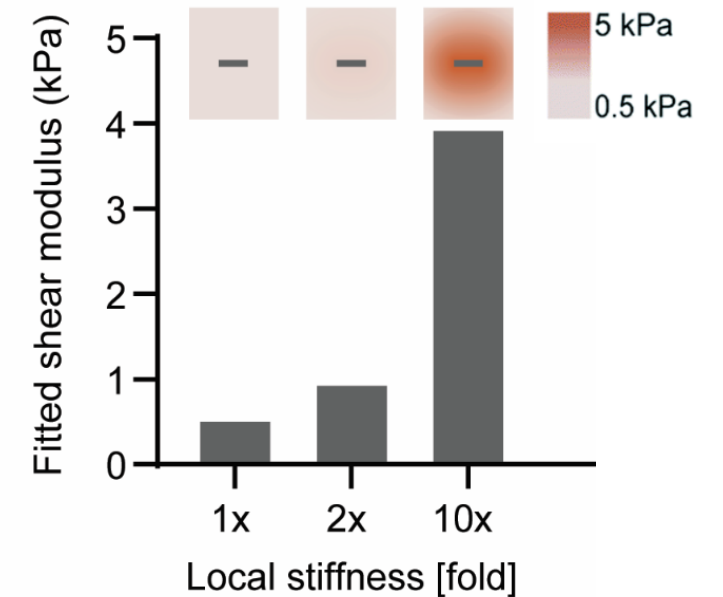
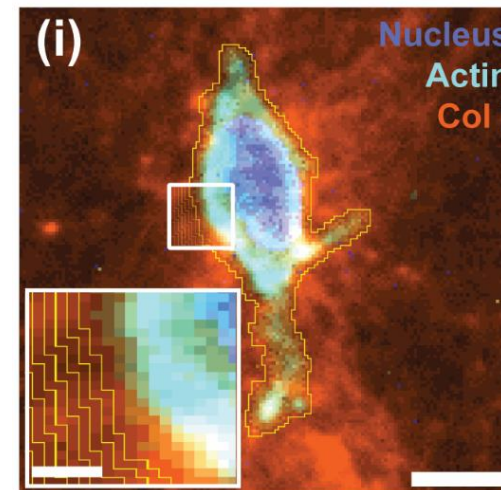
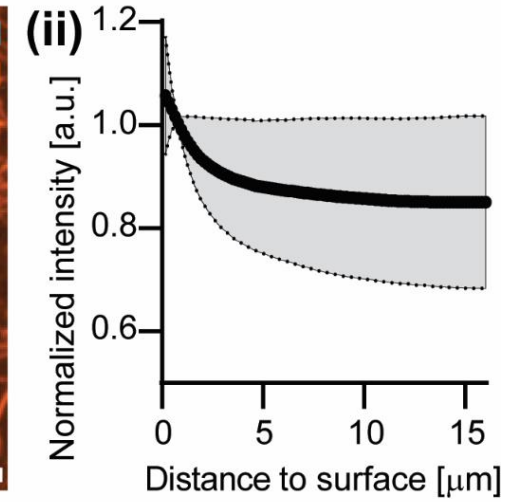
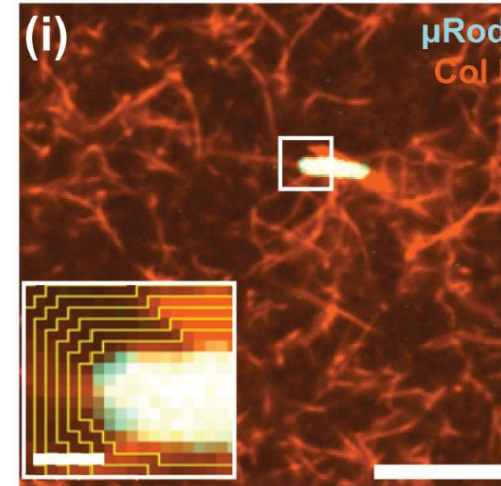
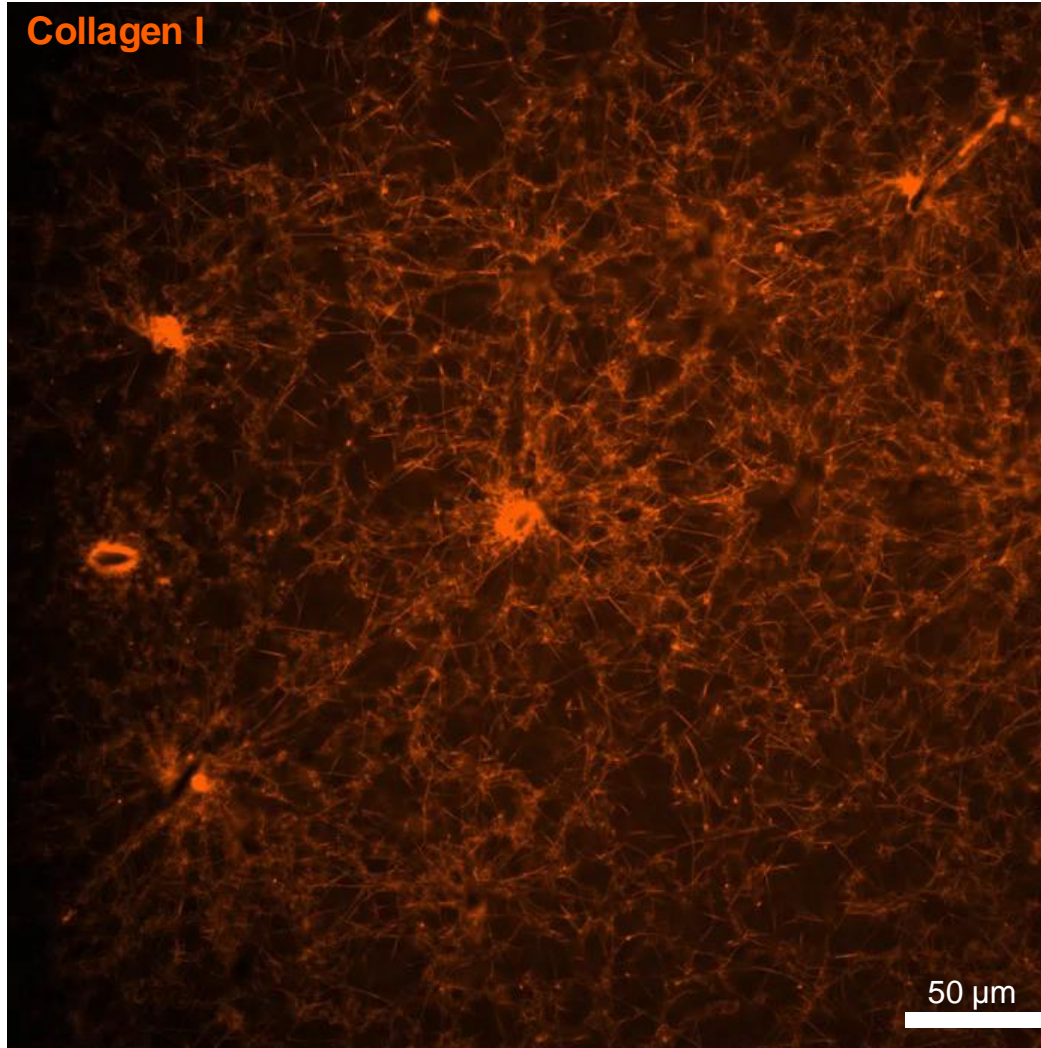
$$U(\gamma, \alpha, \theta) = U_{mech}(\alpha) + U_{field}(\gamma, \theta) + U_{ani}(\gamma, \alpha)$$



Effective shear moduli  $G$

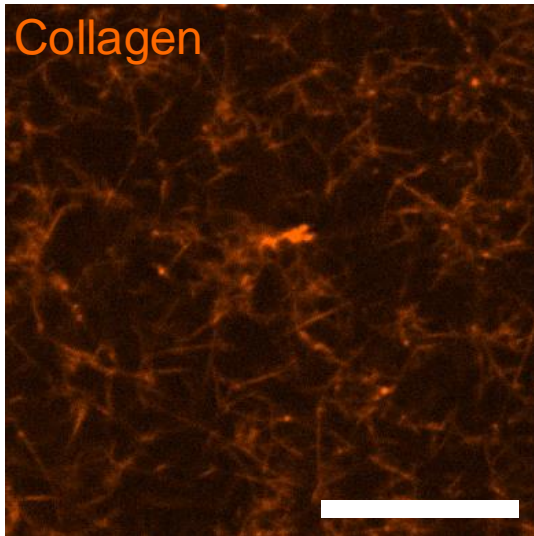
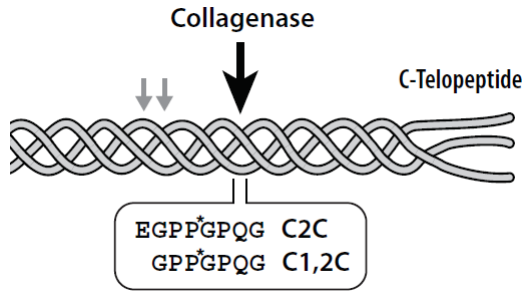


# Probing the mechanical environment of a cell *in vitro*

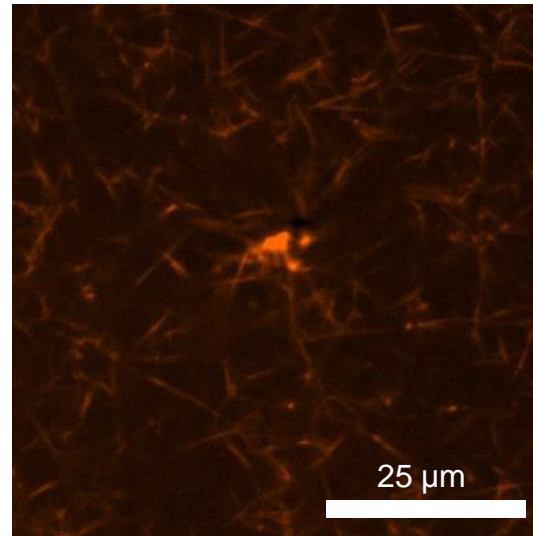


# Stiffness probing with temporal resolution

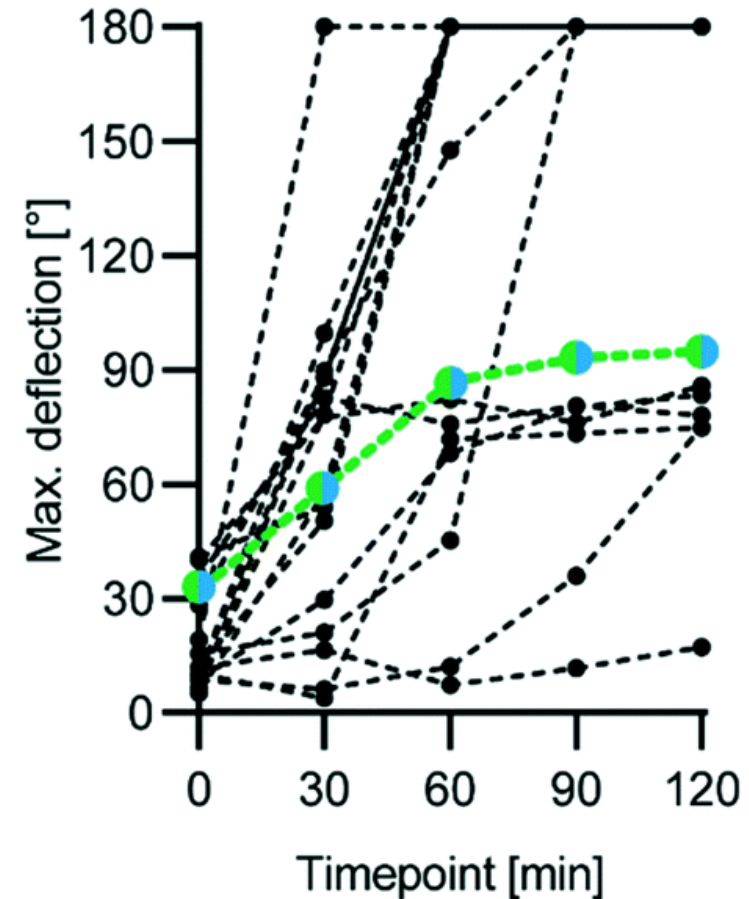
## $\mu$ Rods sense matrix softening during enzymatic degradation



immediately after  
collagenase addition

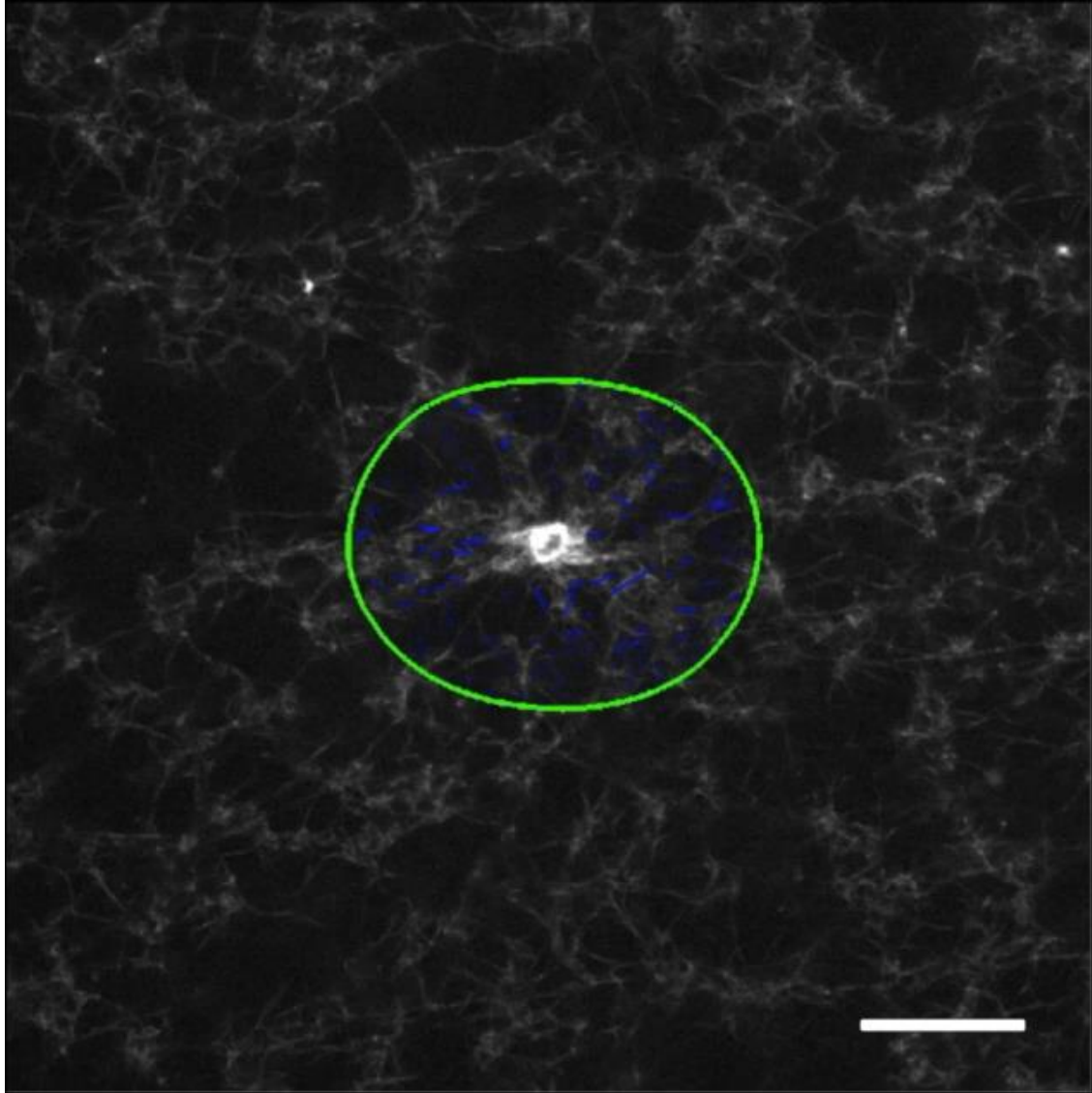


2h after incubation

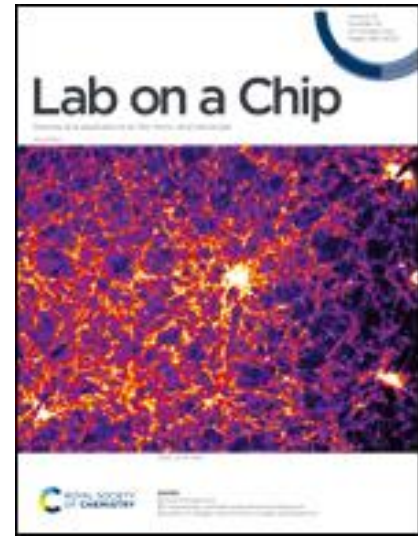
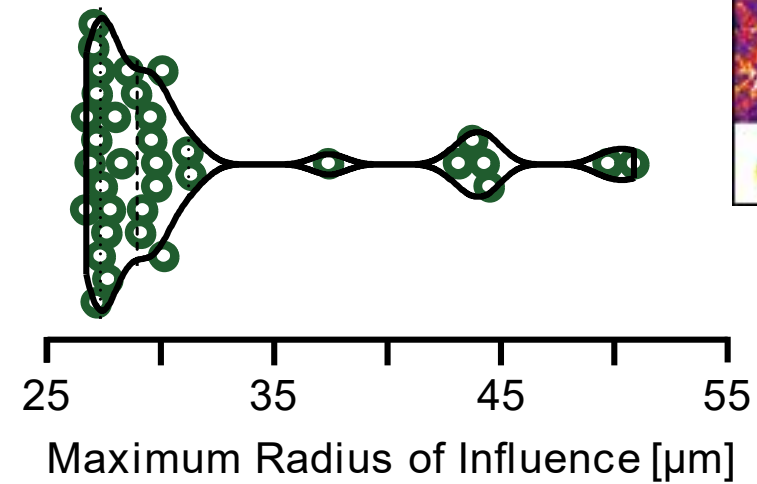




# Applying controlled mechanical cues

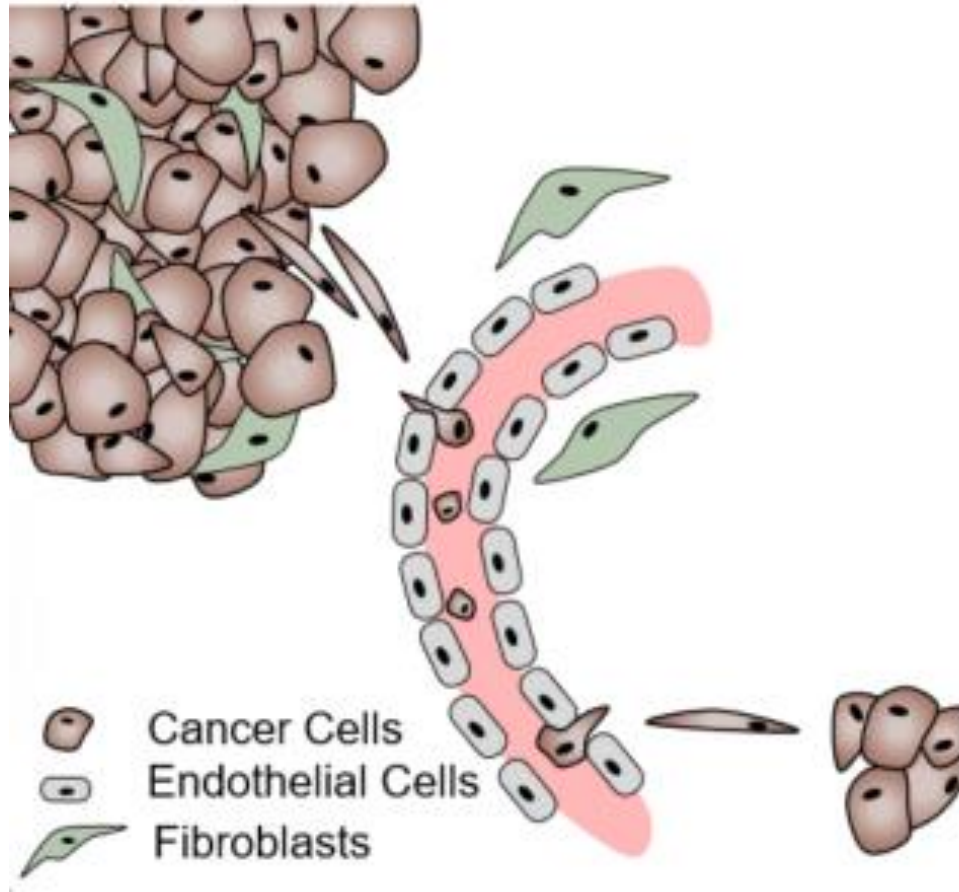


Asgeirsson et al., *Lab on a Chip*, 2021



**Our microrobots deflect collagen matrices over several tens of micron and can apply tens of pNm torques, similar to cell contractile moments!**

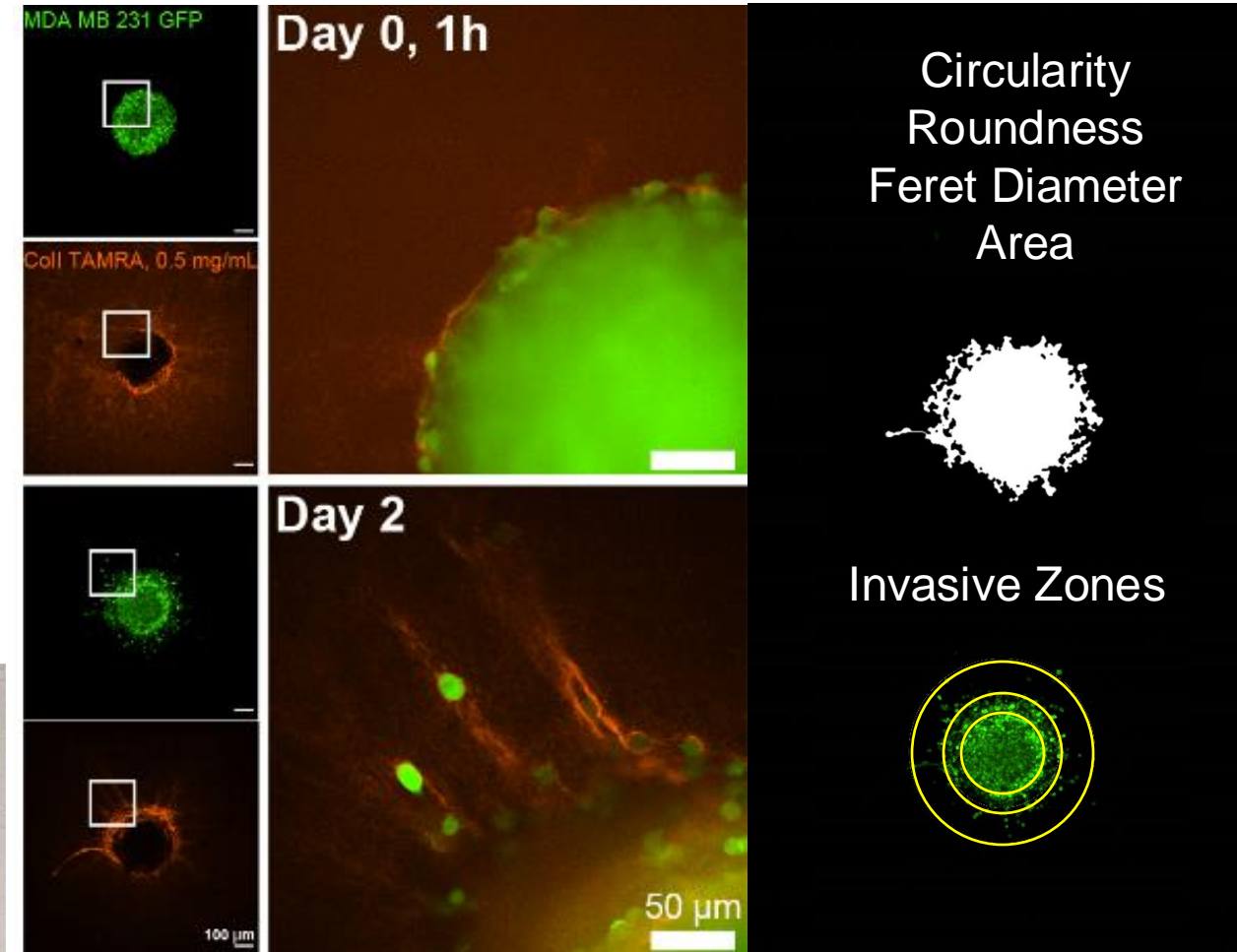
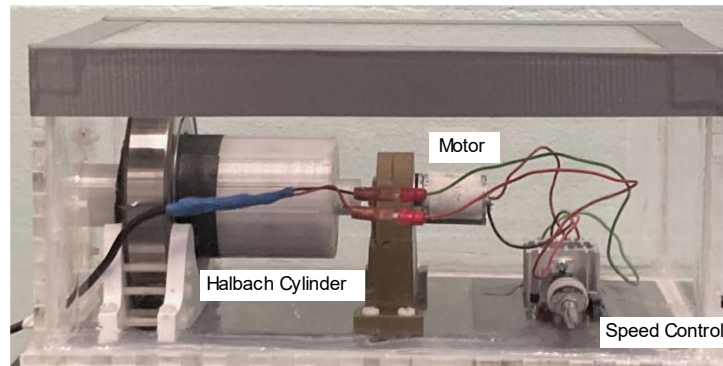
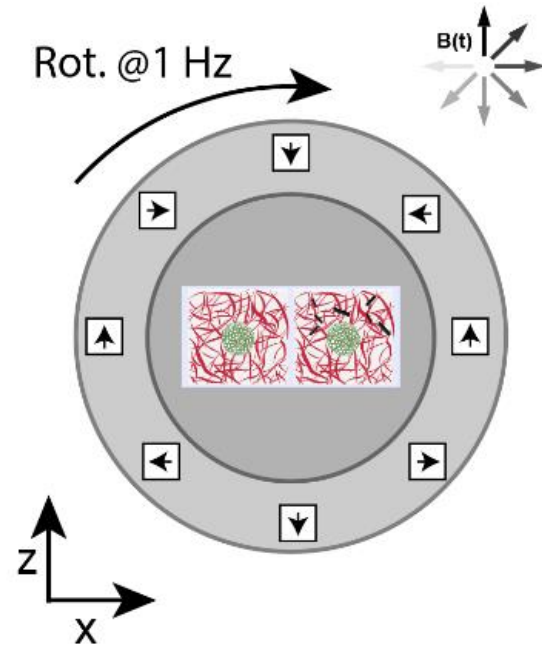
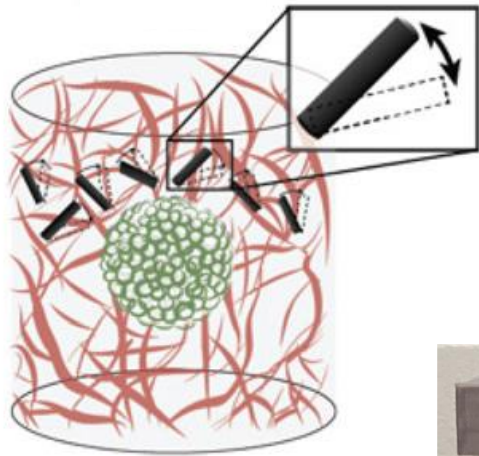
# Applying controlled mechanical cues to the tumor microenvironment



**How do mechanical cues affect cancer invasion?**

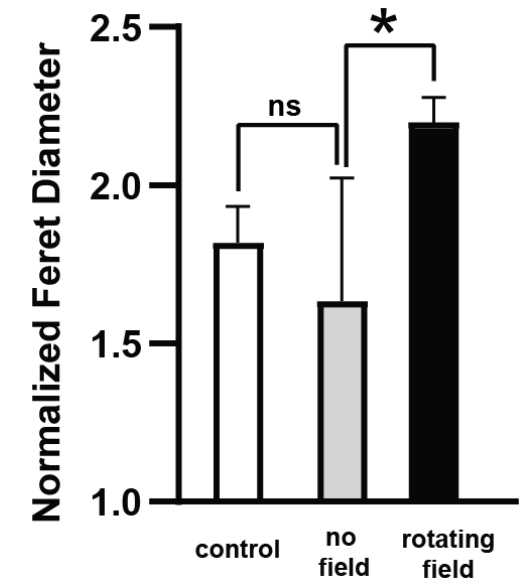
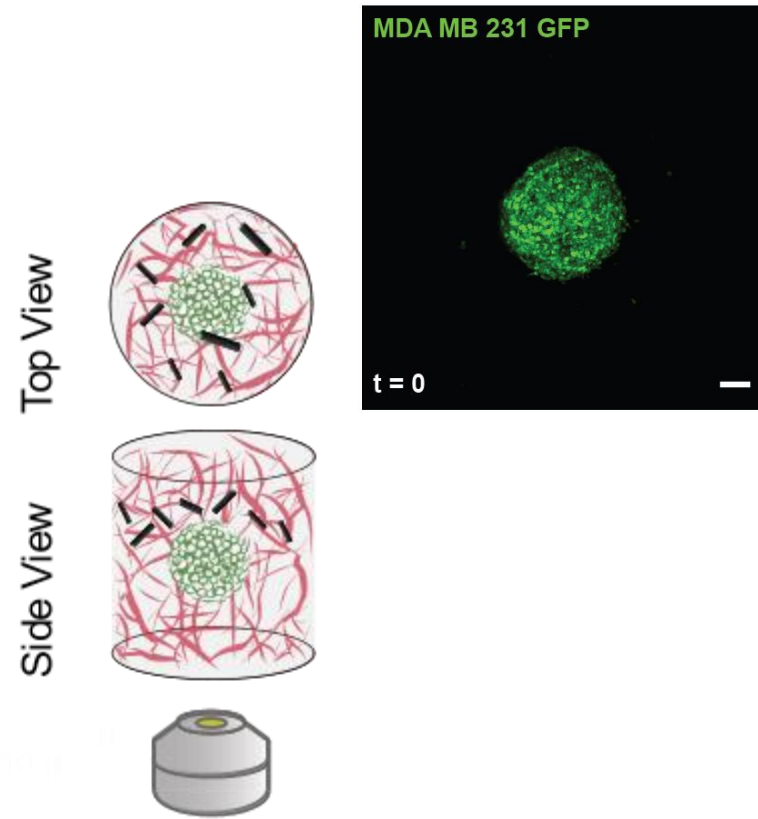
# Applying controlled mechanical cues to the tumor microenvironment

How do mechanical cues affect cancer invasion?



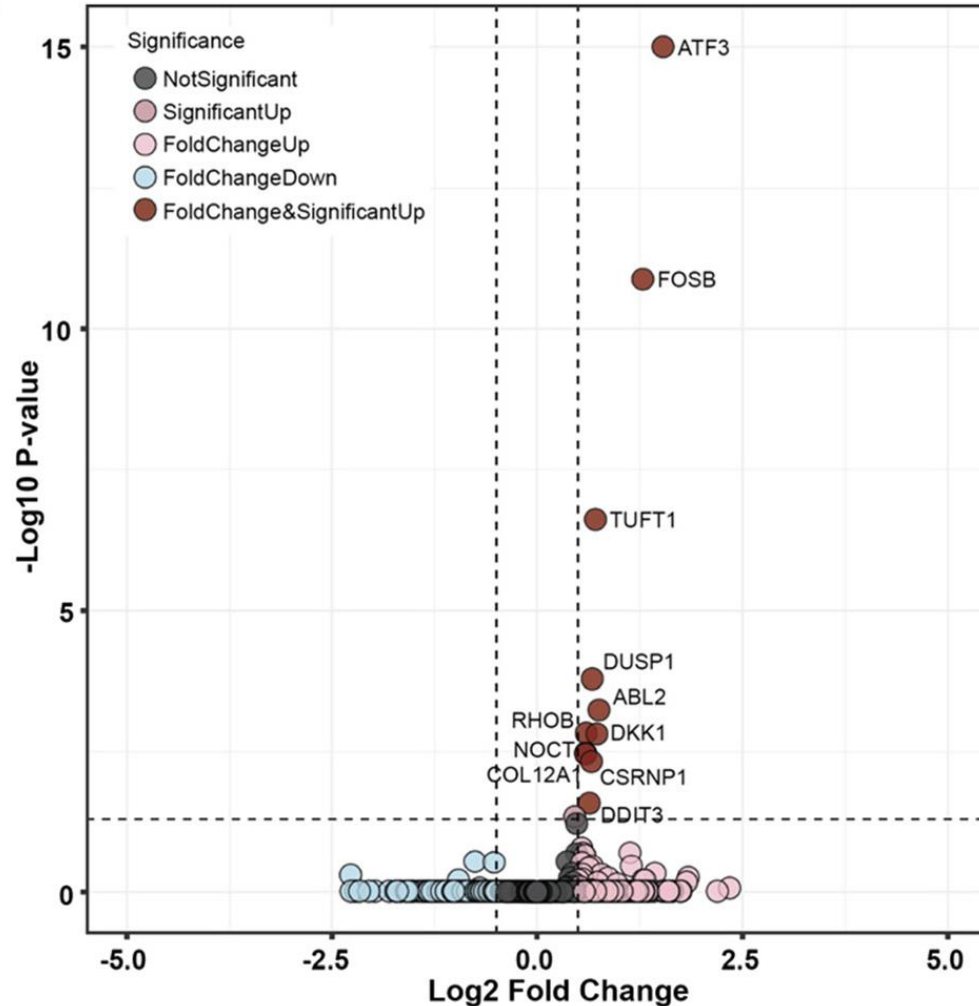
*In collaboration with Ece Su Idliz and Nicola Acteo*

# Mechanical cues drive cancer cell invasion

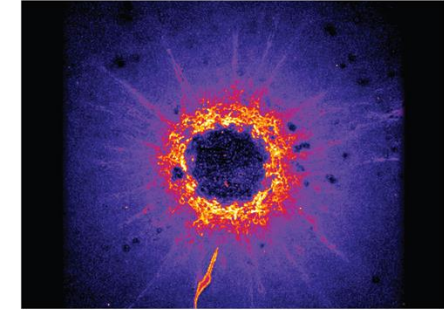




# Magnetically induced mechanical deformation triggers expression of migration- and mechano-related genes



Asgeirsson et al.,  
*Biomaterials Science*, 2023

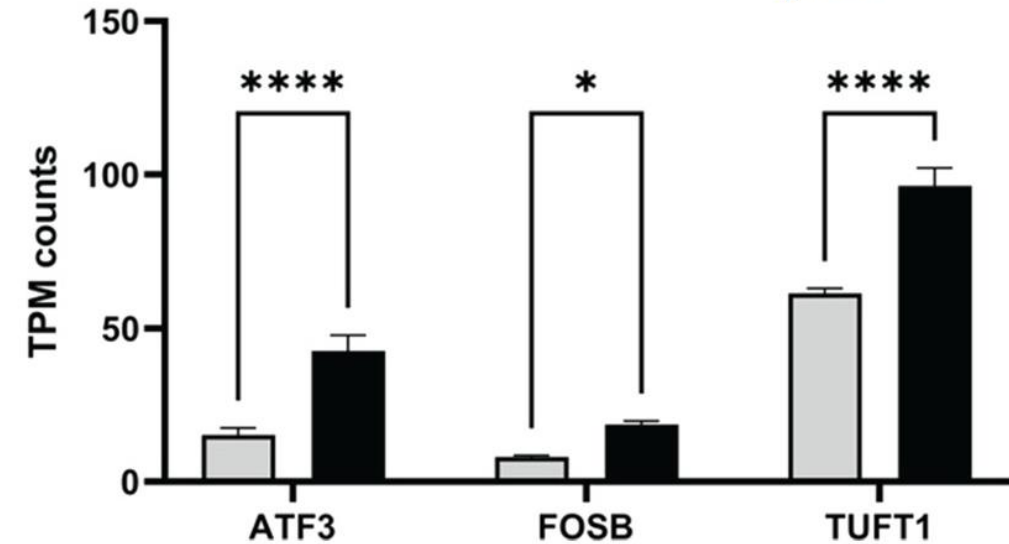


Showing research from the Responsive Biomedical Systems Laboratory, headed by Professor Simone Schuerle, at the Institute of Translational Medicine, Department of Health Sciences & Technology, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland.

This article presents an approach to mechanically activate 3D in vitro cancer model environments in a non-invasive manner over several days of culture. It demonstrates that magnetically controlled cyclic activation of the tumor microenvironment promotes the invasion of MDA-MB 231 cancer cells from 3D tumor spheroids into the surrounding extracellular matrix in vitro.



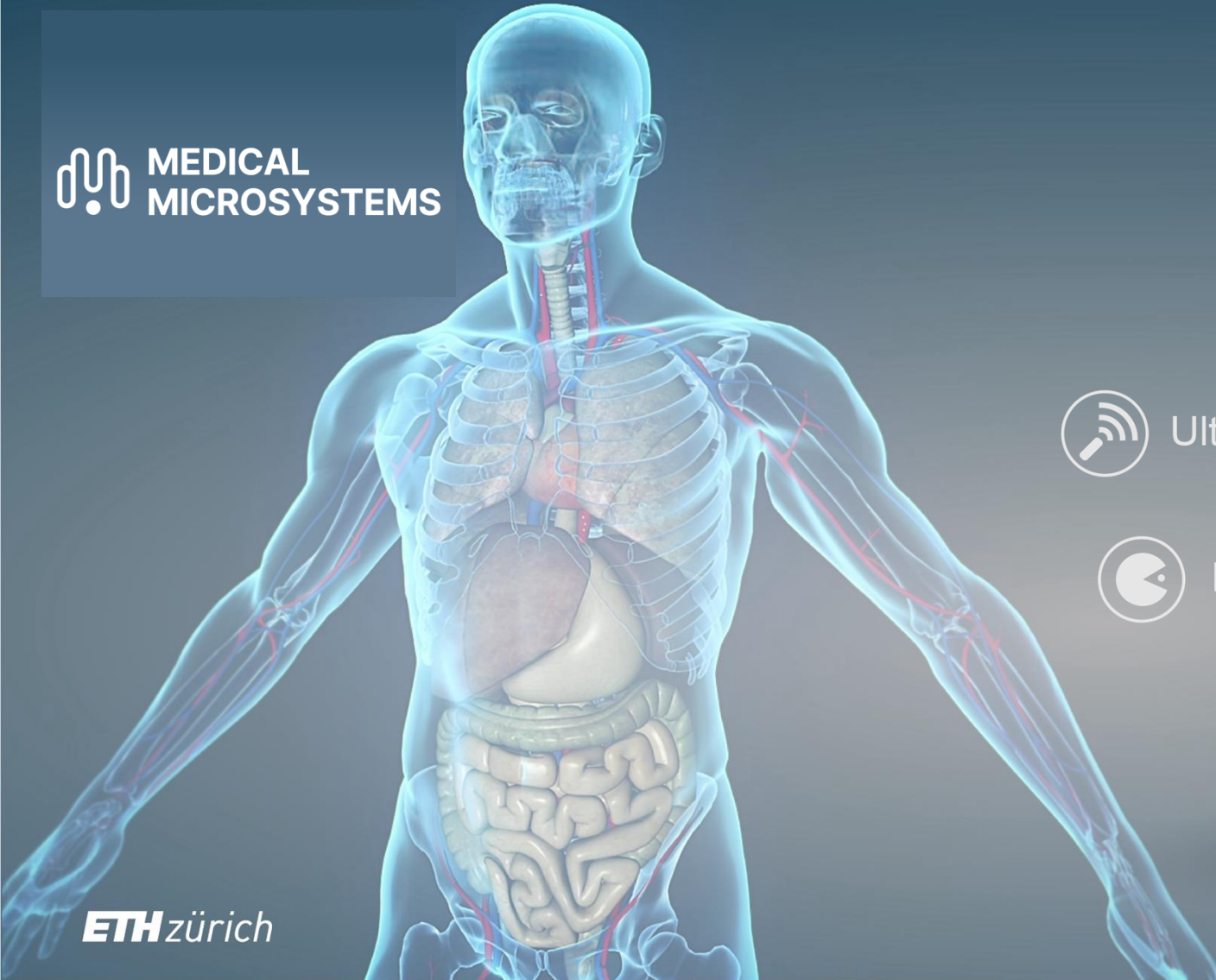
□ Rods, No Field  
■ Rods, Rotating Field



ROYAL SOCIETY  
OF CHEMISTRY

rsc.li/biomaterials-science

In collaboration with Ece Su Idliz and Nicola Acteo



Ultrasound



Enzymes

## Microrobots for

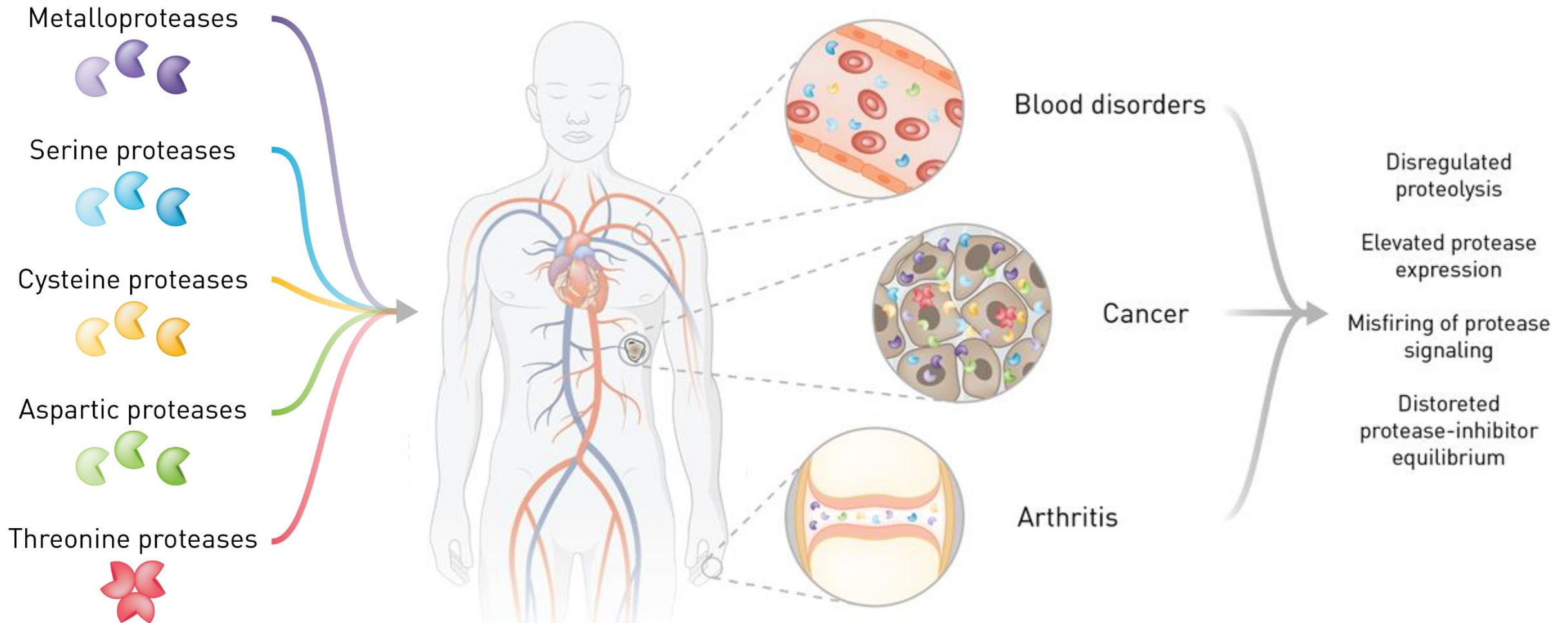
① Cell & tissue probing

② Biosensing & diagnostics

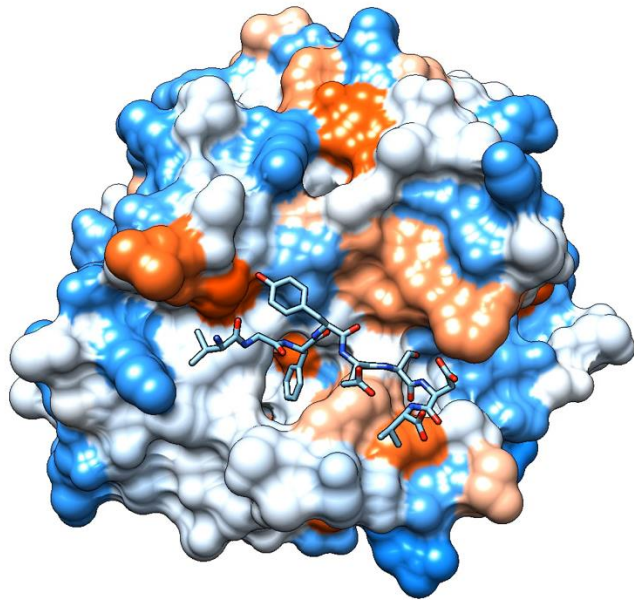
③ Drug delivery



# Proteases are an important hallmark of disease

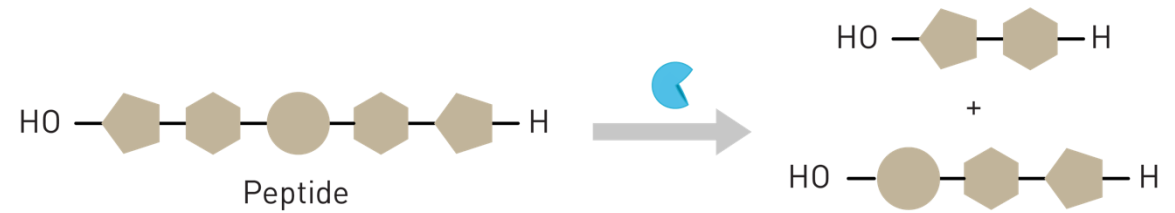


# Proteases are molecular scissors

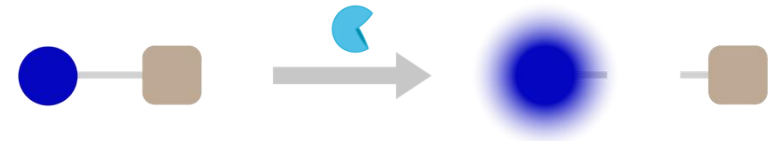


**VGFYESDV octapeptide cleaved by MMP-2**

**Proteases break peptide bonds via hydrolysis**

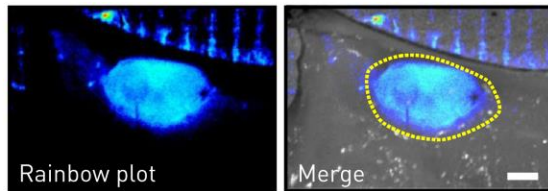
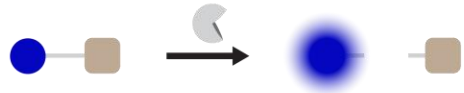


**Protease activity can be measured with peptide substrates and quenched fluorescent probes**



# Biosensing of proteases

Fluorescence guided surgery



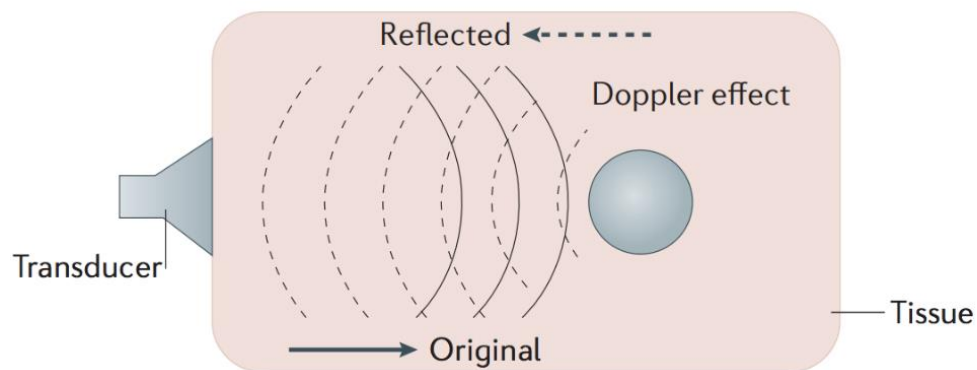
J.C. Widen et al., *Nat. Bio. Med. Eng.*, 2021

# Ultrasound imaging

- 1 to 10 MHz sound waves
- Mechanical wave propagates at a speed dependent on the acoustic impedance of the medium
- Respective echo signal is used to construct an image
- Imaging depth limited in most organs to approx. 10 cm
- High resolution
- High endogenous contrast



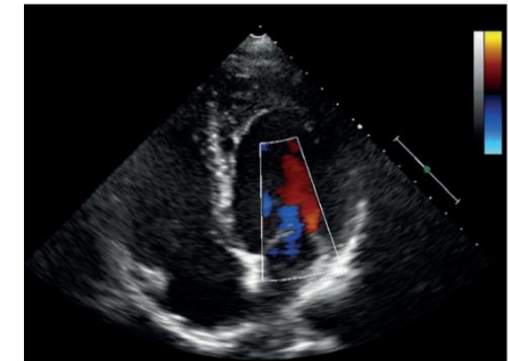
## Ultrasound



Fetus (ultrasound)

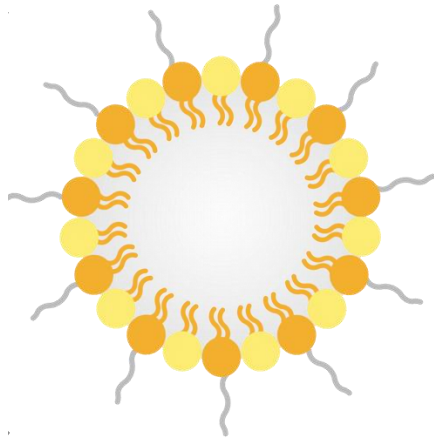


Cardiac (ultrasound Doppler)

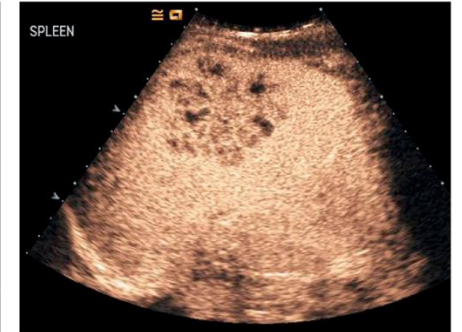
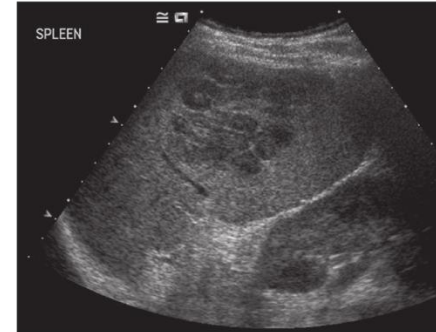


# Microbubbles offer a platform to integrate responsiveness

## Microbubble as ultrasound contrast agents



- Primary lipid (90 %)
- Emulsifier lipid (10 %)
- Gas core



P.L. Allan et al., *Clinical Ultrasound*, 2011



# Incorporation of responsiveness through modulation of the shell

## Chemical modulation of shell parameters

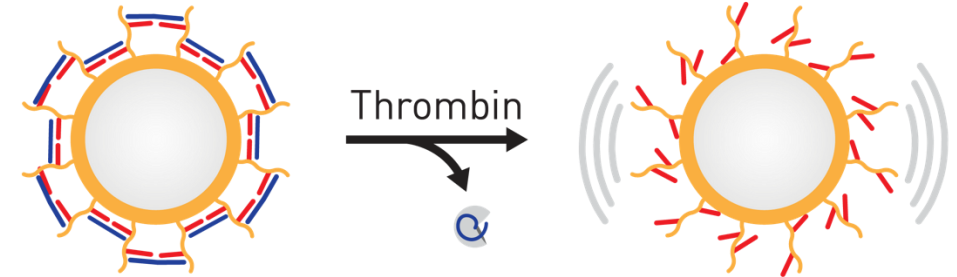
Targeting ability



J. Lux et al., *ACS Appl. Mater. Interfaces*, 2017

## Mechanical modulation of shell through aptamer hybridization

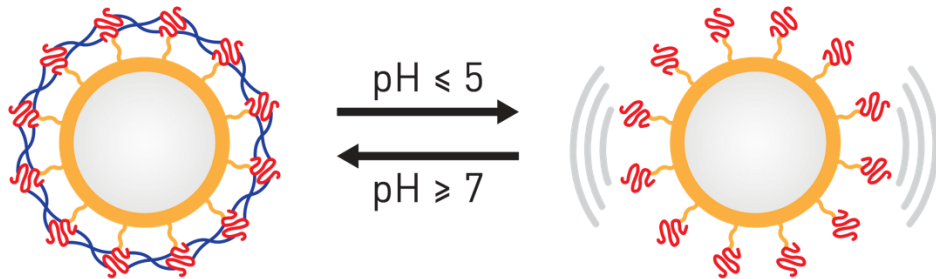
Nonlinear ultrasound



M.A. Nakatsuka et al., *Adv. Mater.*, 2012

## Mechanical modulation of shell through pH-based cleavage

Nonlinear ultrasound



M.W.N. Burns et al., *ACS Appl. Mater. Interfaces*, 2020

## Mechanical modulation of bacterial gas vesicles through protease cleavage

Nonlinear ultrasound



A. Lakshmanan et al., *Nat. Chem. Bio.*, 2020

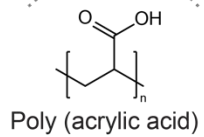
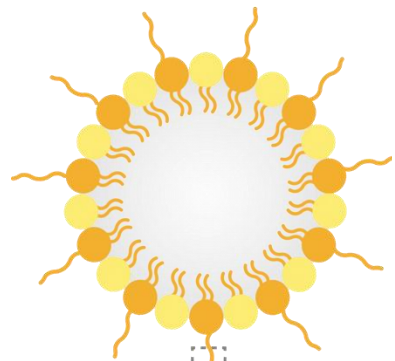
# Protease responsive ultrasound contrast agents (PRUCAs)



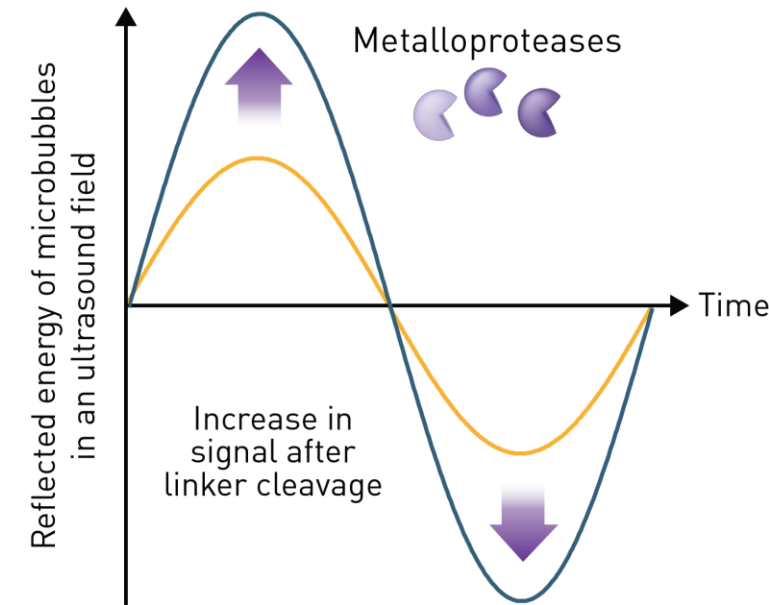
Dr. Dragana Ristanovic



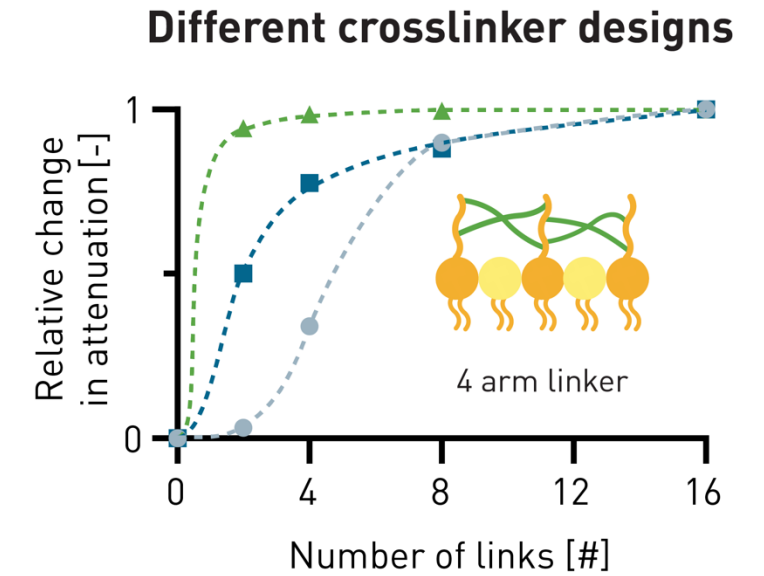
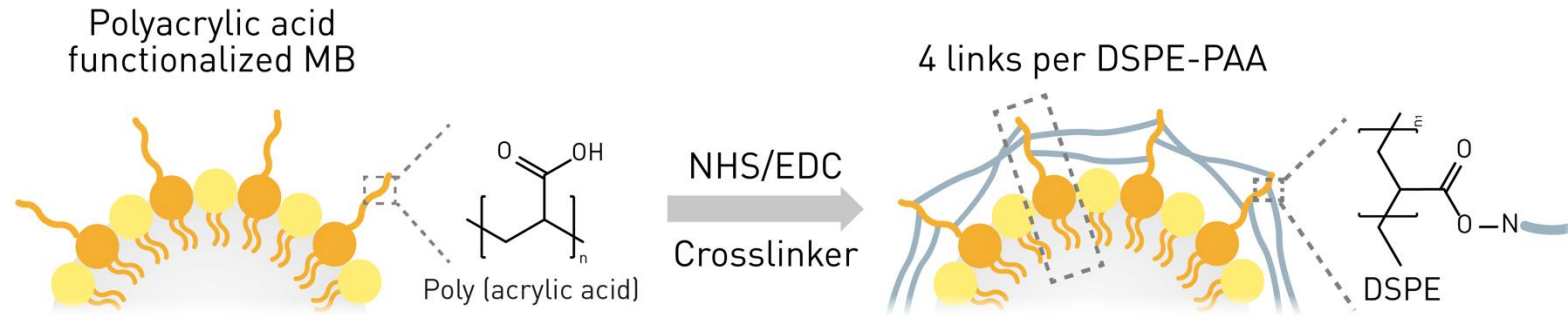
PAA-functionalized microbubble



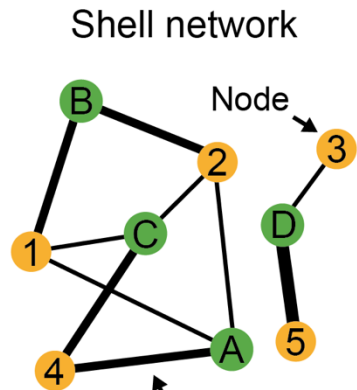
- DSPC (99 %)
- DSPE-PAA (1 %)
- Perfluorobutane



# Crosslinking modulates mechanical properties of microbubbles



# Network model predicts observed influence of crosslinker



Weighted edge

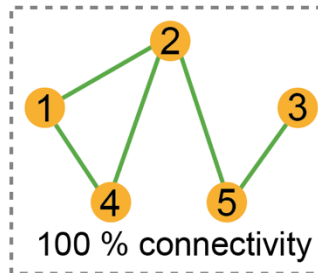
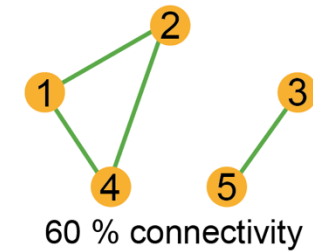
● DSPE-PAA  
● 4 arm crosslinker

Incidence matrix

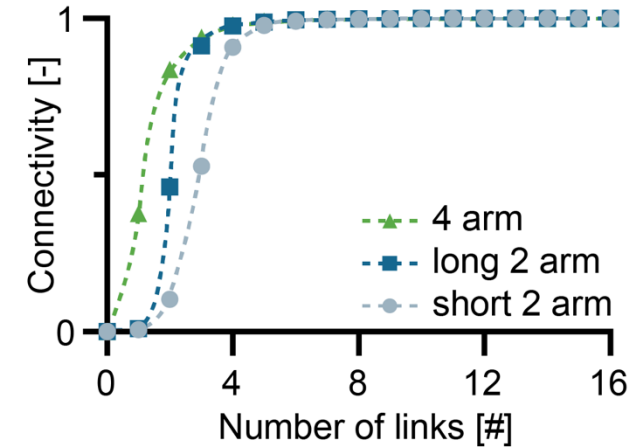
	A	B	C	D
1	1	2	1	0
2	1	2	1	0
3	0	0	0	1
4	2	0	2	0
5	0	0	0	3
Sum				

○ = Nr. of connections  
□ = Amount of arms of the crosslinker

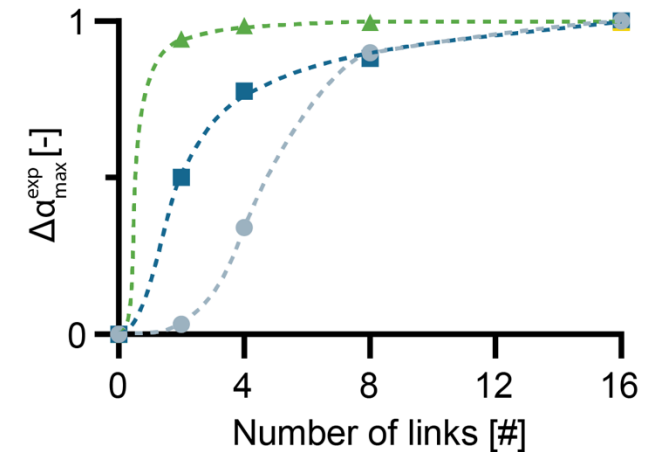
Bipartite projection



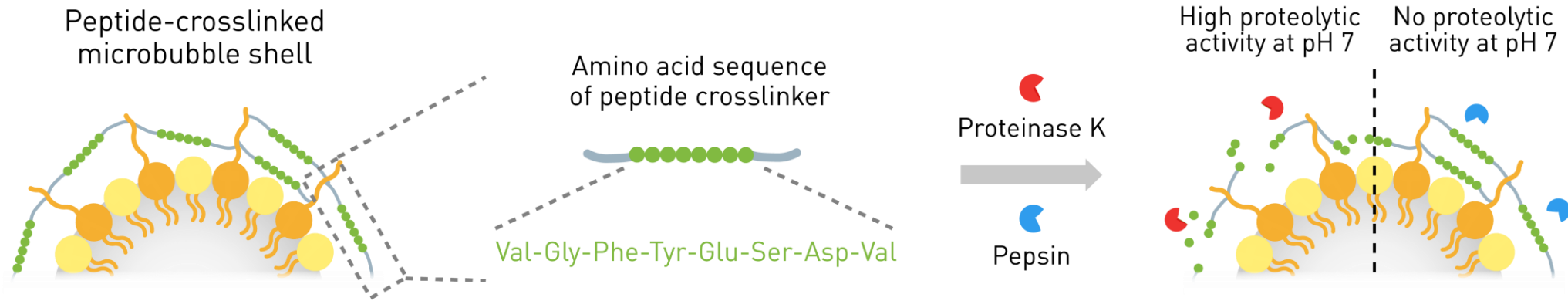
Predicted shell network



Experimental data



# Peptide-crosslinked microbubbles report proteolytic activity

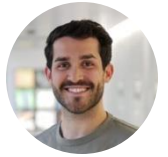
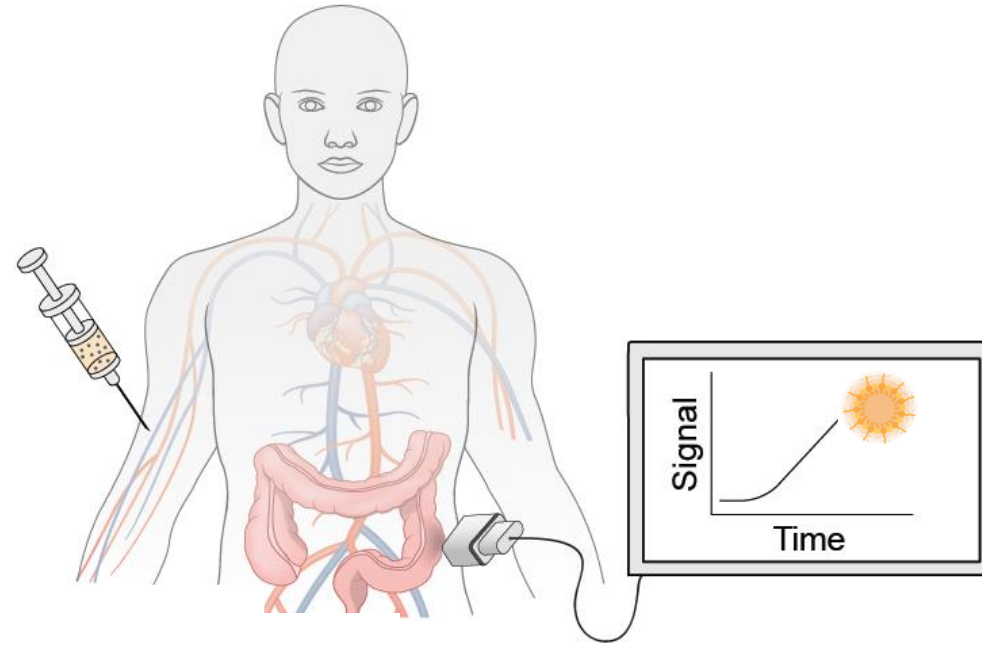




# Diagnostic targets

We are now working on applying this concept for

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Lung fibrosis
- Skin fibrosis
- Infection



Pascal Poc

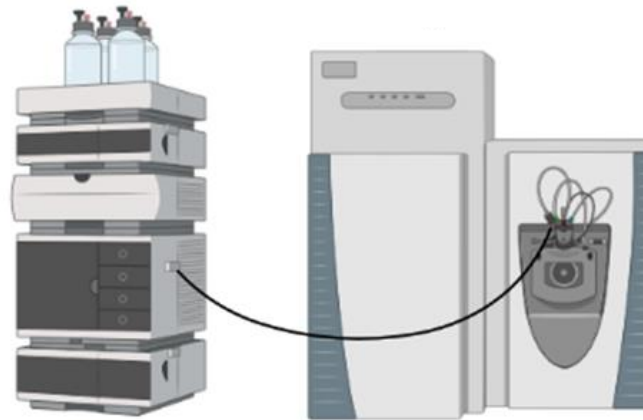
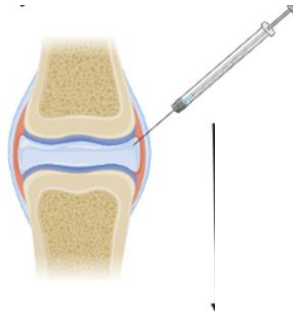


Ines Oberhuber

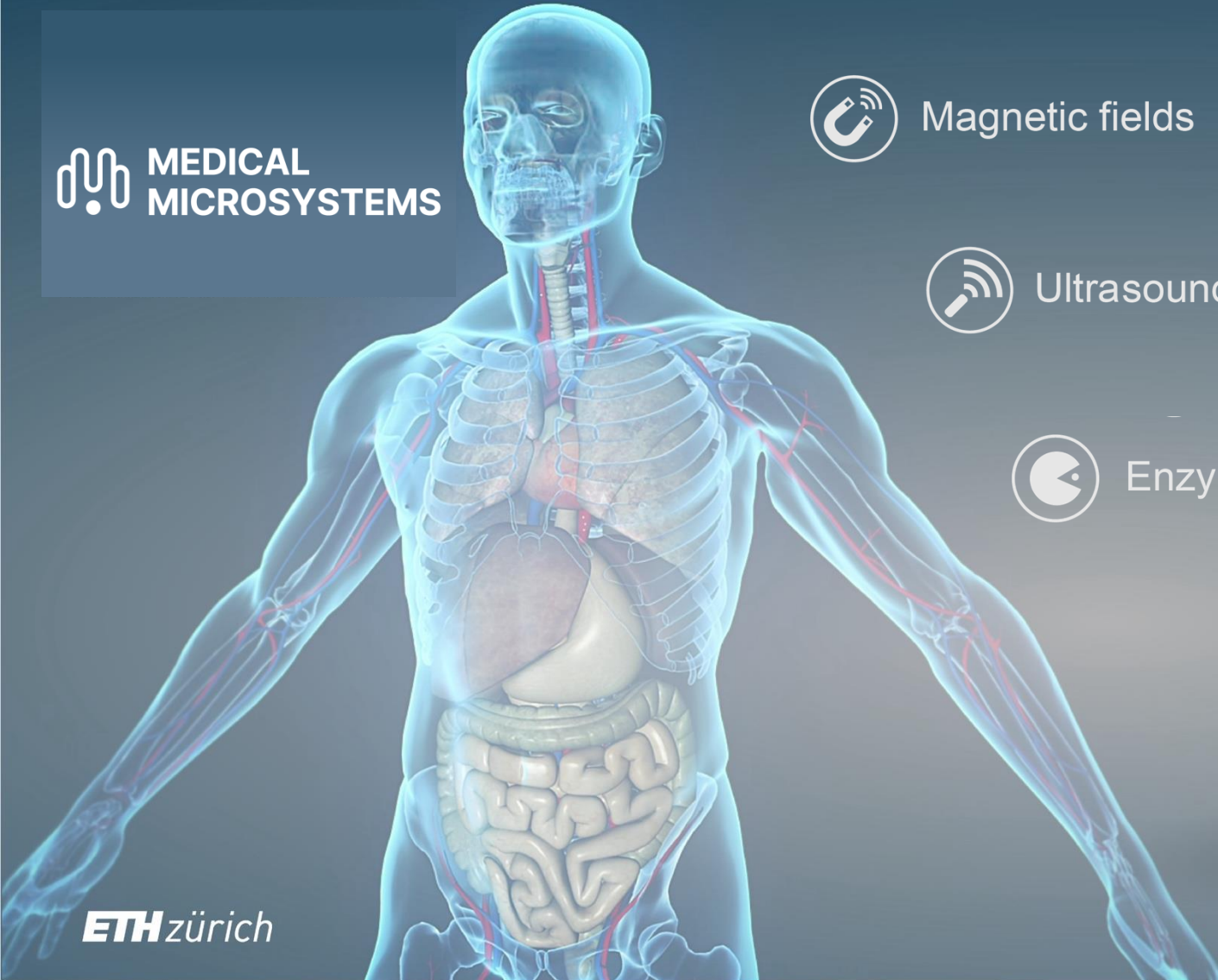
Gut biopsy  
samples



Synovial fluid  
samples



LC-MS/MS analysis of the proteome  
and the intrinsic peptidome



Magnetic fields



Ultrasound

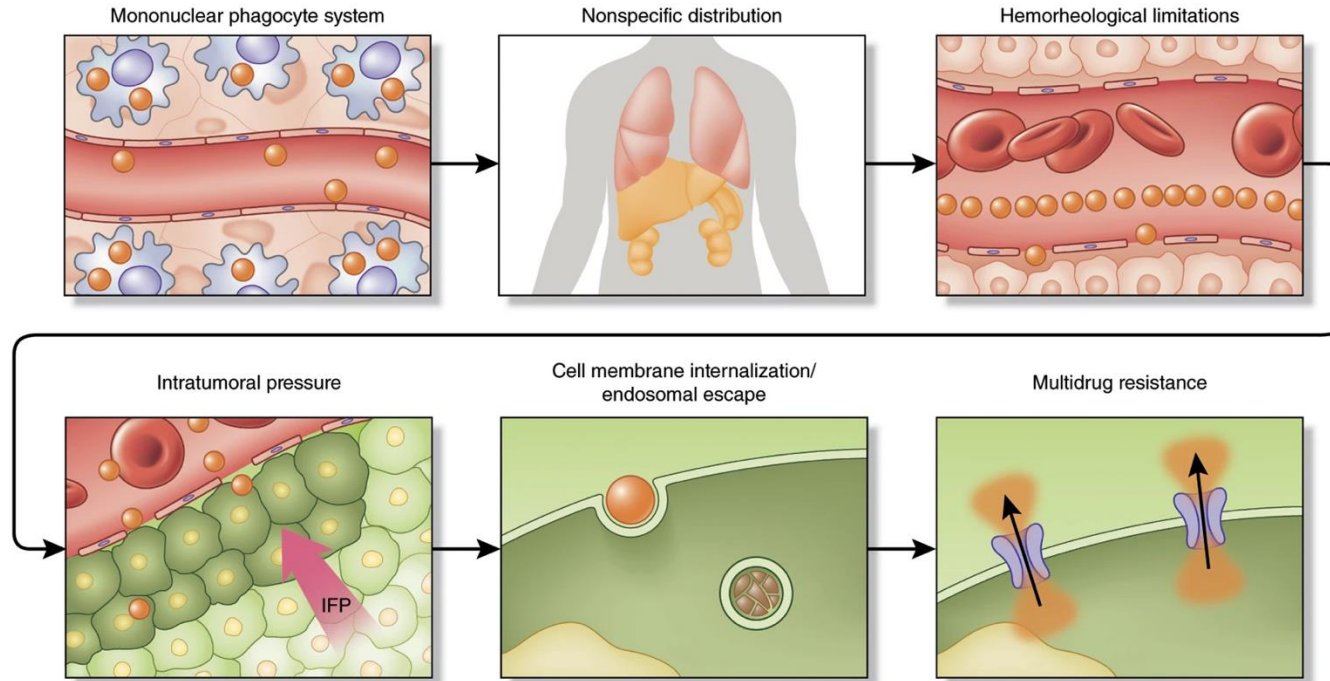


Enzymes

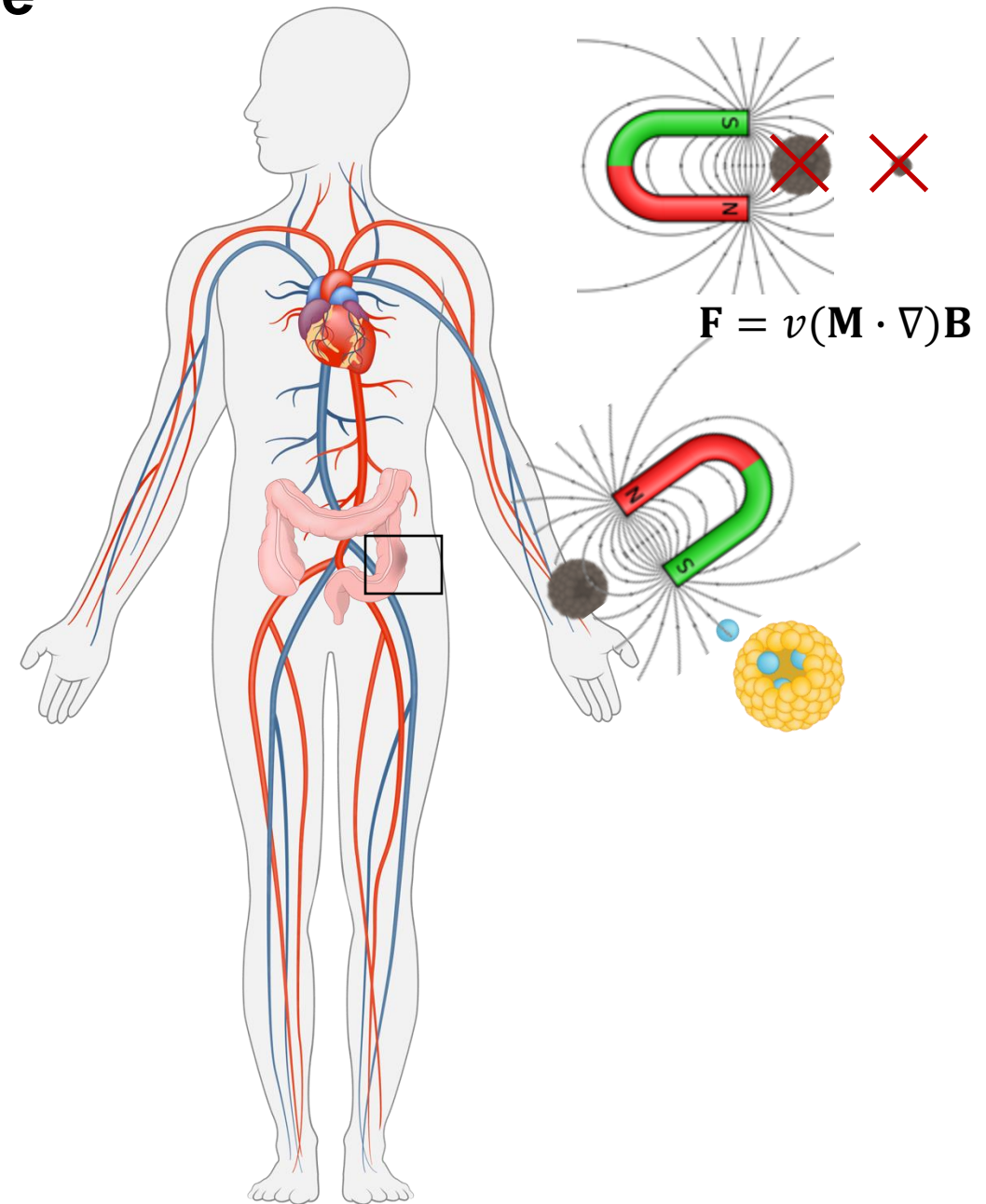
## Microrobots for

- ① Cell & tissue probing
- ② Biosensing & diagnostics
- ③ Drug delivery

# The delivery problem of (cancer) nanomedicine

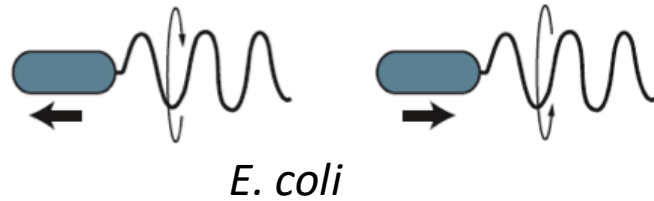


**Only a dismal fraction of nanoparticle-based drugs reaches the tumor sites**



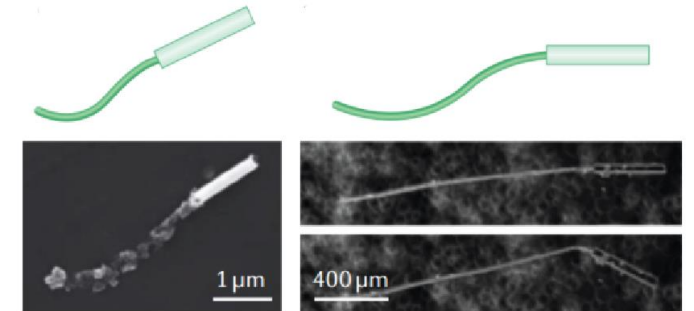
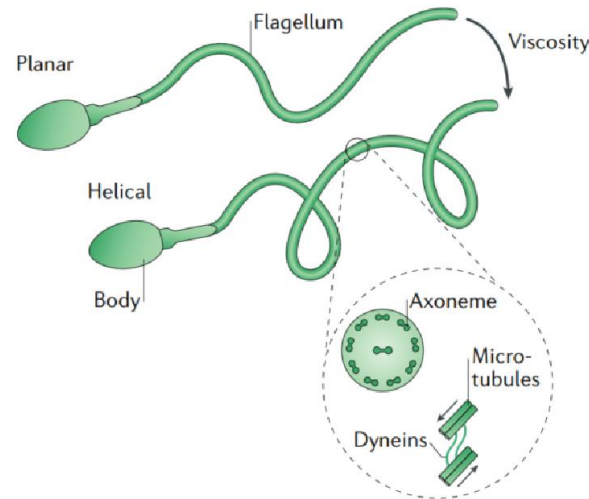
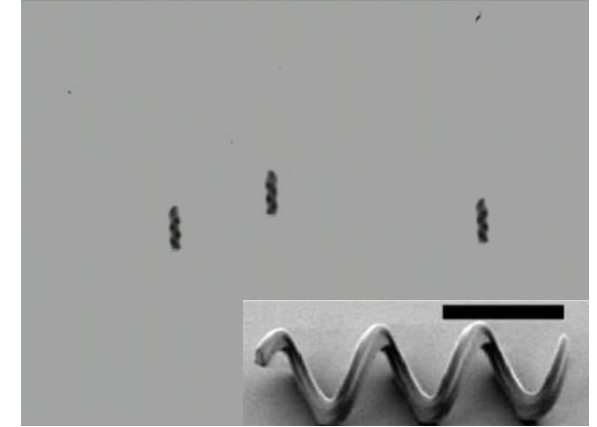
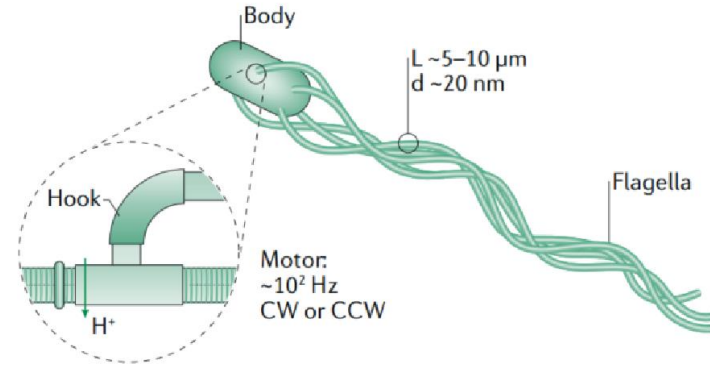


# Bioinspired microrobots as delivery vehicles



Video: Howard Berg

**Non-reciprocal motion as effective means for propulsion at the Low Reynolds numbers**



**Using magnetic fields as external motor**

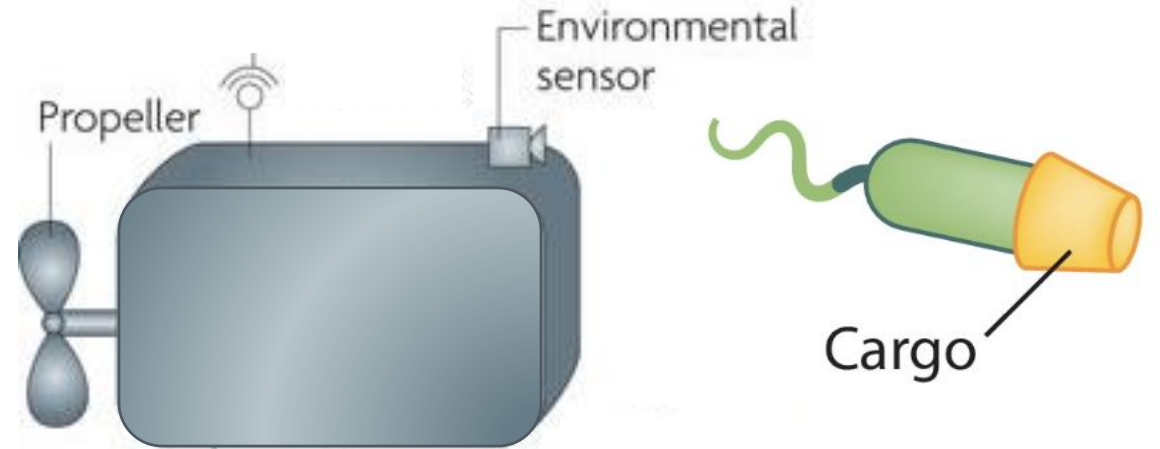


# Biological/biohybrid microrobots: a robotics perspective



*Video: Howard Berg*

**Non-reciprocal motion as effective means for propulsion at the Low Reynolds numbers**

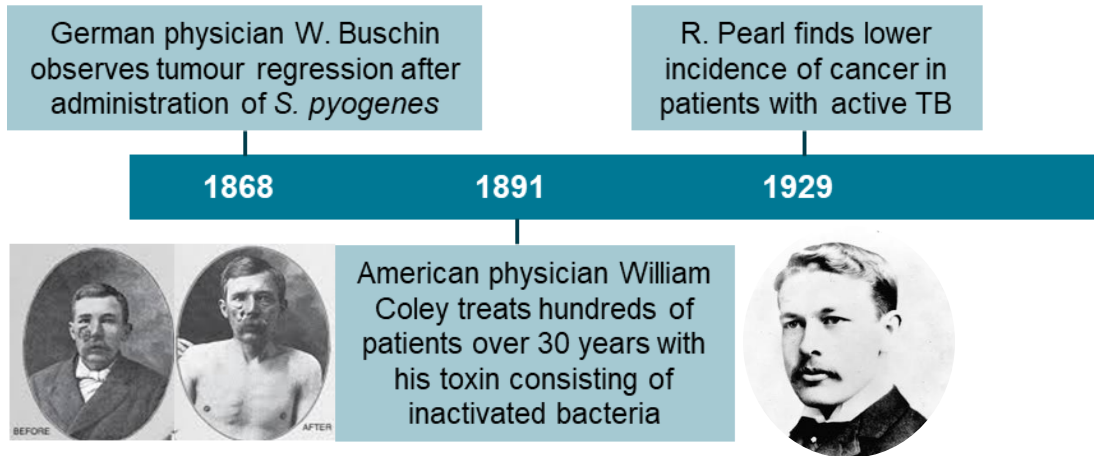


*Adapted from Forbes, Nat Rev Cancer, 2010  
Christiansen et al, Annu Rev Control Robot Auton Sys, 2022*

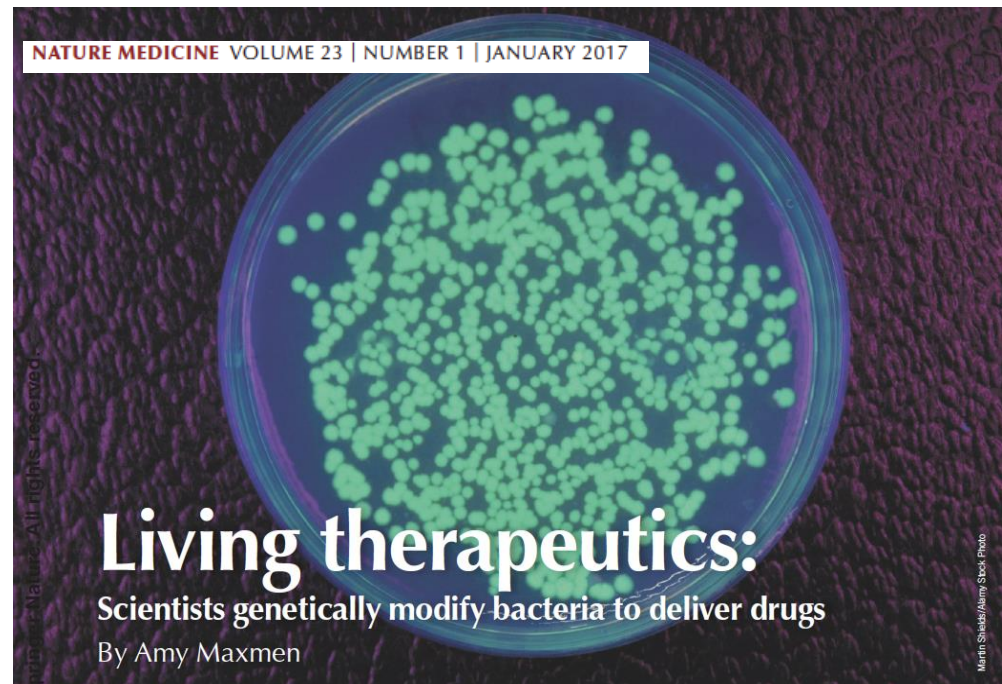
## **Bacteria are somewhat smart “microrobots”**

- On board sensing, e.g. chemotaxis
- Self propulsion

# Bacteria for medical applications– a (b)old idea



- Oldest form of immunotherapy, experiencing a renaissance
- Anaerobic bacteria amplify in tumors
- They provoke immune response
- Native or genetically engineered for on board drug production



□ CNV-NT: Clostridium novyi-NT – Tumor-fighting Bacteria

Source: In-licensed from Johns Hopkins University  
Stage: Phase I

**But...**

- **Clinical trials limited to intratumoral injection**
  - Only about 1% of intravenously administered dose reaches tumor
  - Limited tumor penetration
  - Limited tolerable dose

**Need for effective control to increase safety and efficacy at acceptable dosages**

**Effective powering**



**Feedback and Tracking**



**Controllability**



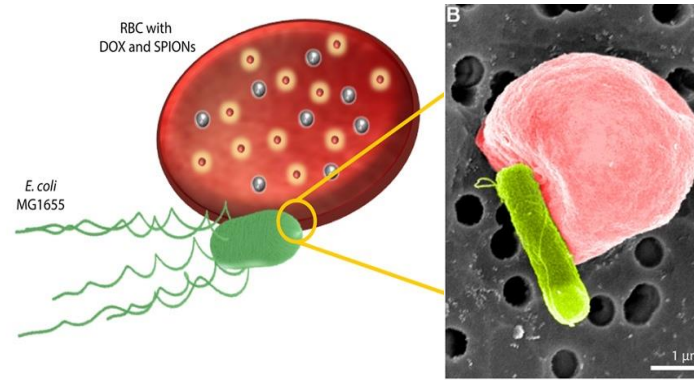
# Means to magnetically control living bacteria-based microrobots



Natural propulsion



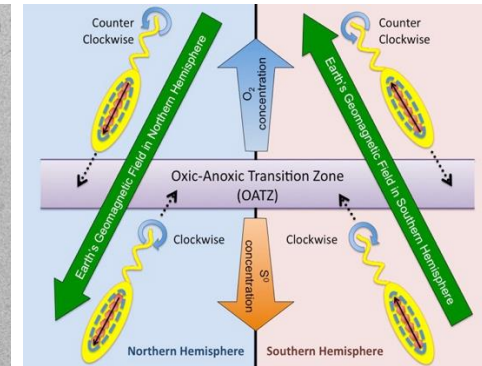
0.1 pN



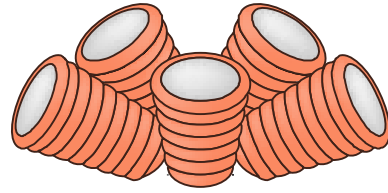
Alapan et al. *Sci Rob*, 2018



Schuerle et al., *Sci. Adv.*, 2019



# Means to magnetically control living bacteria-based microrobots

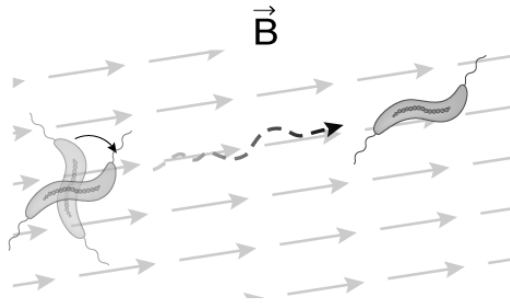


Natural propulsion



0.1 pN

Directing magnetic field



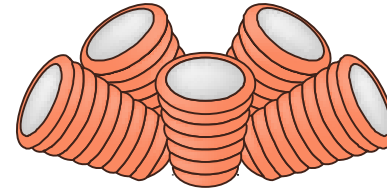
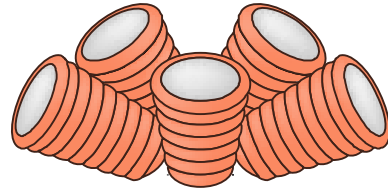
0.1 pN



Limited by molecular motor  
Limited to paratormoral  
injections



# Means to magnetically control living bacteria-based microrobots

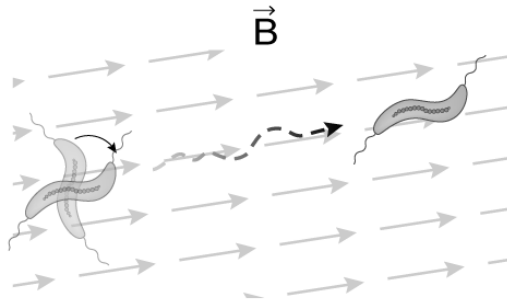


Natural propulsion



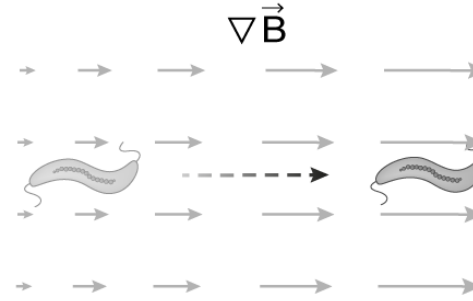
0.1 pN

Directing magnetic field



0.1 pN

Magnetic field gradient



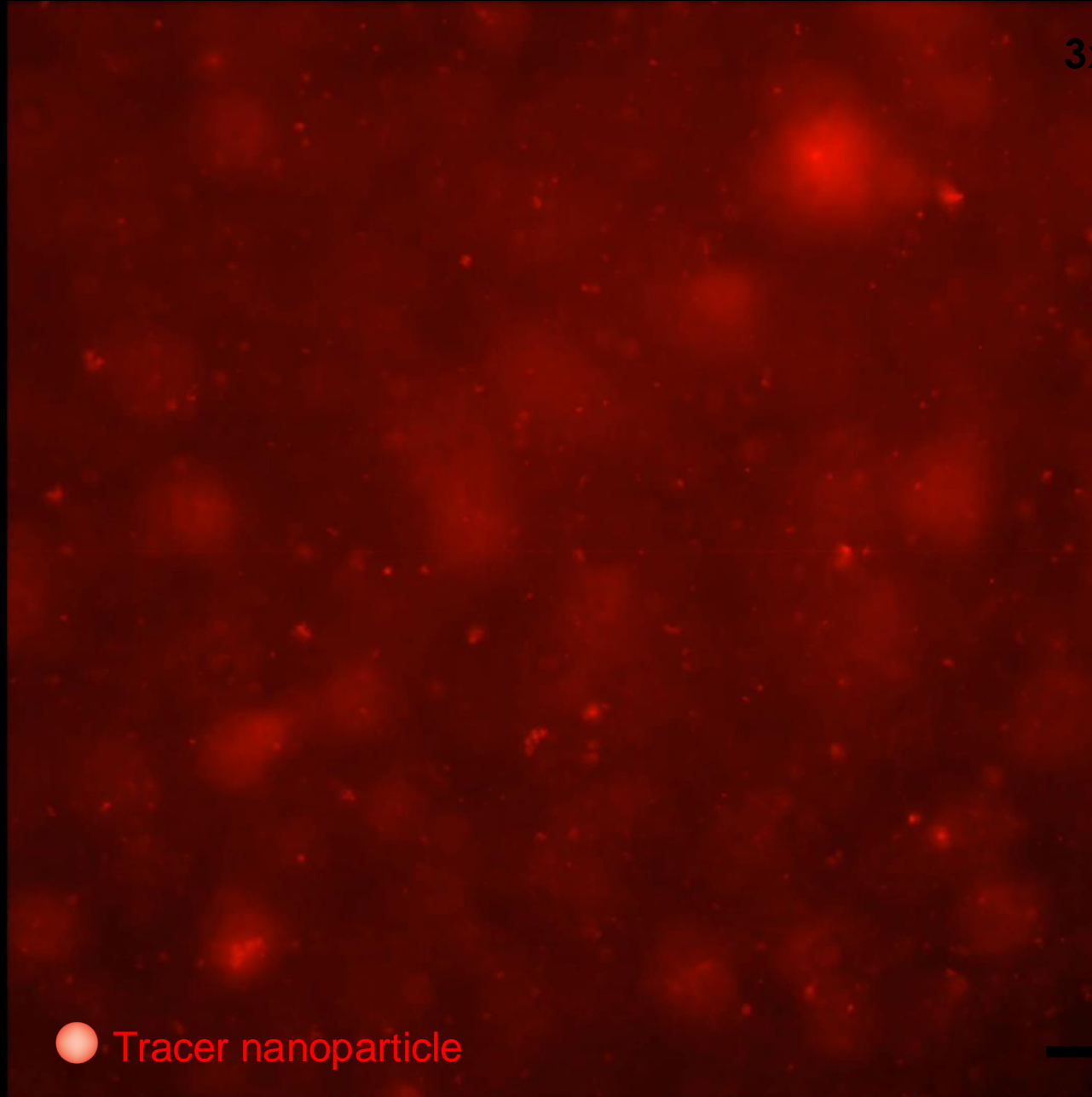
1 pN  
1300 T/m

Limited by molecular motor  
Limited to paratormoral  
injections

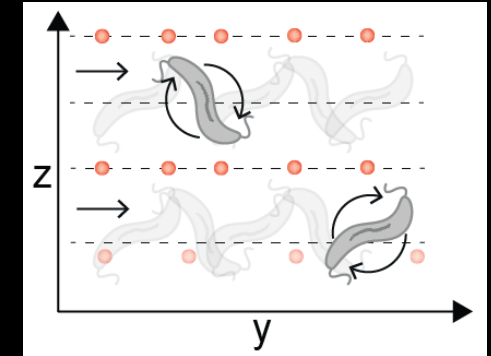
Poorly scalable  
Limited to  
superficial targets

# Magnetic torque based bacterial swarm control is powerful

Effective powering  
and control!



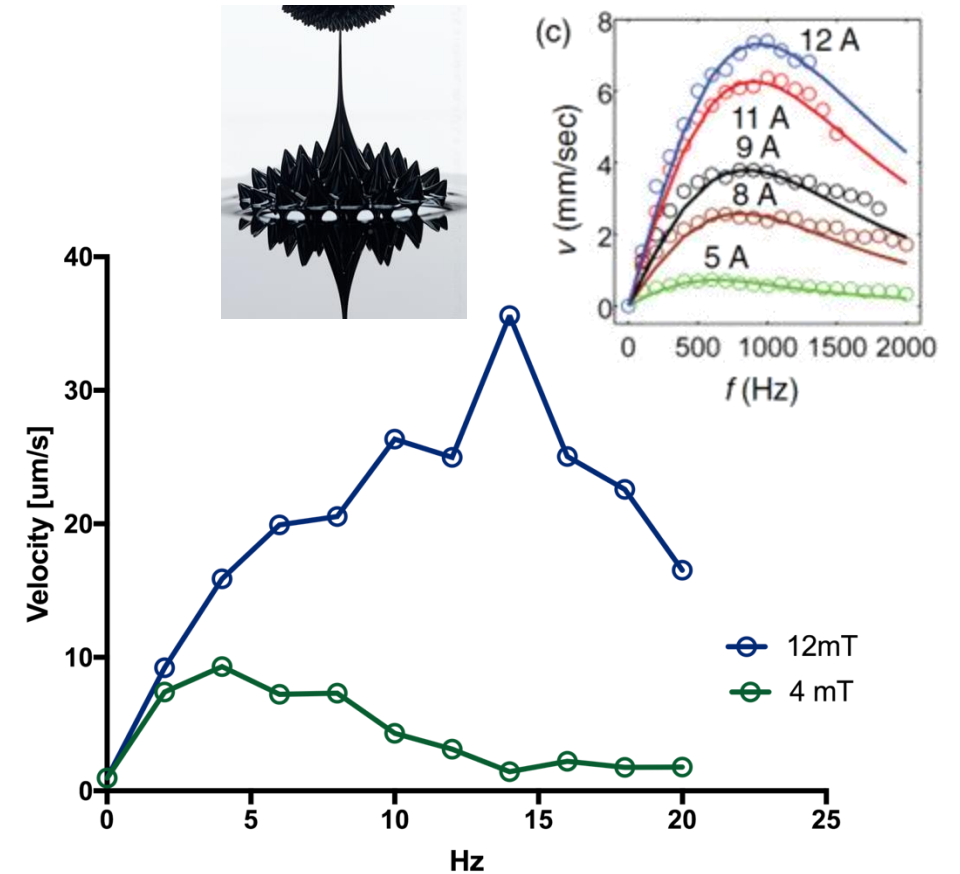
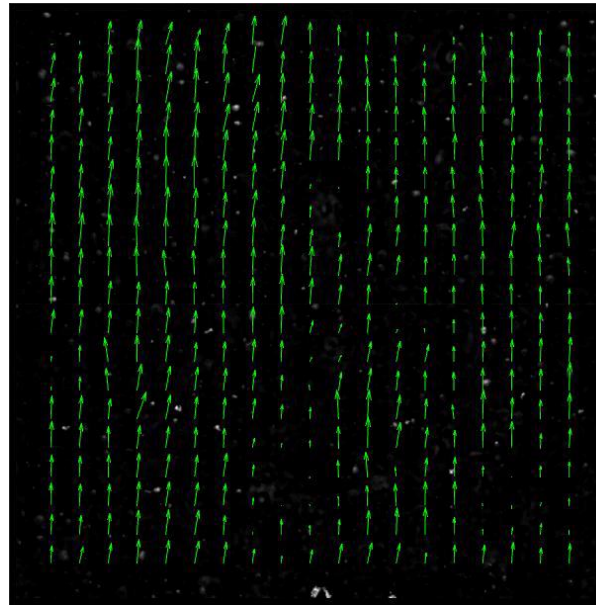
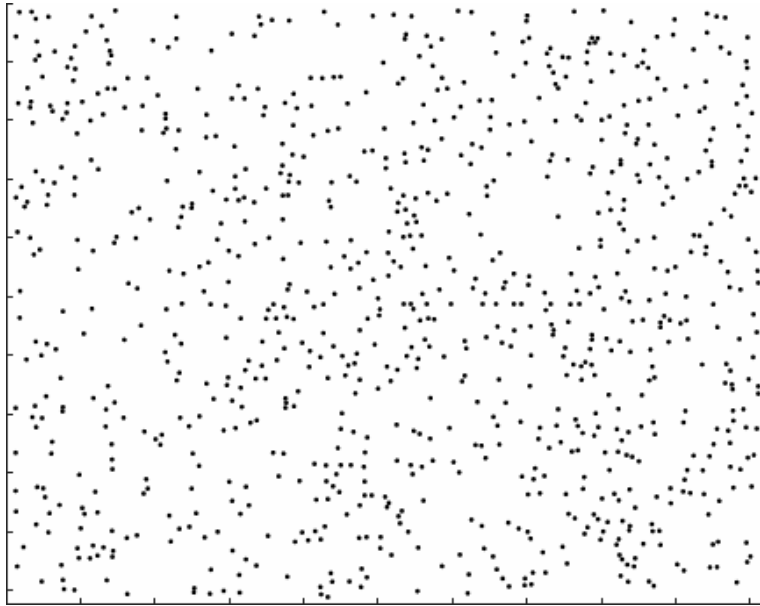
● Tracer nanoparticle



Schuerle et al., *Sci Adv* 2019

# Ferrohydrodynamics with bacterial swarms as living ferrofluids

Zahn et al., Appl Phys Lett 2007.



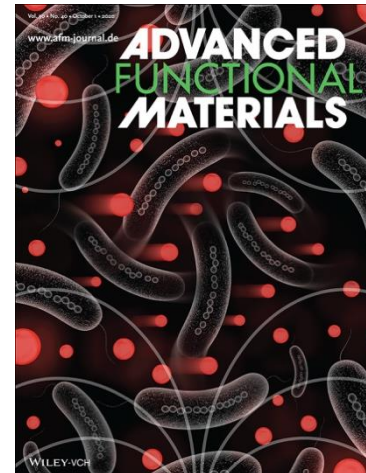
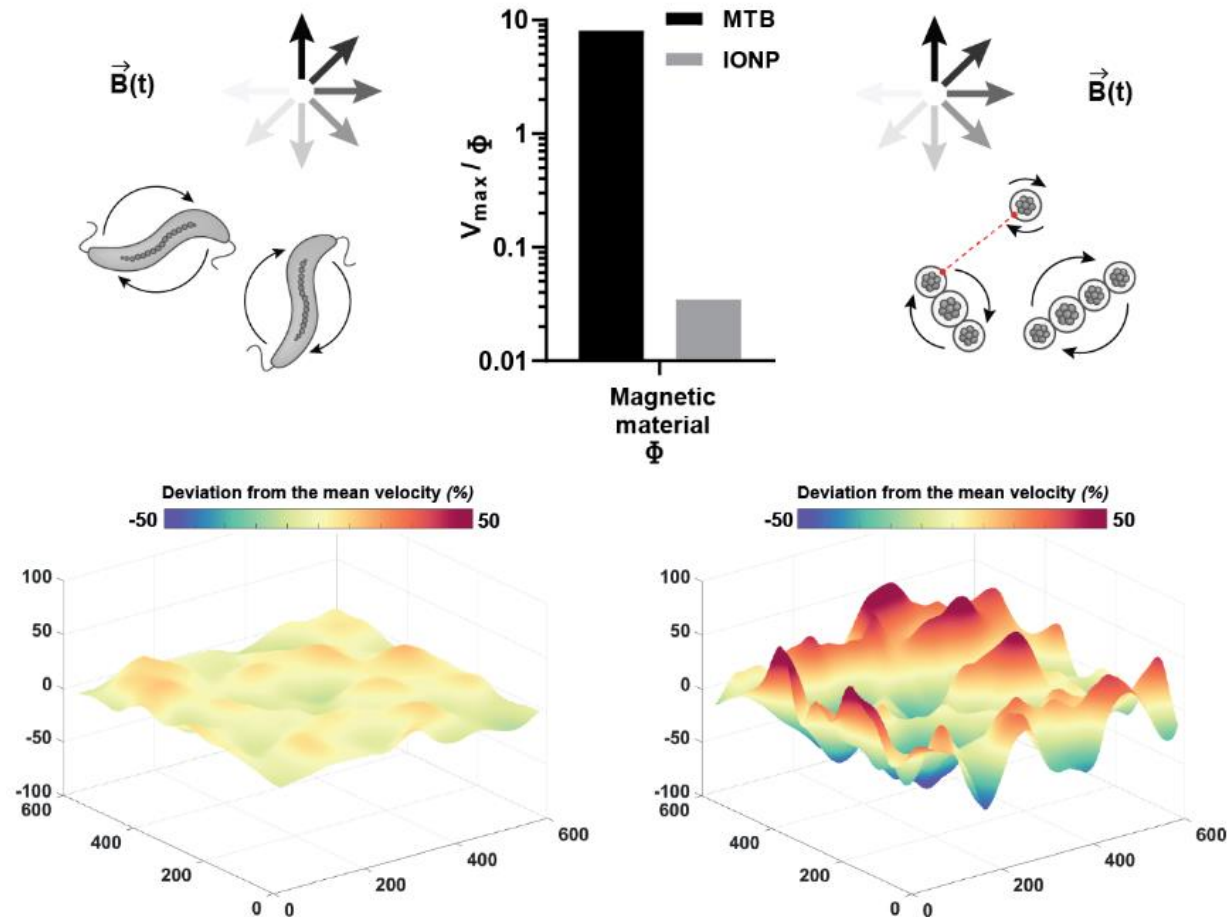
Response of bacterial swarms under rotating magnetic fields similar to synthetic ferrofluids

# Magnetotactic bacteria generate higher flow rates



Dr. Nima Mirkhani

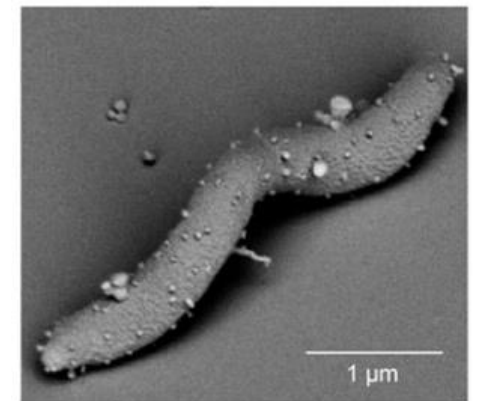
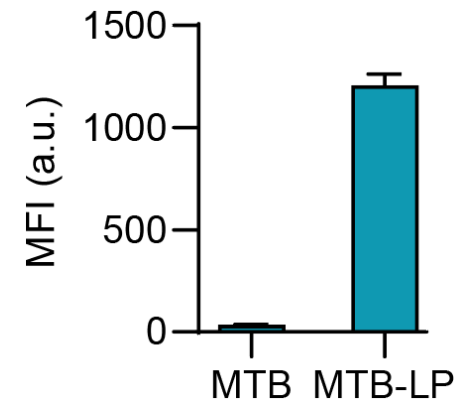
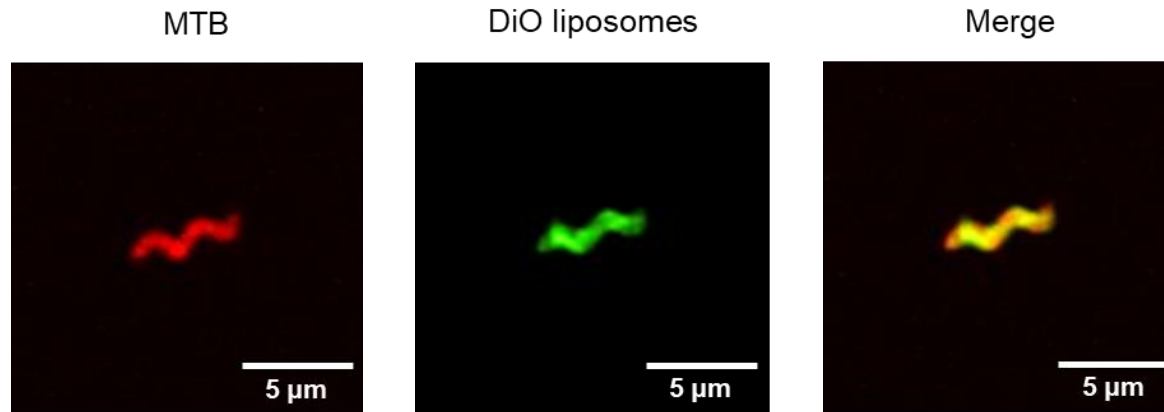
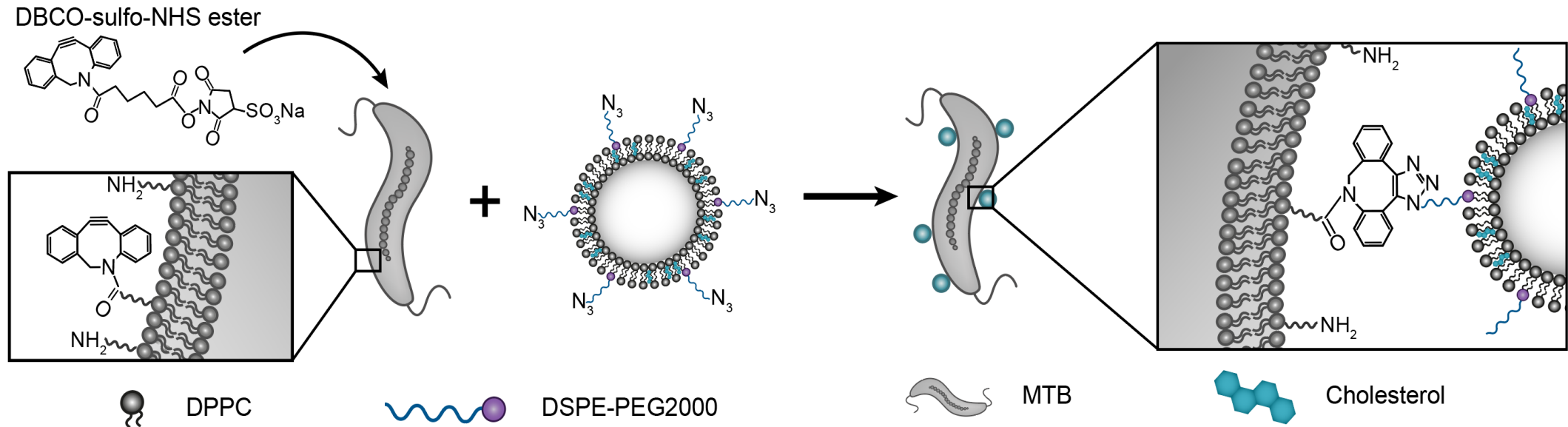
- Relatively large and elongated bacterial body
- Shape anisotropy and magnetic ordering of magnetosome chains



# Living microrobots with liposomes as versatile drug nanocargo

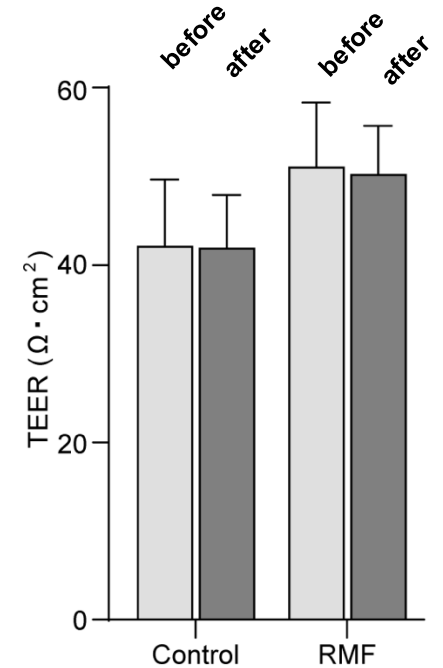
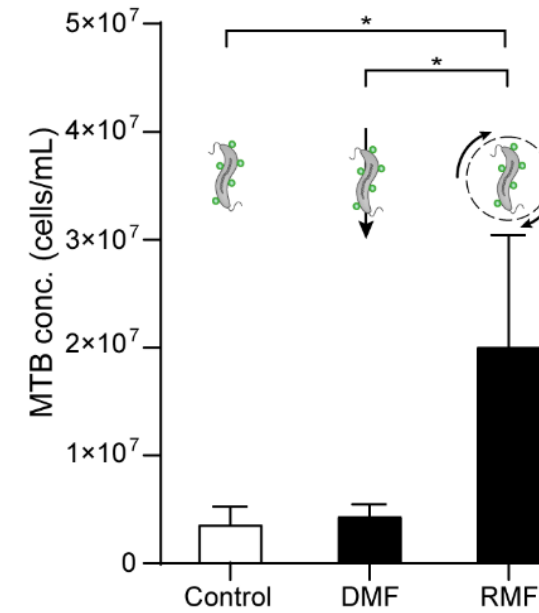
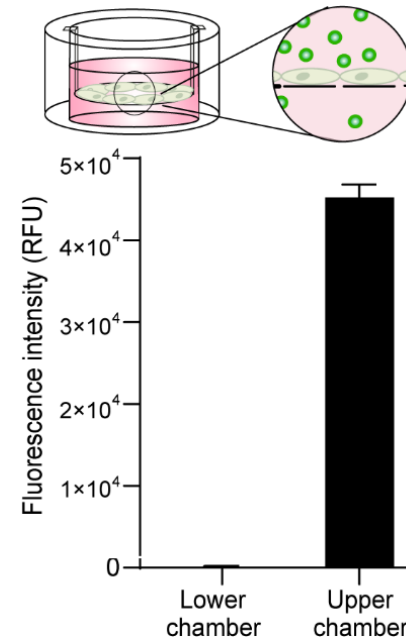
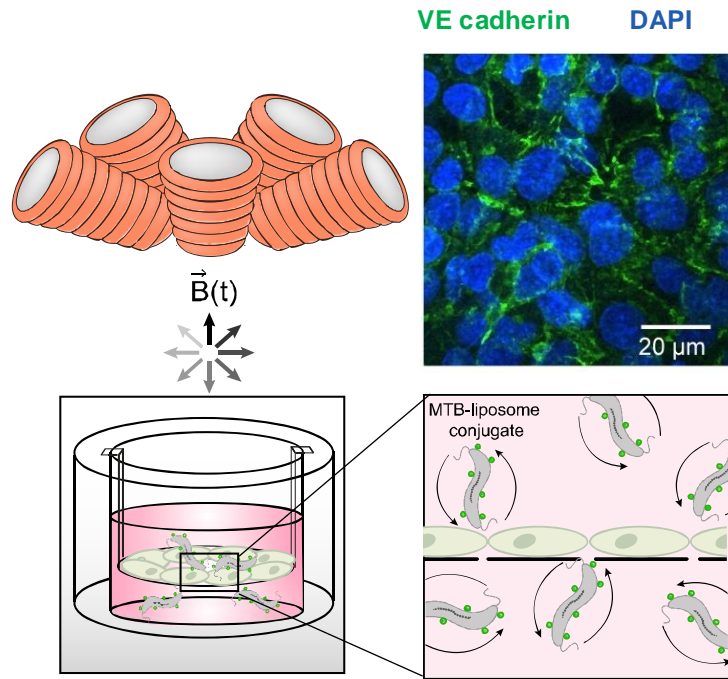


Dr.  
Tintotenda  
Gwisai





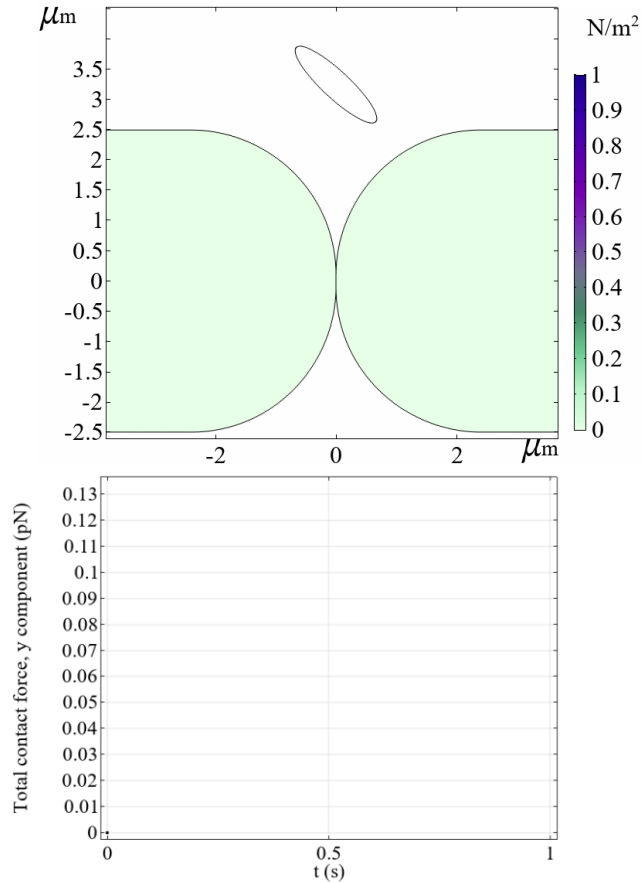
# Torque driven magnetic control of living microrobots increases transport across physiological barriers



RMF = 24 Hz, 20 mT, 1 hour,  $n = 3$ ,  $*P < 0.05$

# Higher applied forces are needed to break and open cell-cell junctions

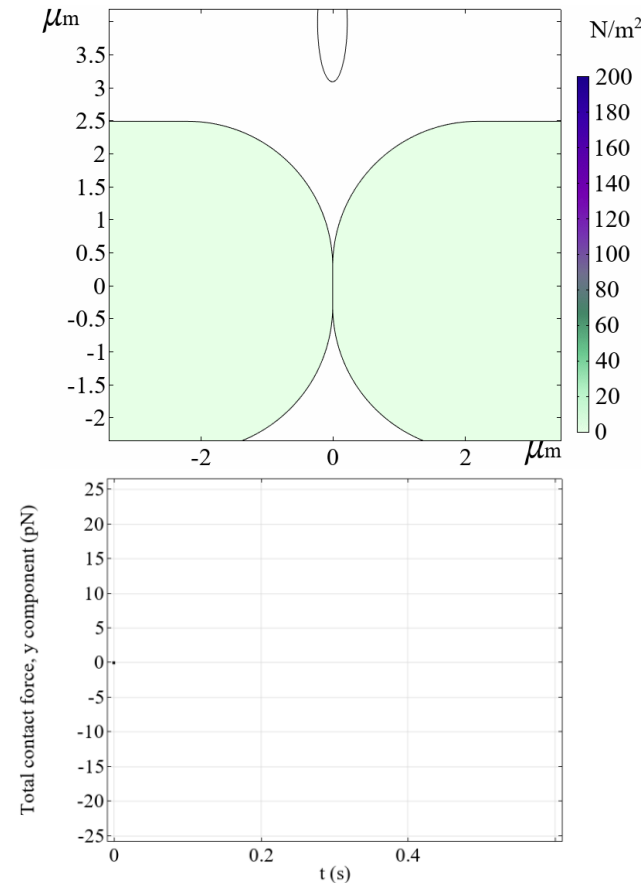
Contact force caused by the rotational actuation near a junction



~ 0.1 pN

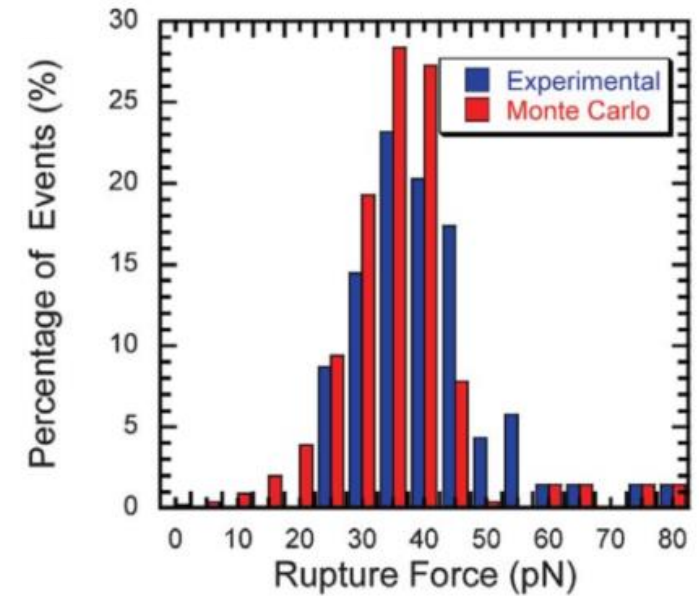
<

Elastic resistance profile of a micron-sized object passing through a junction



~ 10 pN

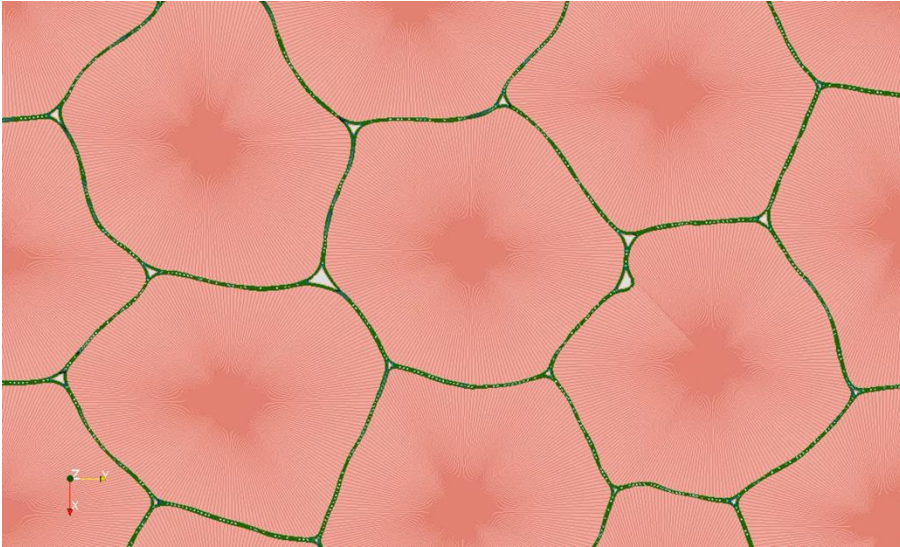
Distributions of forces required to break single VE-cadherin/VE-cadherin bonds



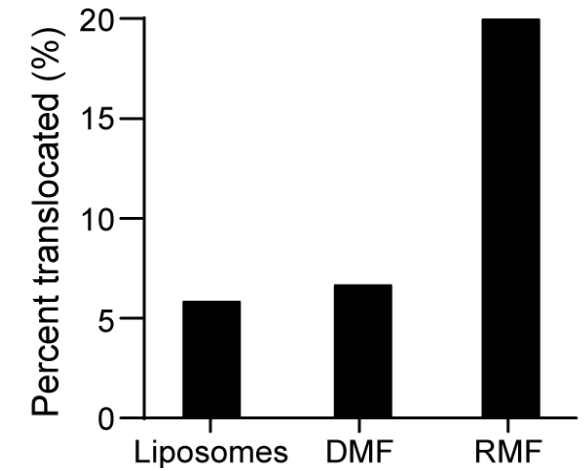
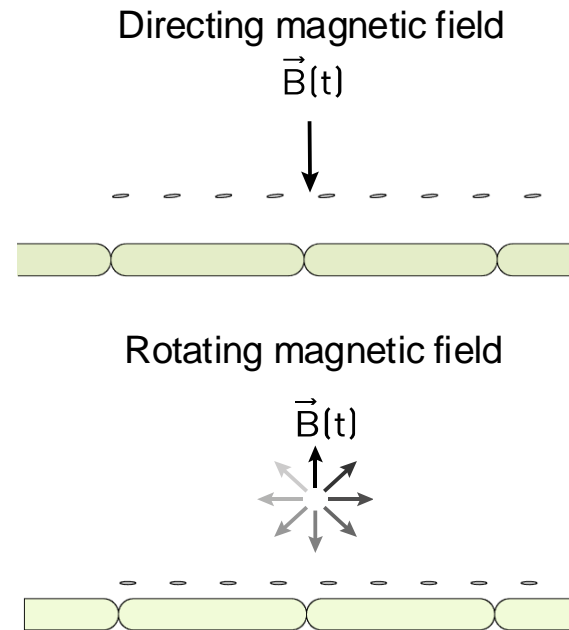
Panorchan, P., et al, *J. Mol. Biol.* (2006) 358, 665–674

~ 10 pN

# Increased surface exploration as driving mechanism of translocation



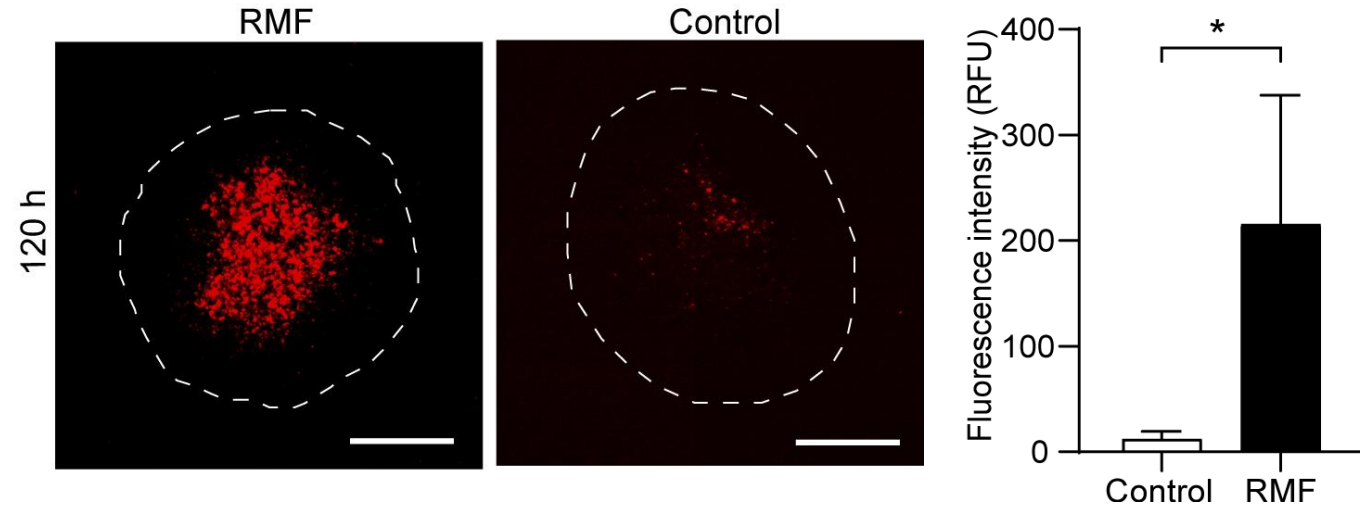
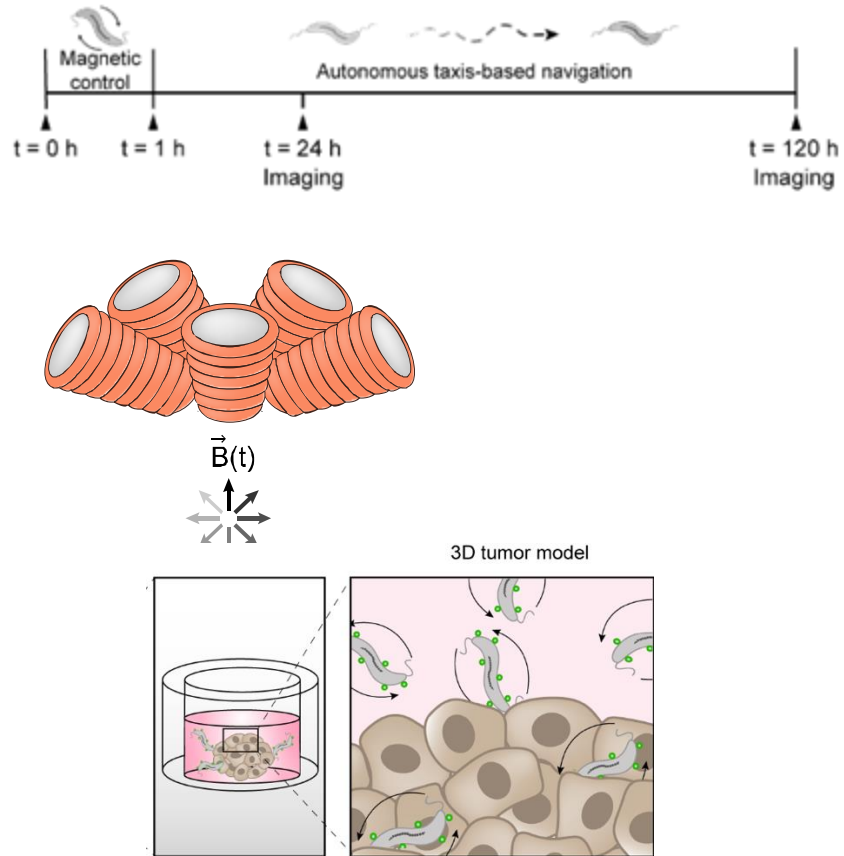
Escribano, J., *PLoS Comput Biol*, 2019,15(5)



# Torque driven control increases infiltration in 3D tumor models



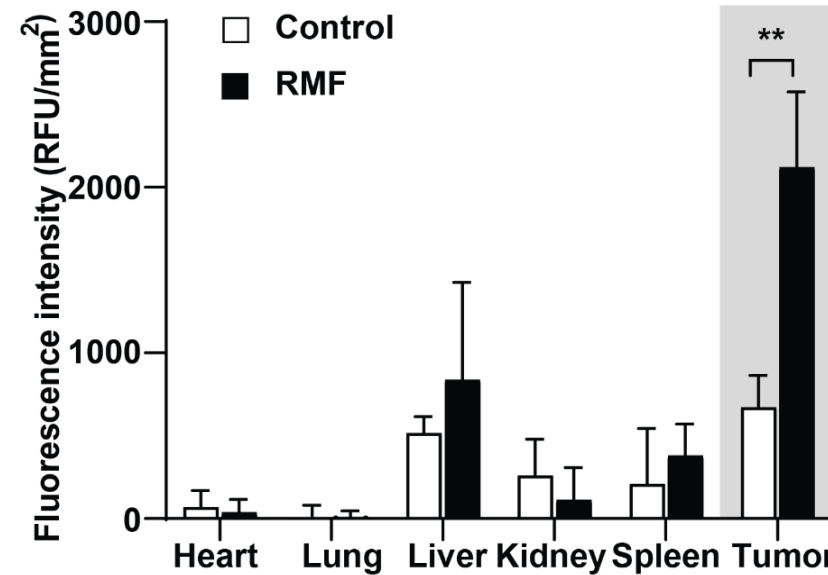
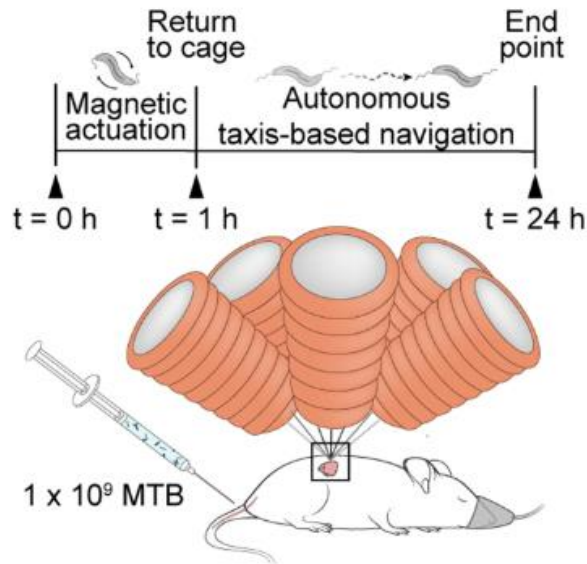
MCF-7 (breast adenocarcinoma)  
spheroids model avascular solid tumors



RMF = 24 Hz, 20 mT, 1 hour;  $n = 3$ ; \* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ ; Scale bar = 200  $\mu$ m

**Magnetic torque-driven motion with taxis-based navigation results in robust tumor colonization**

# Torque driven control increases tumor infiltration of living microrobots



## Research highlights

nature reviews bioengineering

Microrobotics

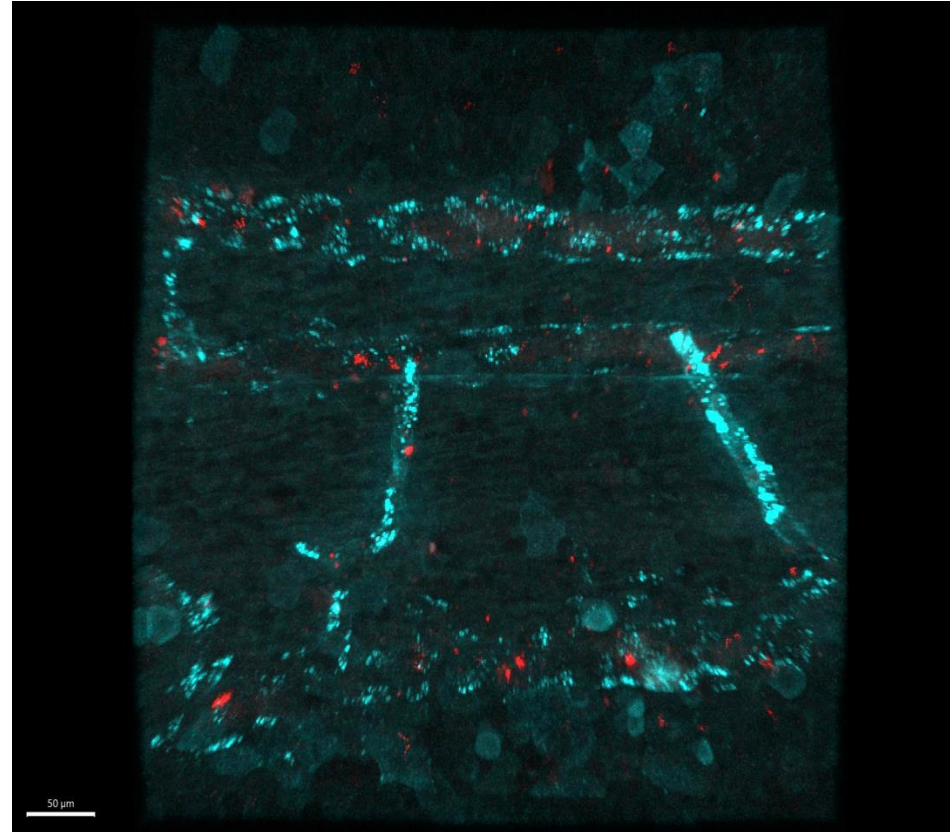
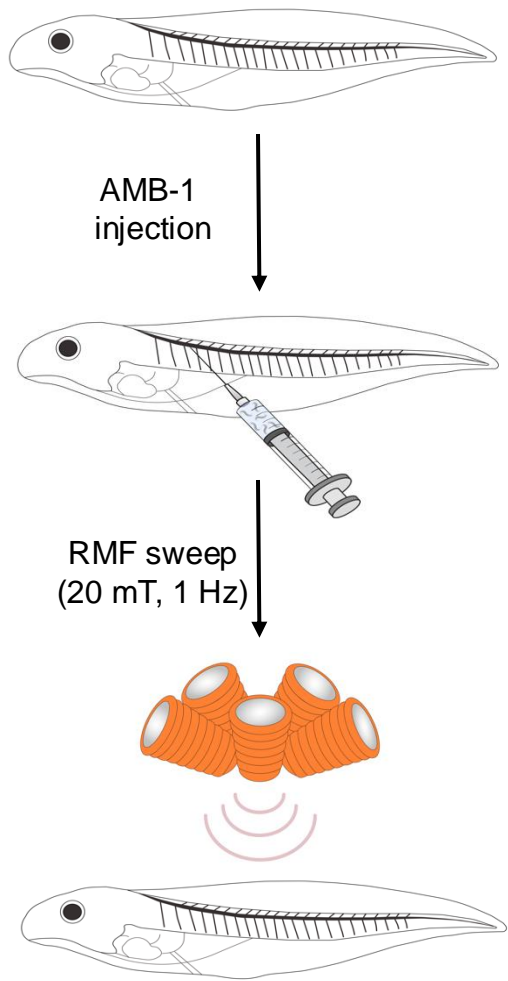
Living microrobots target cancer



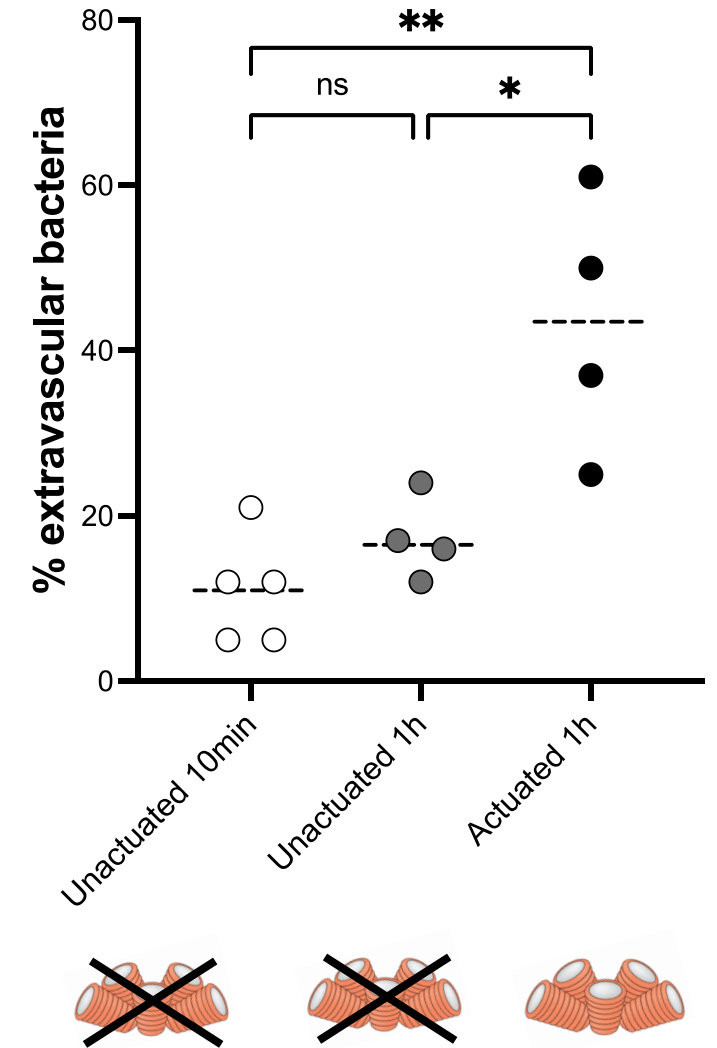
We introduced a hybrid control approach leveraging torque-driven control and autonomous tumor taxis by combining robotics and biology



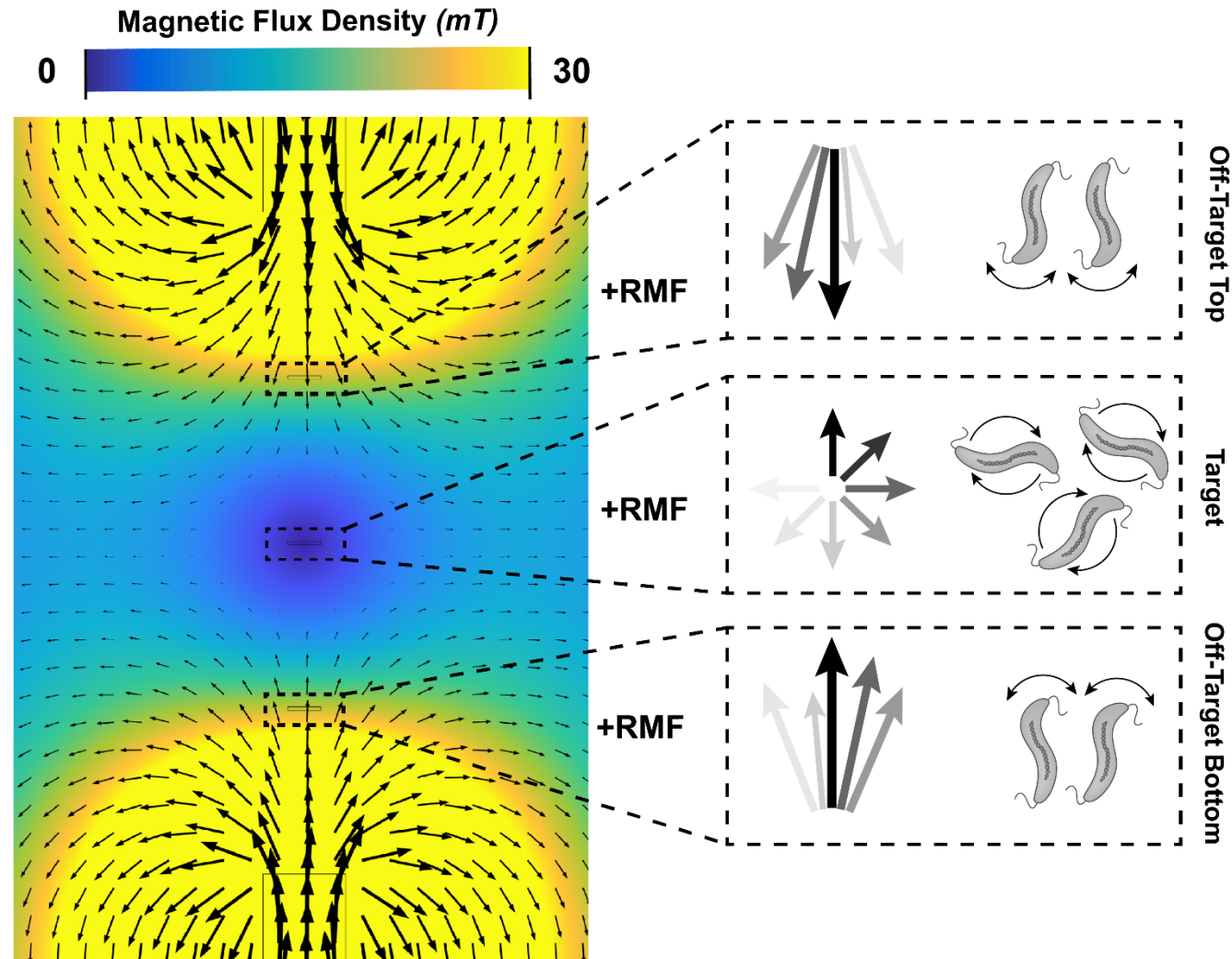
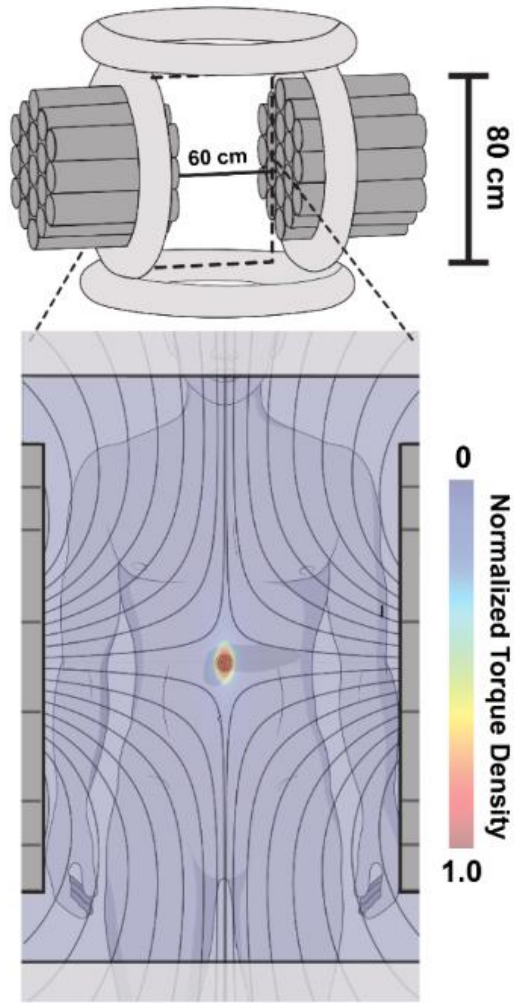
# Live imaging of microrobot extravasation in embryos of *X. laevis*



intravascular bacteria  
extravascular bacteria



# Can we increase spatial selectivity and scale to human patients?



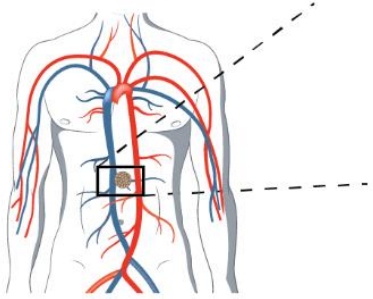
Dr. Nima Mirkhani



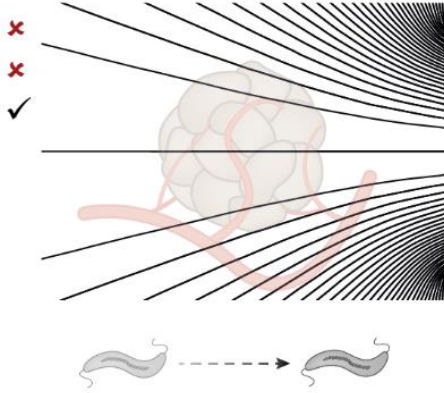
Dr. Michael Christiansen

# Can we increase spatial selectivity and scale to human patients?

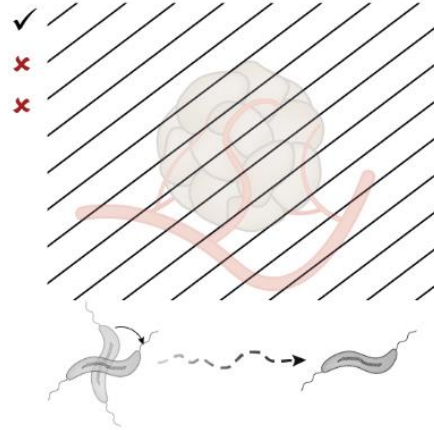
Scalable to human  
Selectivity for deep targets  
Feedback-independent



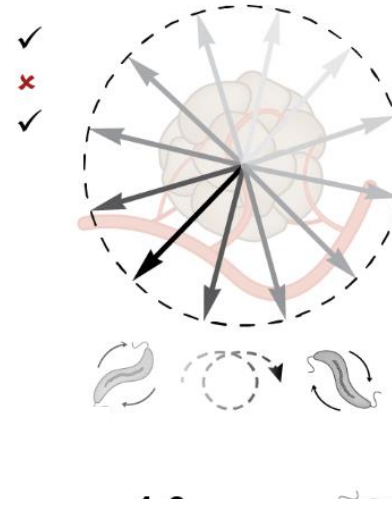
$\nabla \vec{B}$  gradient field



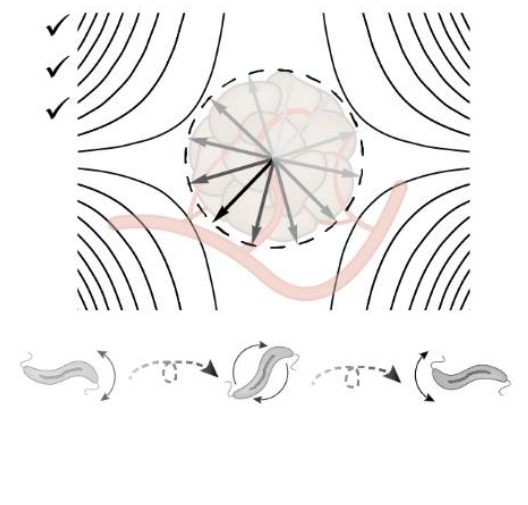
$\vec{B}$  uniform field



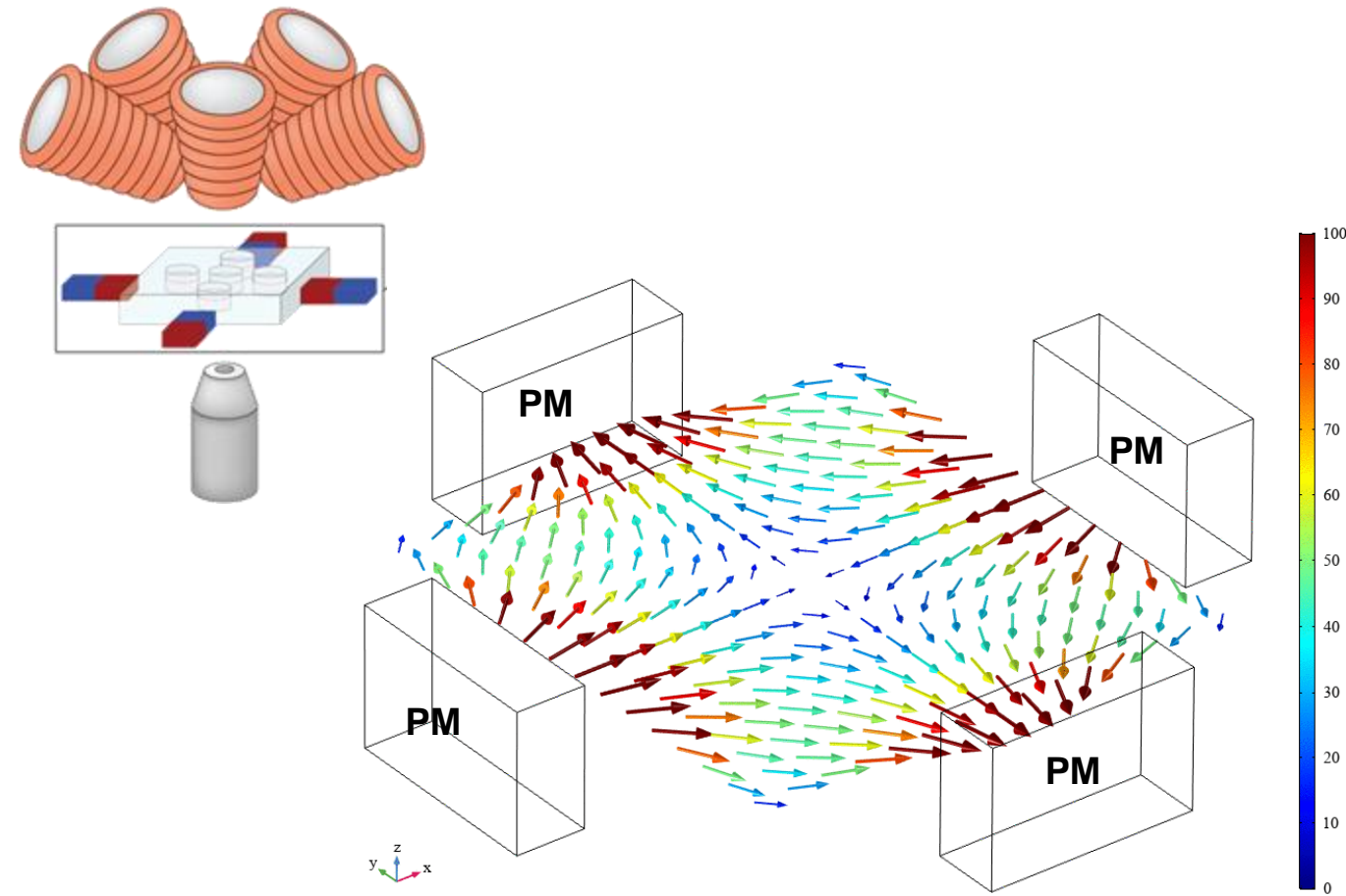
$\vec{B}(t)$  rotating field



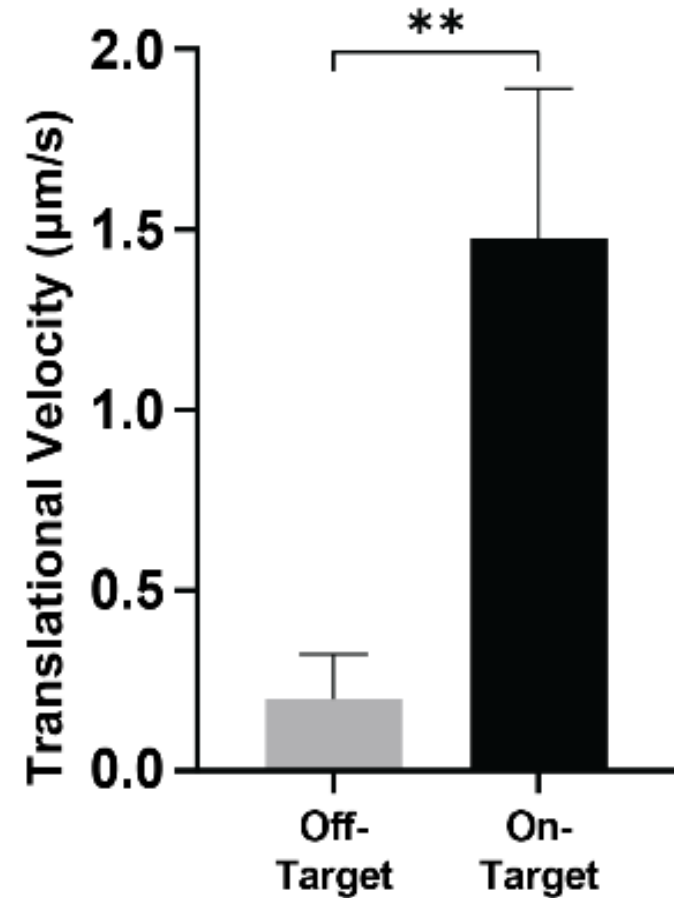
$\nabla \vec{B} + \vec{B}(t)$  gating field rotating field



# Focussing torque to enhance safety and efficacy



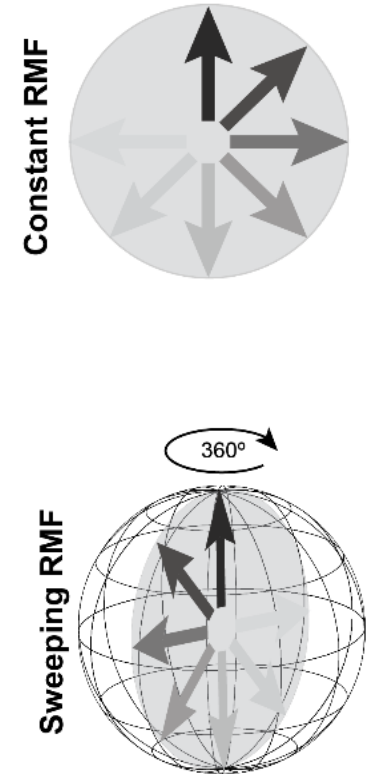
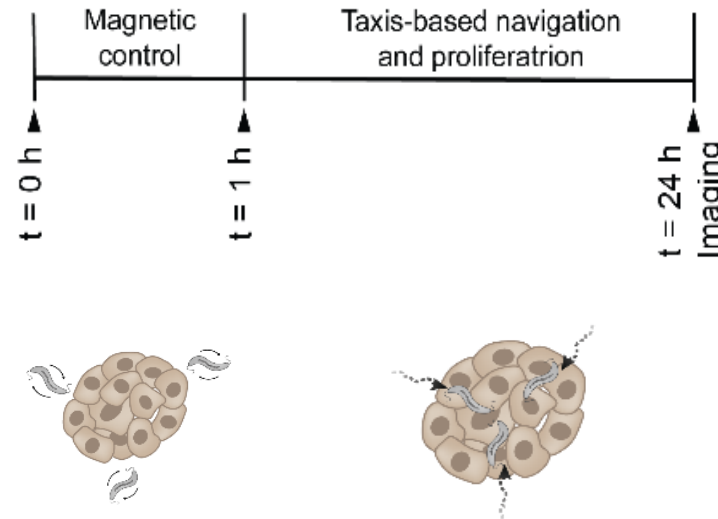
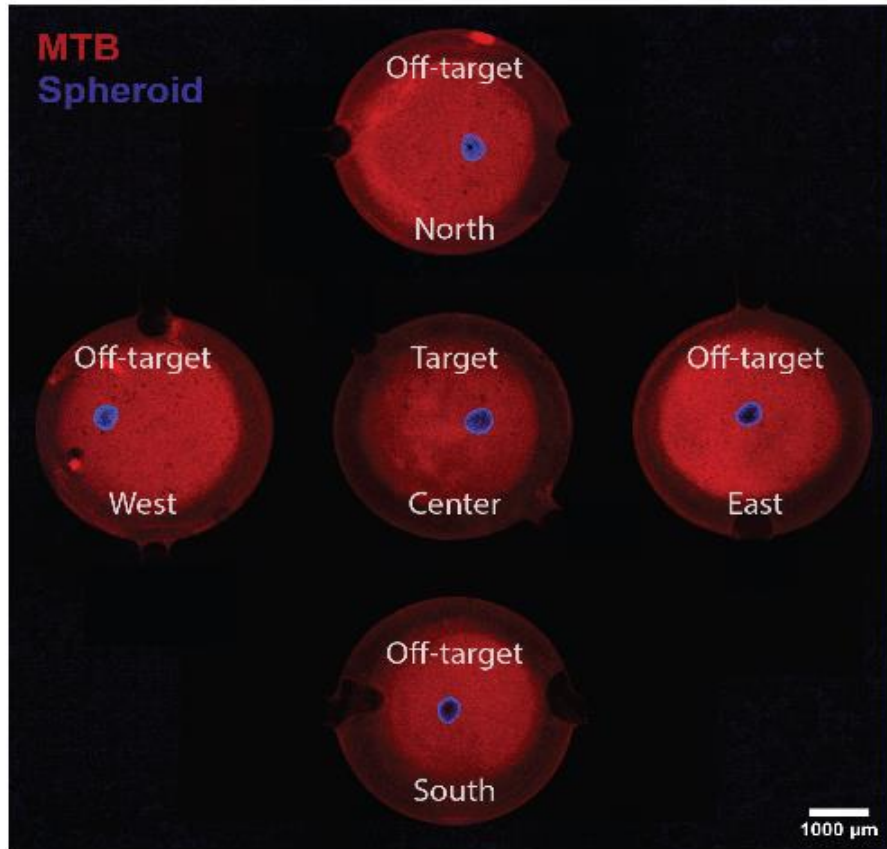
**RMF + Permanent Magnet (PM)**



**Suppression of torque actuation in off target regions**



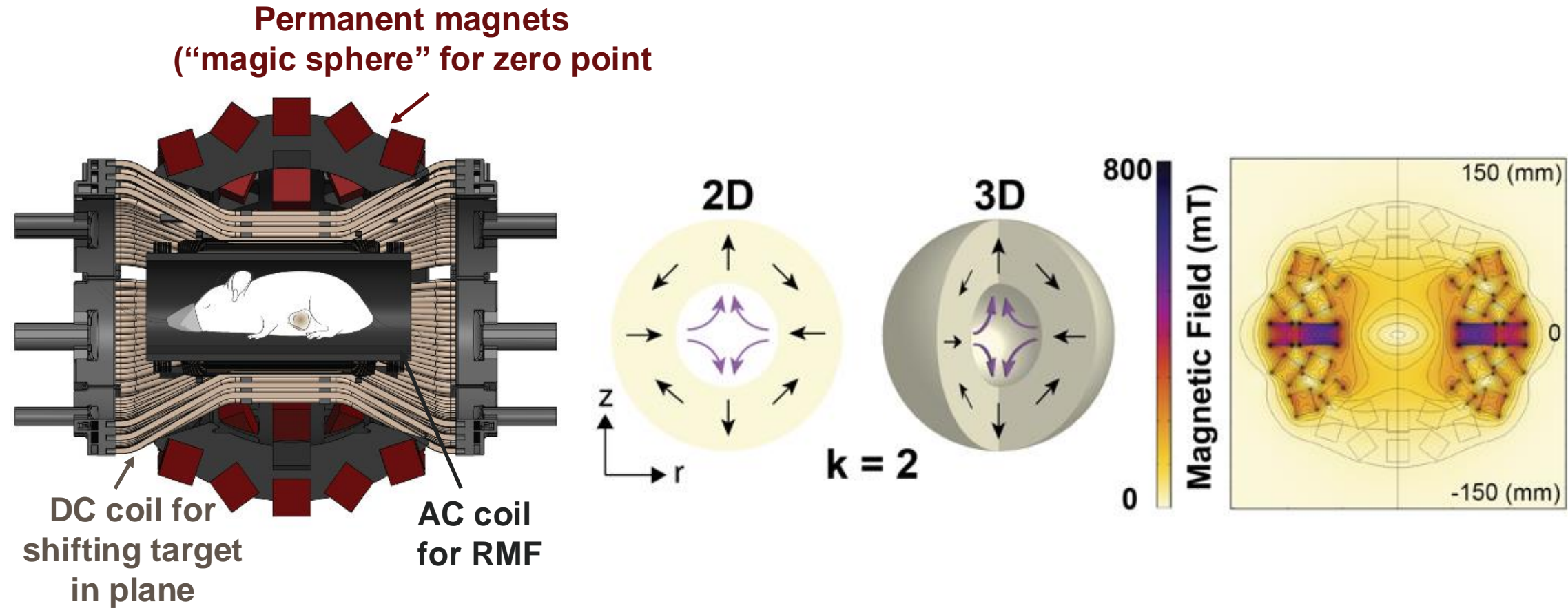
# Sweeping fields to actuate open loop in 3D: no position feedback needed







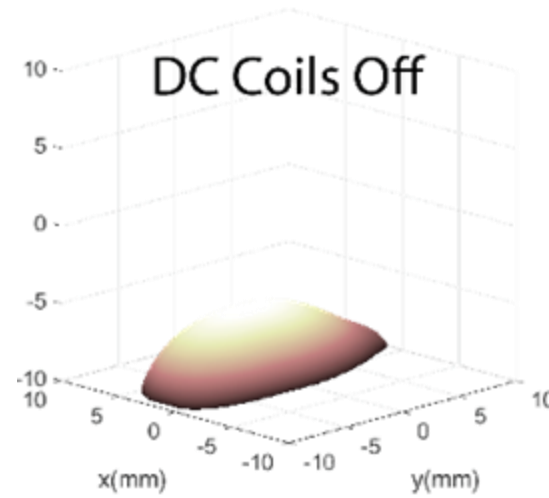
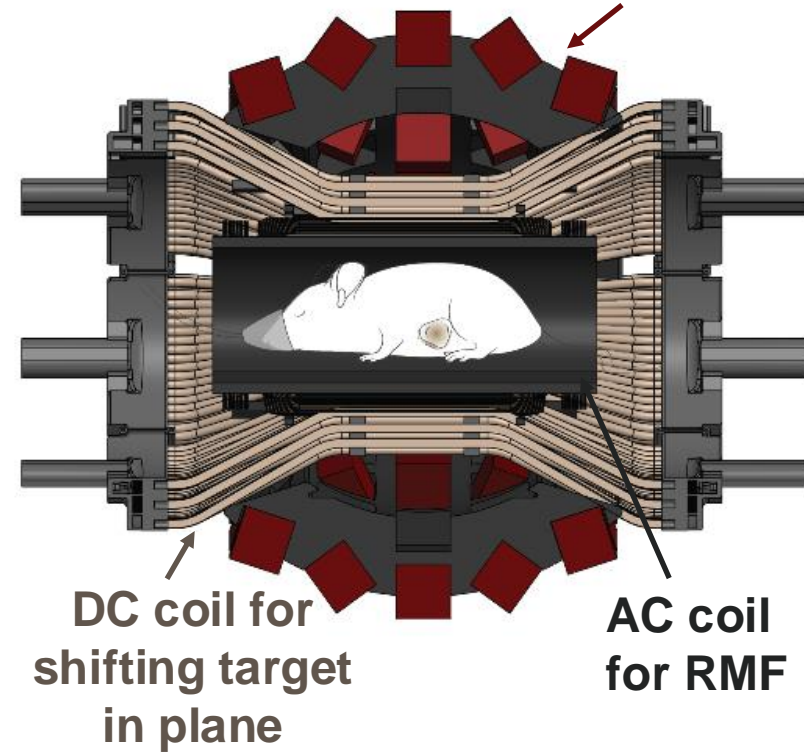
# Design of an in vivo torque focusing setup



# Design of an in vivo torque focusing setup

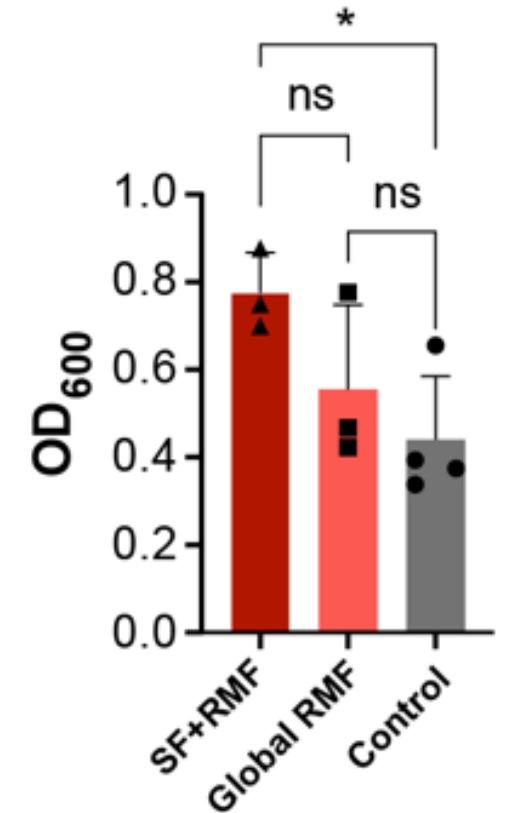
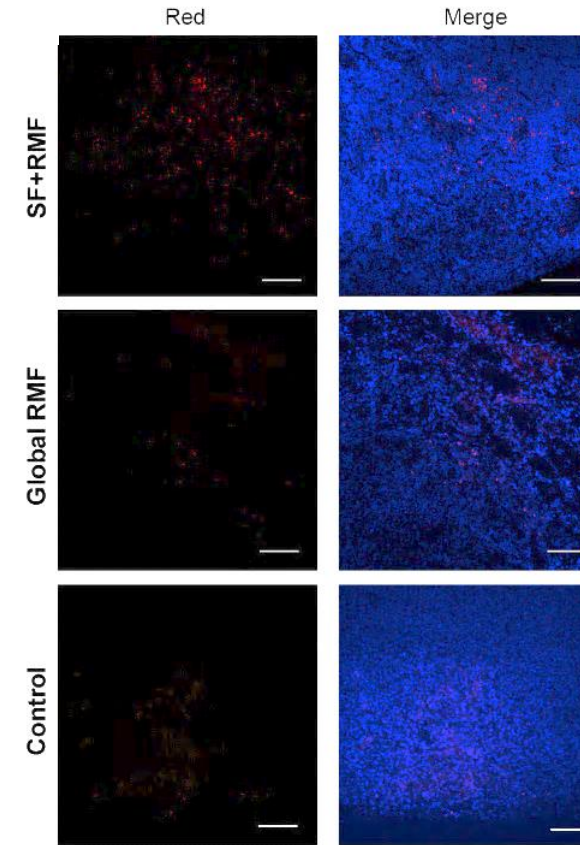
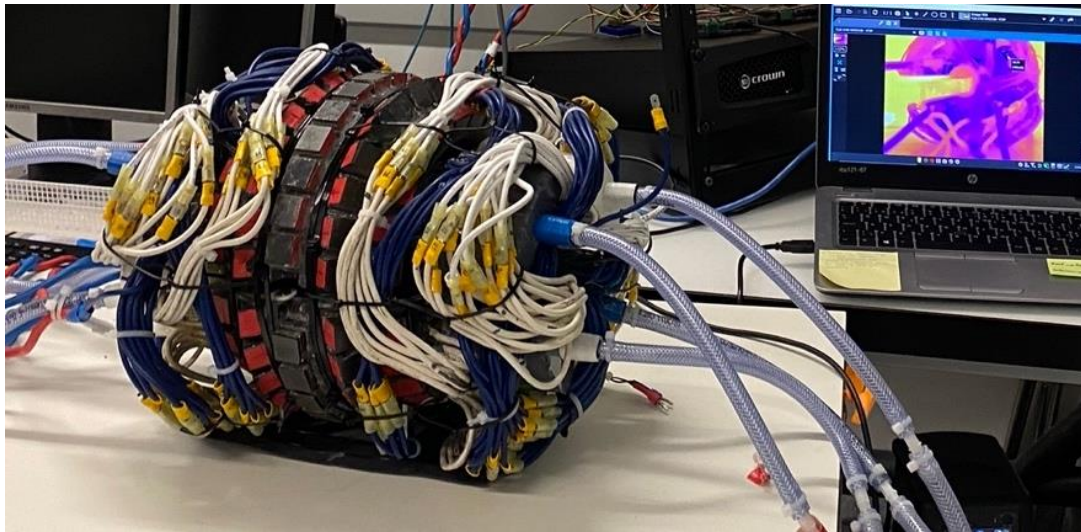
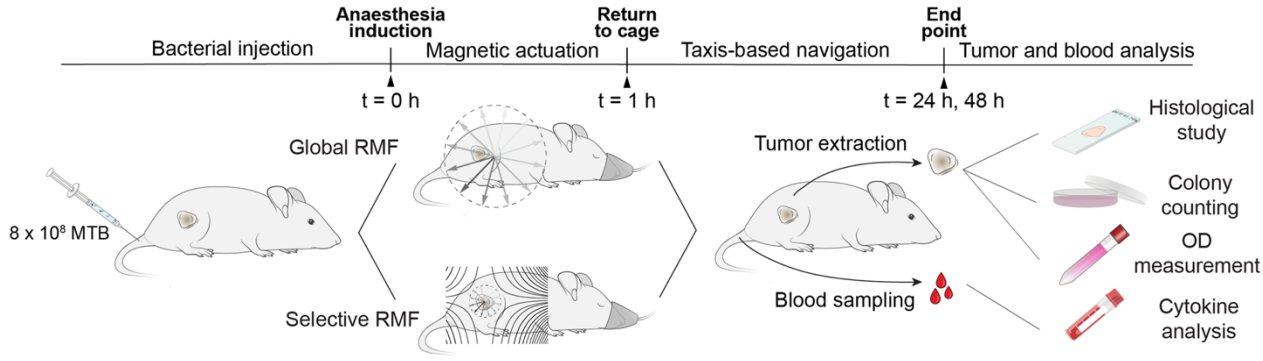


Permanent magnets  
("magic sphere" for zero point)





# Proof of concept demonstrates further increase in tumor accumulation

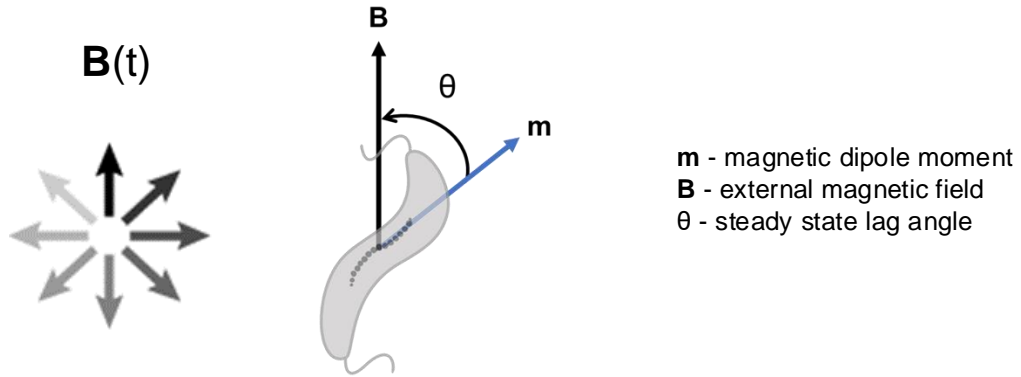


**Increasing spatial selectivity down to mm resolution through suppression of actuation in off target regions**

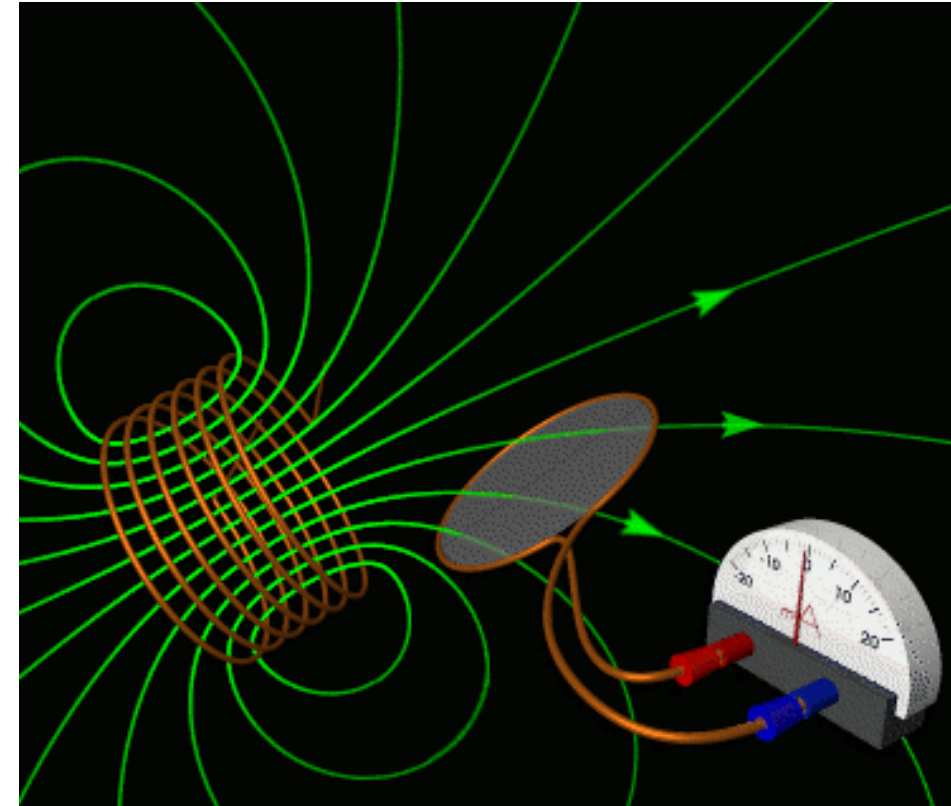
# Finally: integrating feedback via inductive detection



Dr. Michael Christiansen



Making use of Faraday's law of induction



Media source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Induction_coil). CC BY-SA Ponor



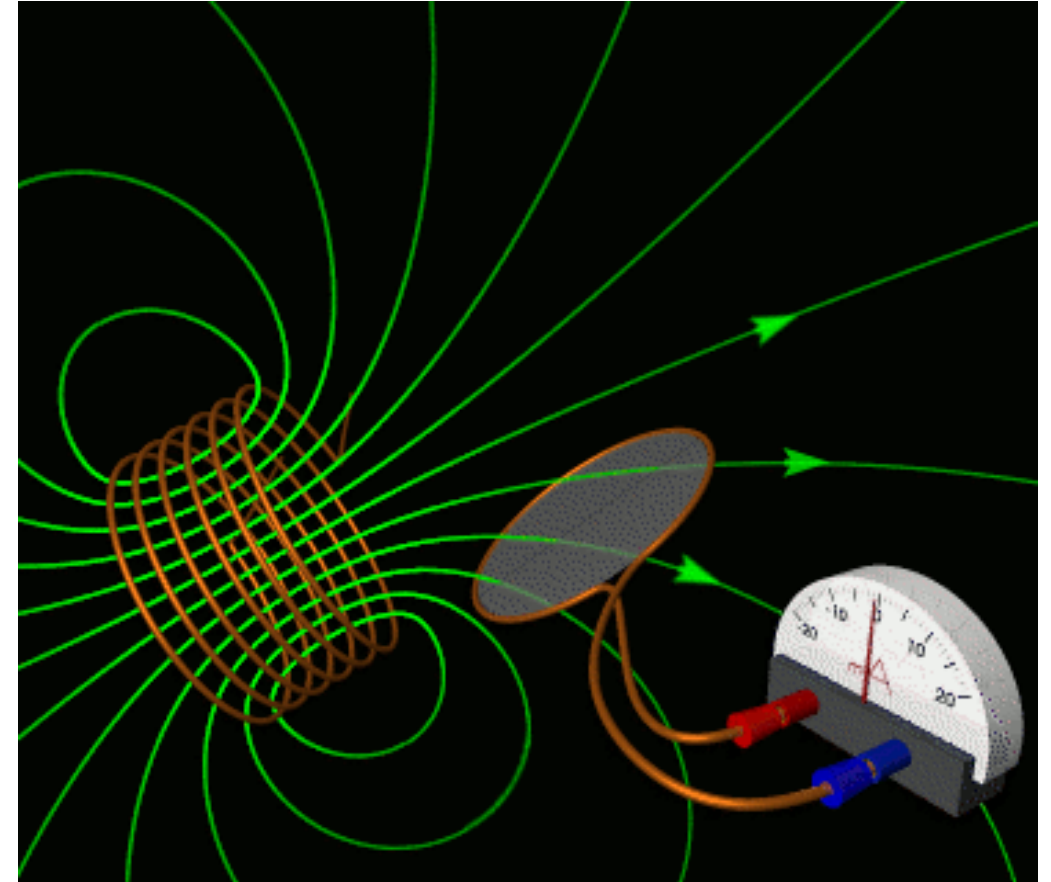
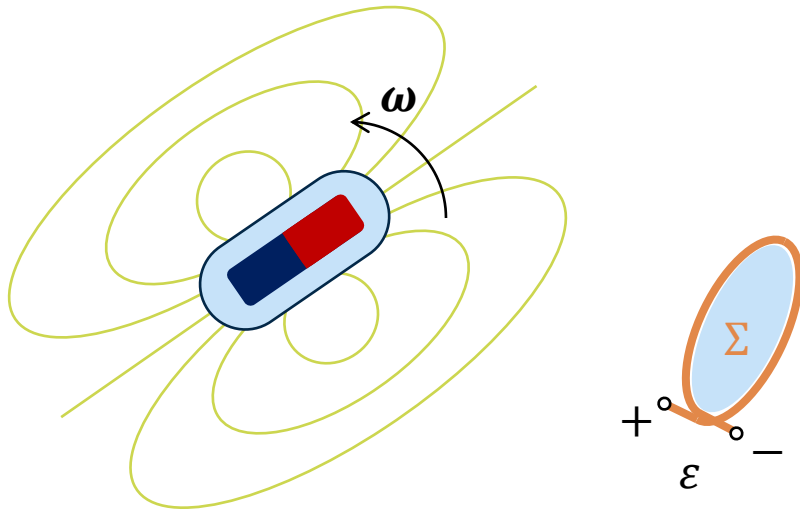
# Inductive Detection Basics

Electromotive force  
(~ Voltage)

$$\varepsilon = - \frac{d\Phi_B}{dt}$$

Magnetic flux through the loop

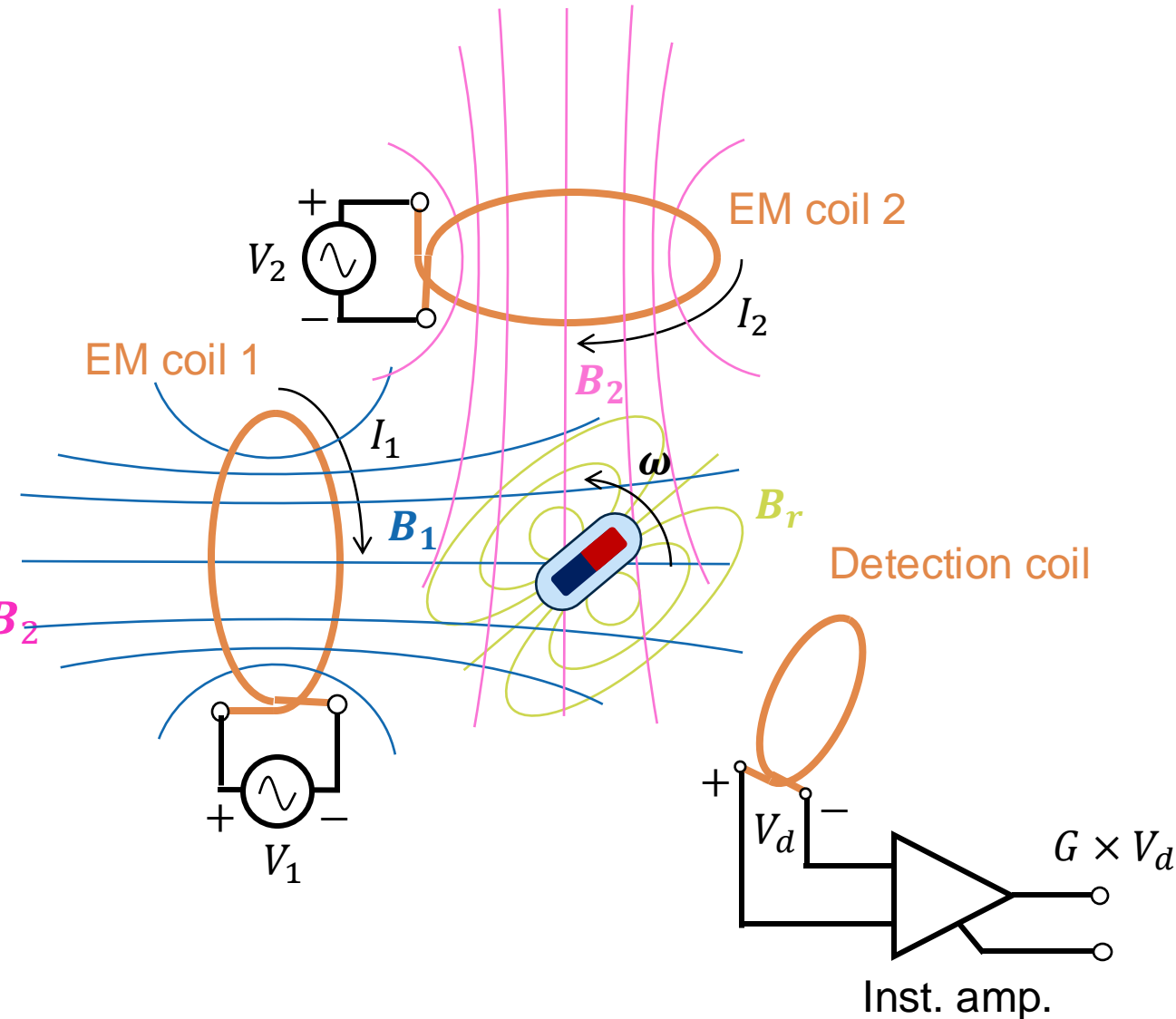
$$\Phi_B = \int_{\Sigma} \mathbf{B} \cdot d\mathbf{A}$$



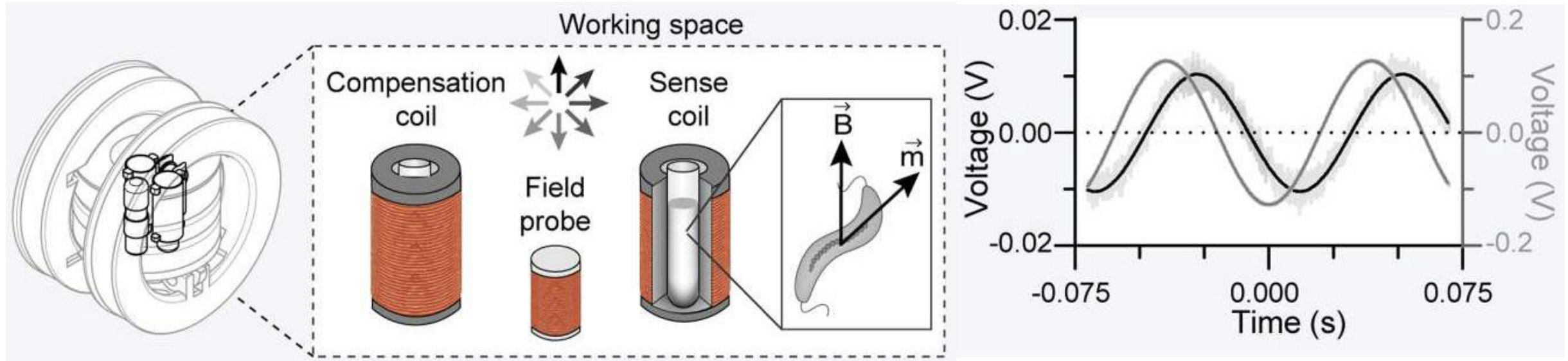
Media source: [Wikimedia Commons](#). CC BY-SA Ponor

# Inductive Detection Basics

- We drive the electromagnets (EM) with sinusoidal voltages
  - $V_1 = |V_1| \cos \omega t$
  - $V_2 = |V_2| \sin \omega t$
- This creates a rotating magnetic field (RMF)  $\mathbf{B}_1 + \mathbf{B}_2$ .
- The RMF causes the magnetic robot to spin.
- The time-varying magnetic fields  $\mathbf{B}_r + \mathbf{B}_1 + \mathbf{B}_2$  create an emf (voltage) in the detection coil.



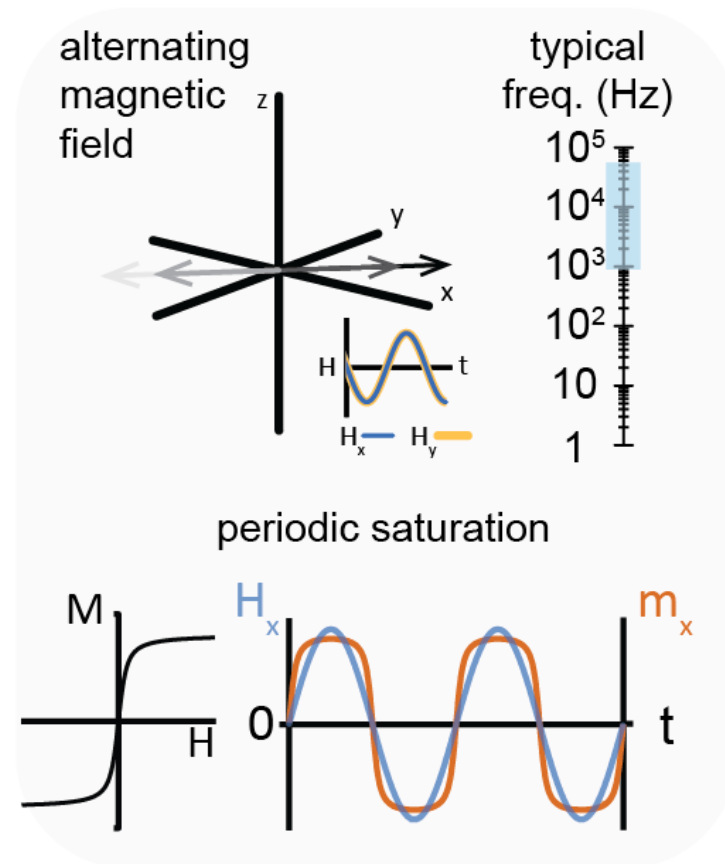
# Finally: integrating feedback via inductive detection



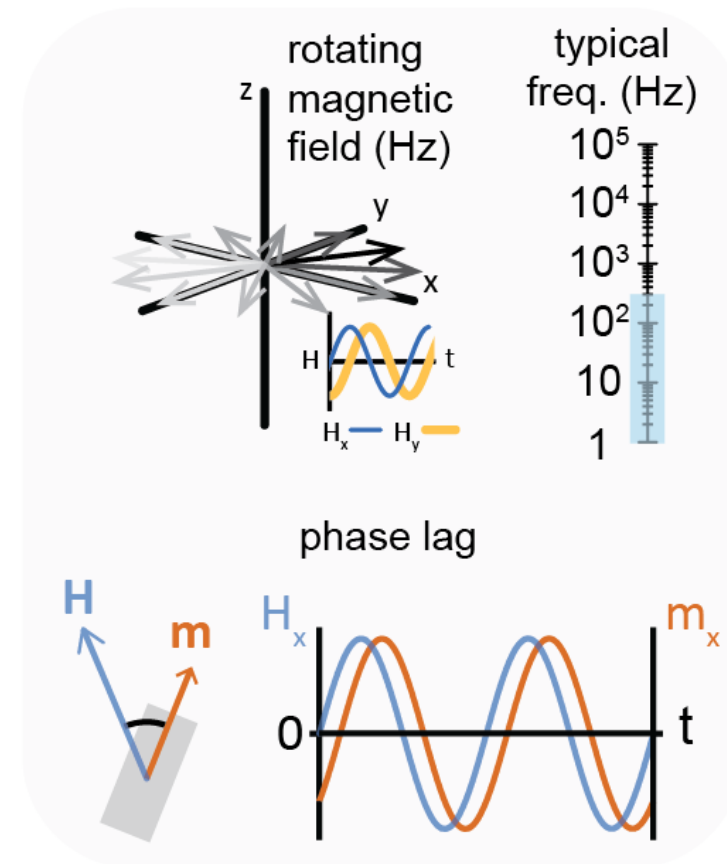
# Key Differences between Inductive Detection in MPI and Rotating Fields

**Driving Field**

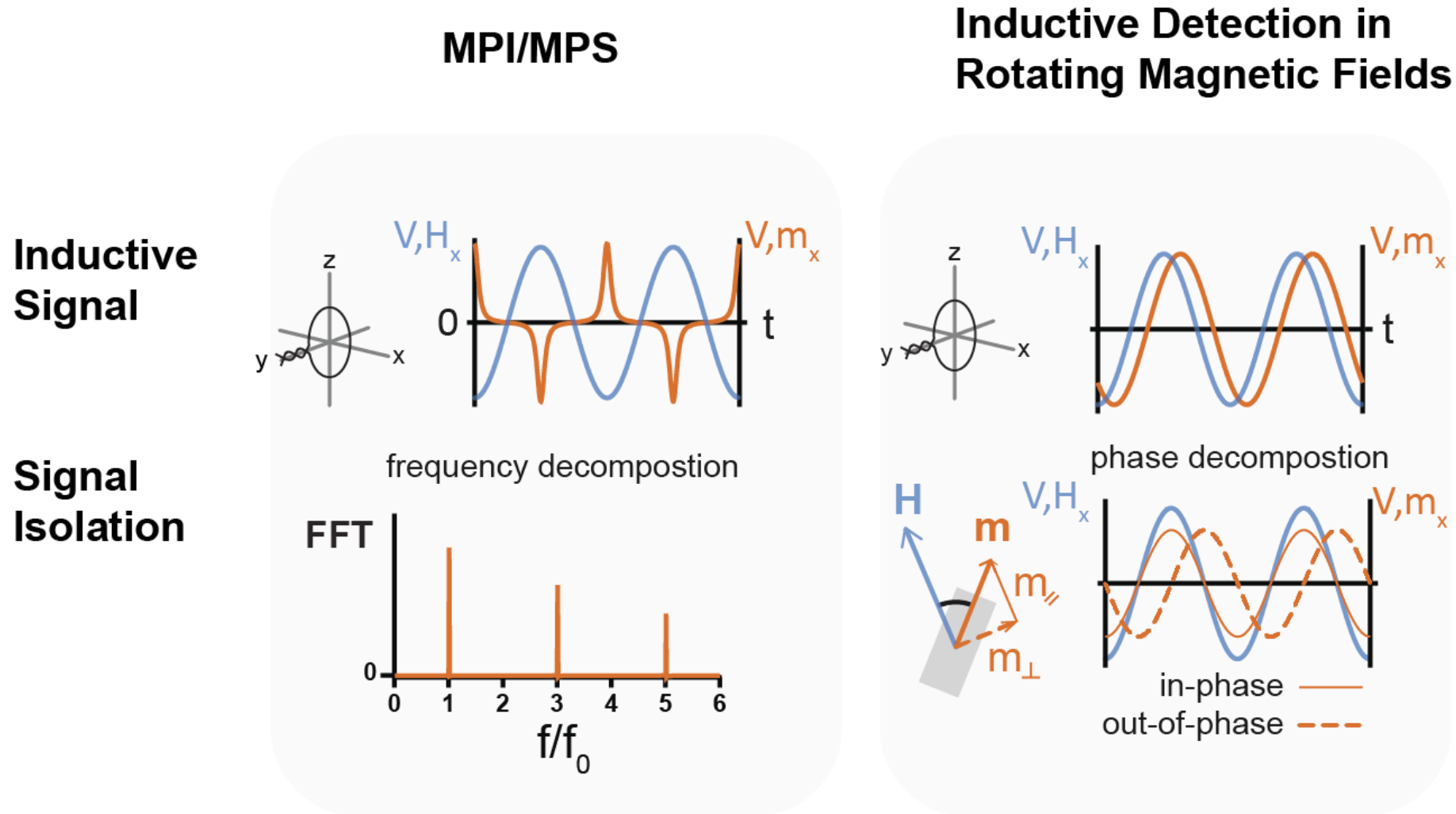
**MPI/MPS**



**Inductive Detection in Rotating Magnetic Fields**

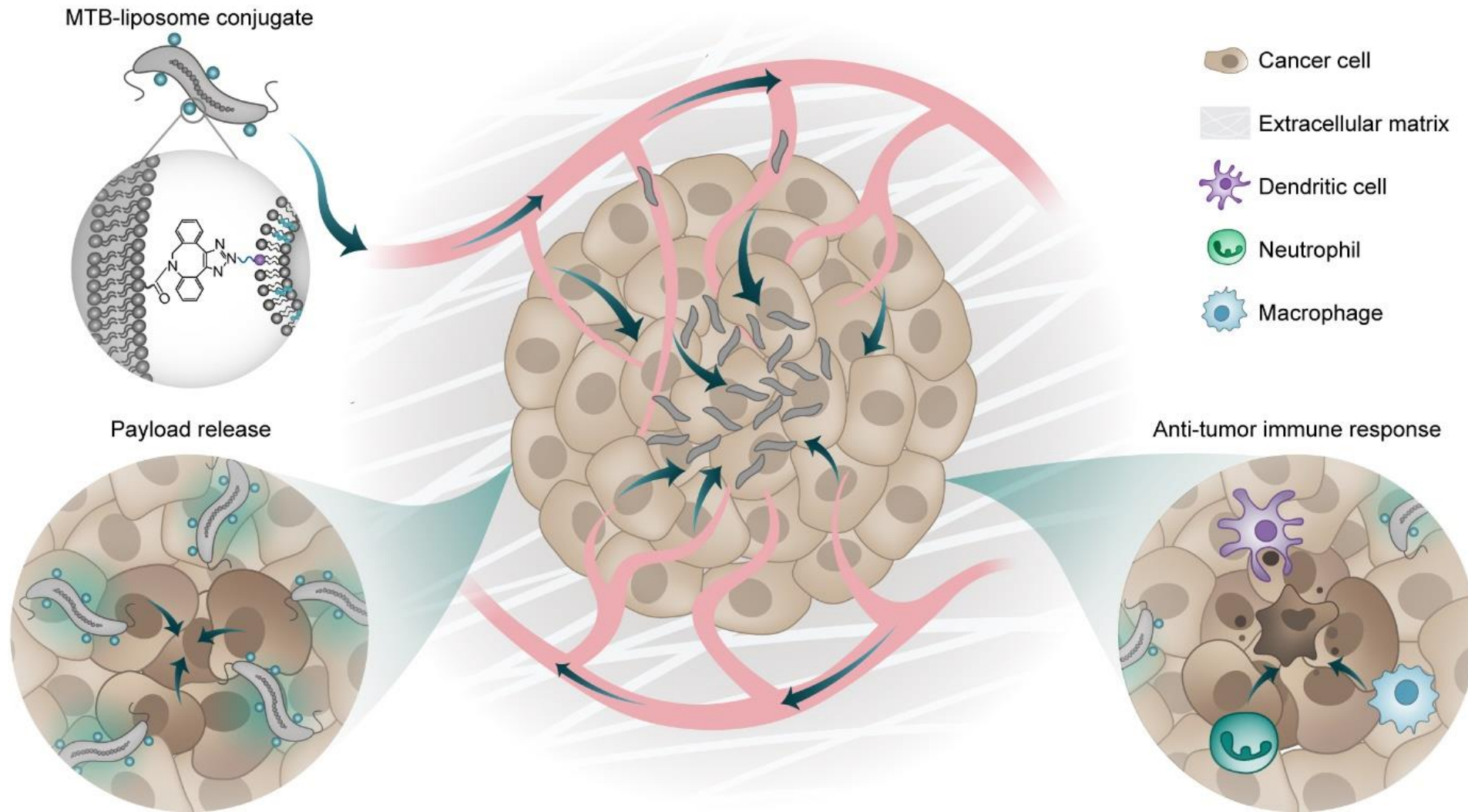


# Key Differences between Inductive Detection in MPI and Rotating Fields





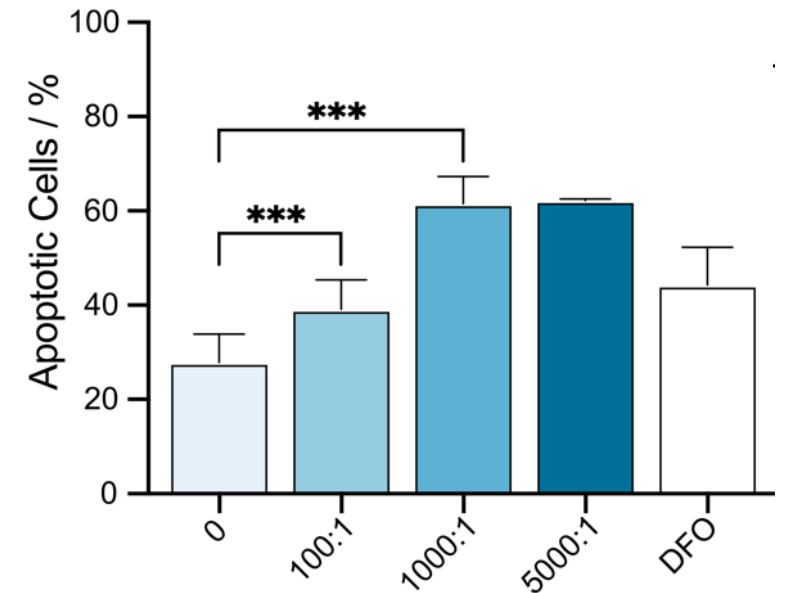
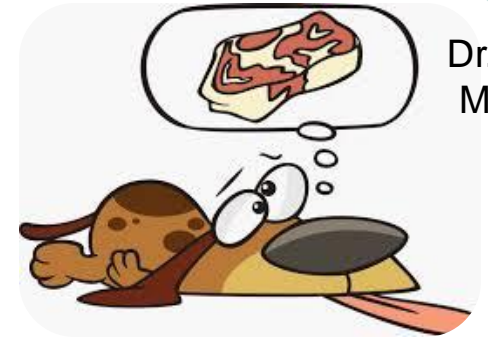
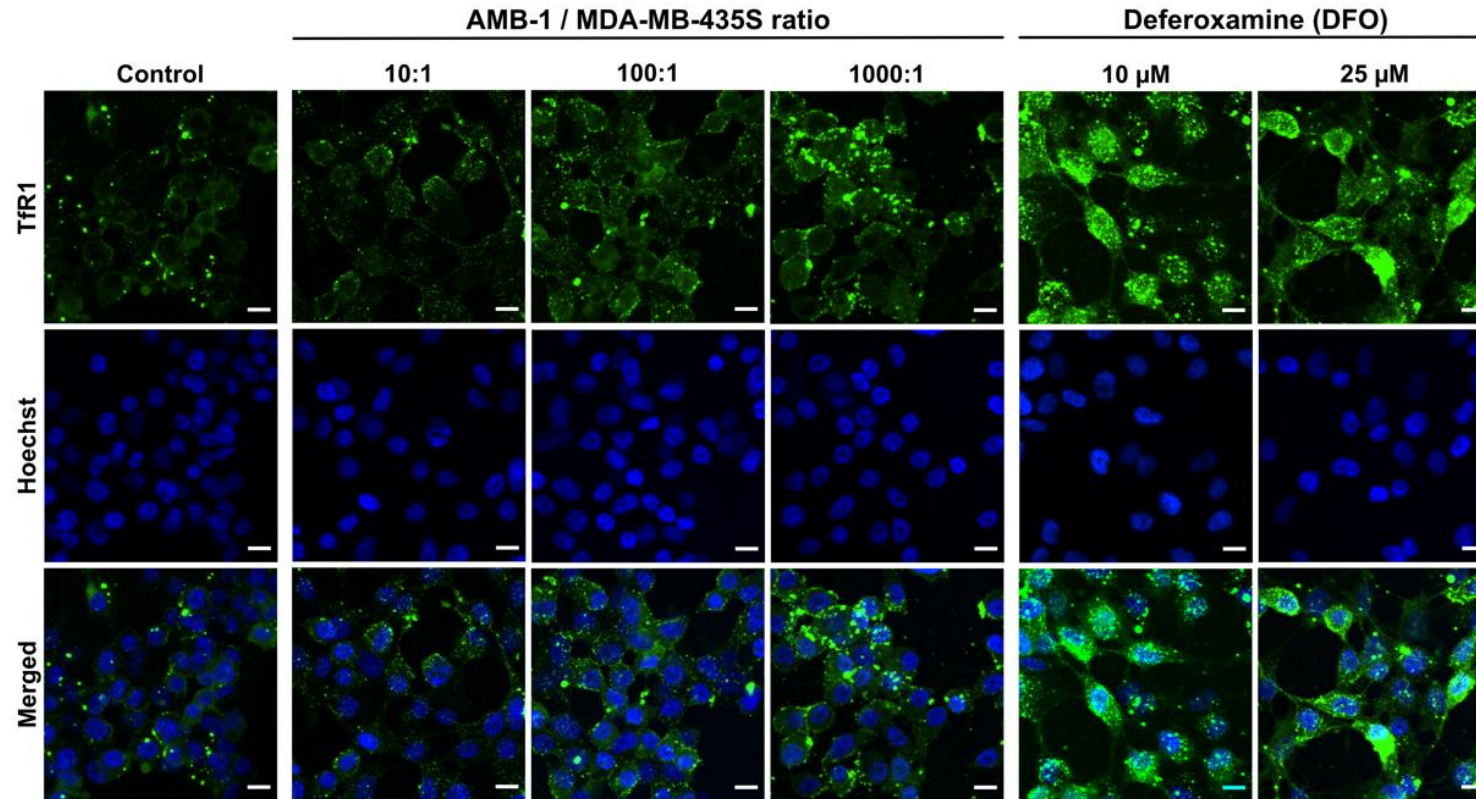
# Investigating and engineering therapeutic pathways



# Innate capability as living iron chelator

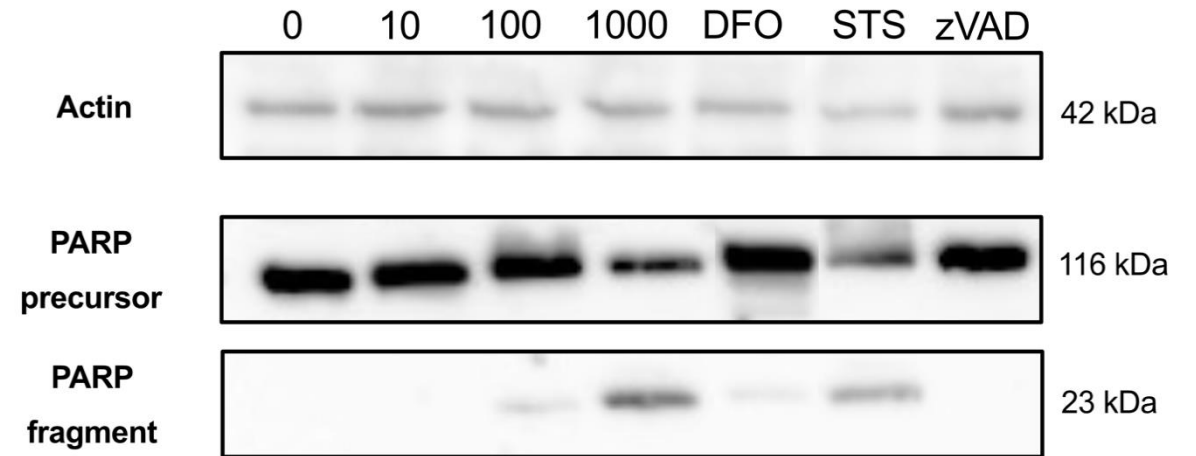
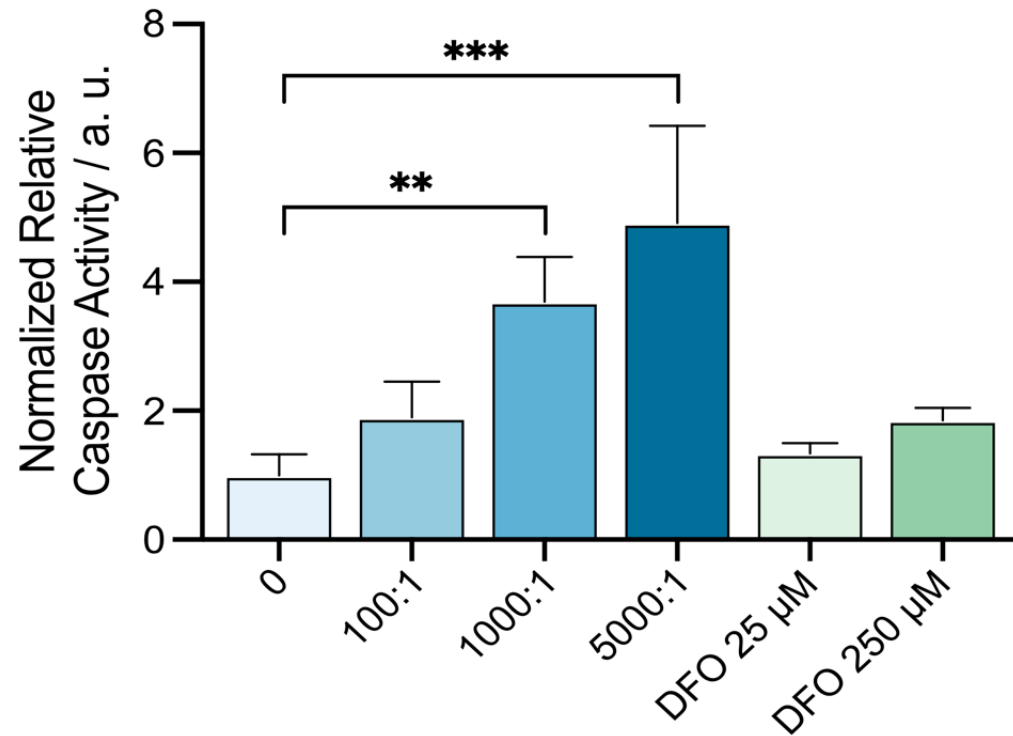


Dr. Stefano Menghini



**AMB-1 upregulate Tfr1 expression and induce apoptosis**

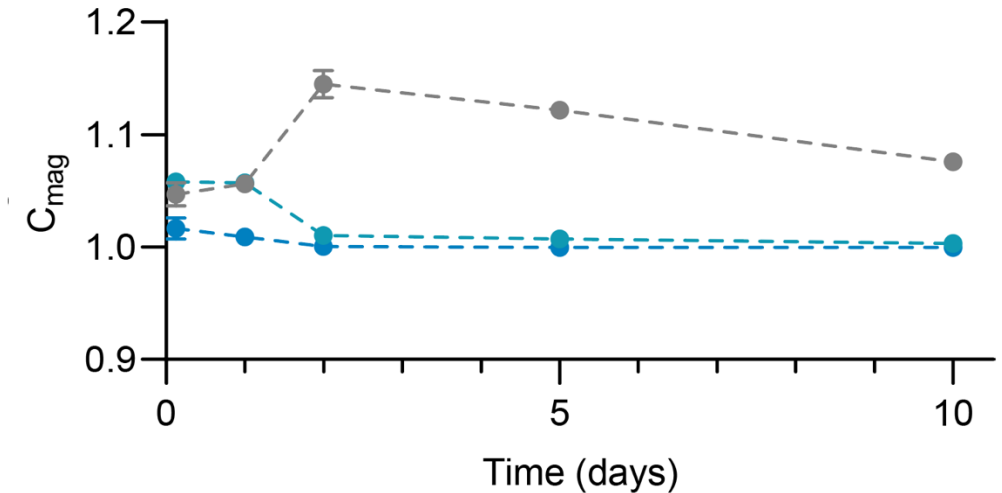
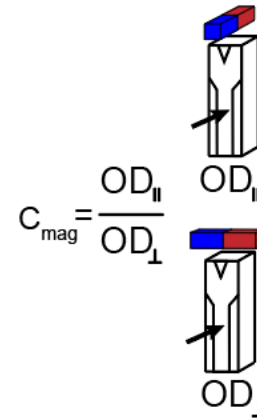
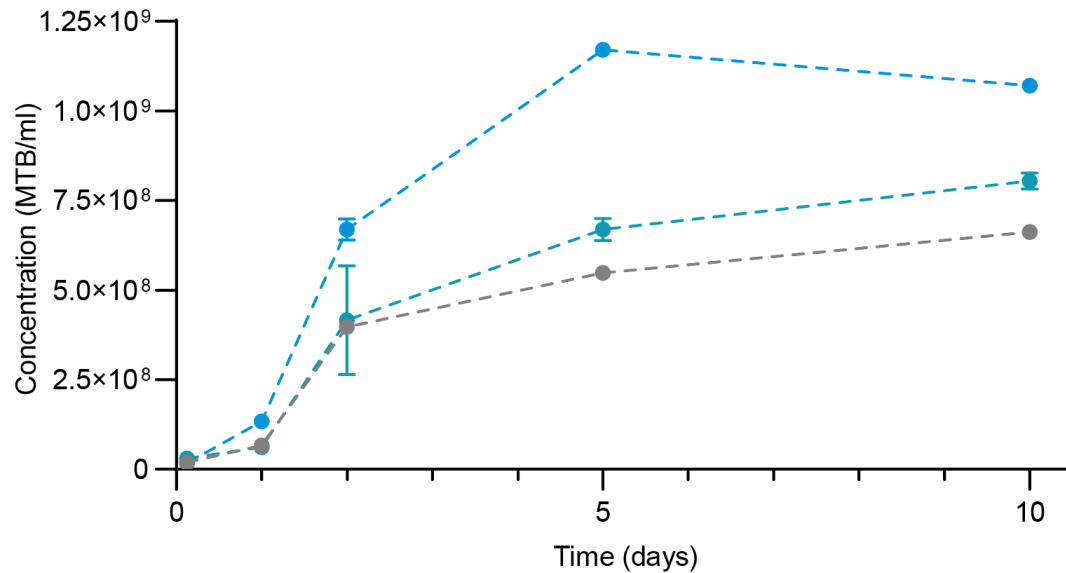
# And they trigger caspase activity and apoptotic markers



# AMB-1 proliferate under physiological conditions



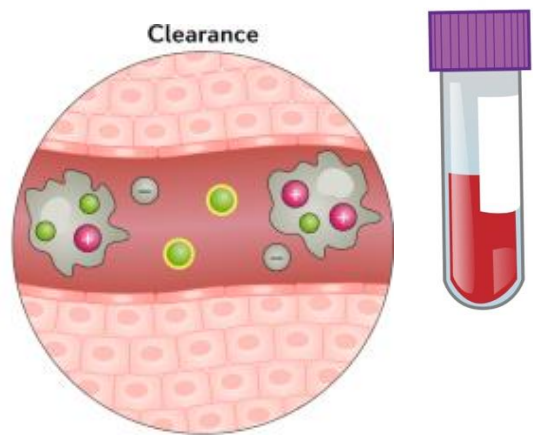
Dr. Tino Gwisai



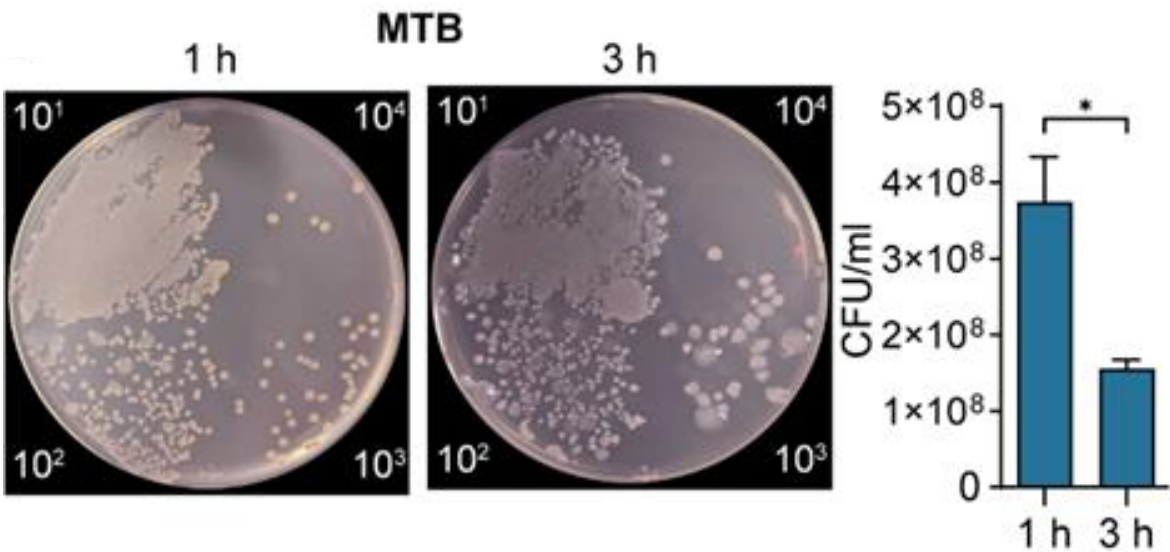
MTB proliferate at 37 °C, which has implications for tumour colonisation



# And remain viable with comparatively low clearance in human whole blood



Magnetic actuation should be applied within 1 hour when viable, magnetic MTB may still be in circulation



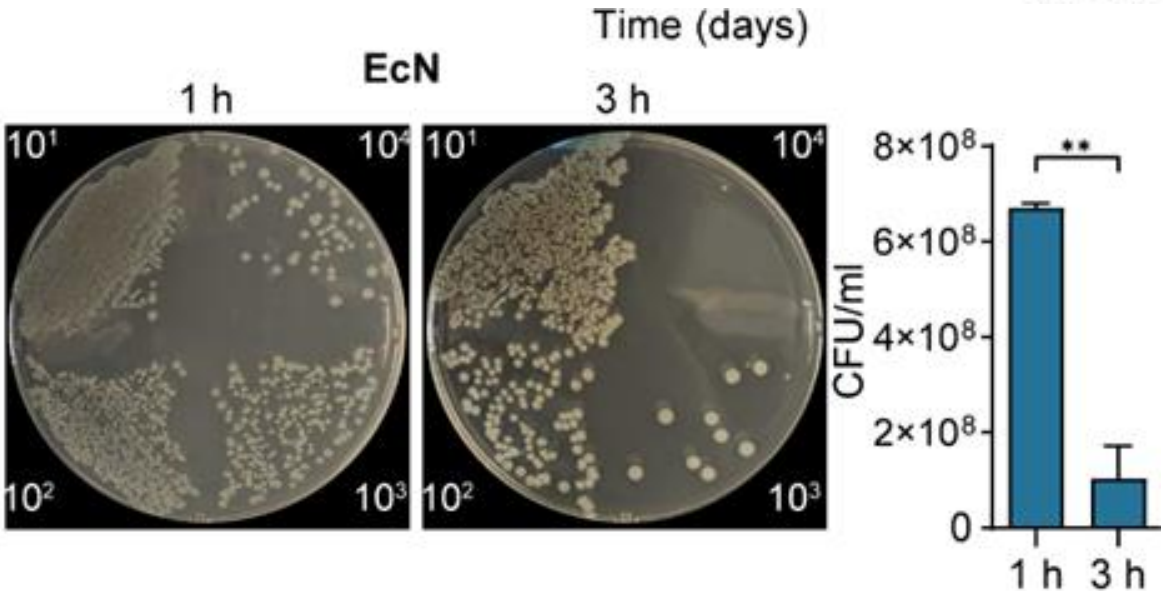
SCIENCE IMMUNOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

## INNATE IMMUNITY

### Deep-sea microbes as tools to refine the rules of innate immune pattern recognition

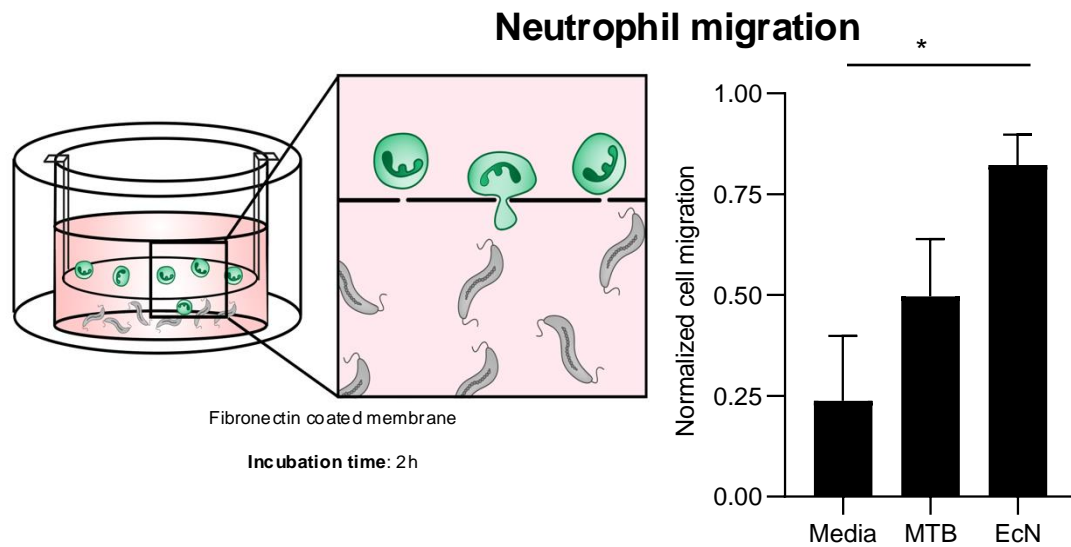
Anna E. Gauthier<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Courtney E. Chandler<sup>4</sup>, Valentina Poli<sup>5</sup>, Francesca M. Gardner<sup>4</sup>, Aranteiti Tekiau<sup>6</sup>, Richard Smith<sup>4</sup>, Kevin S. Bonham<sup>7</sup>, Erik E. Cordes<sup>8</sup>, Timothy M. Shank<sup>9</sup>, Ivan Zanoni<sup>5</sup>, David R. Goodlett<sup>4,10</sup>, Steven J. Biller<sup>7</sup>, Robert K. Ernst<sup>4</sup>, Randi D. Rotjan<sup>3\*</sup>, Jonathan C. Kagan<sup>1\*</sup>

“[...]LPS receptors were unable to detect 80% of deep-sea bacteria examined [...]”

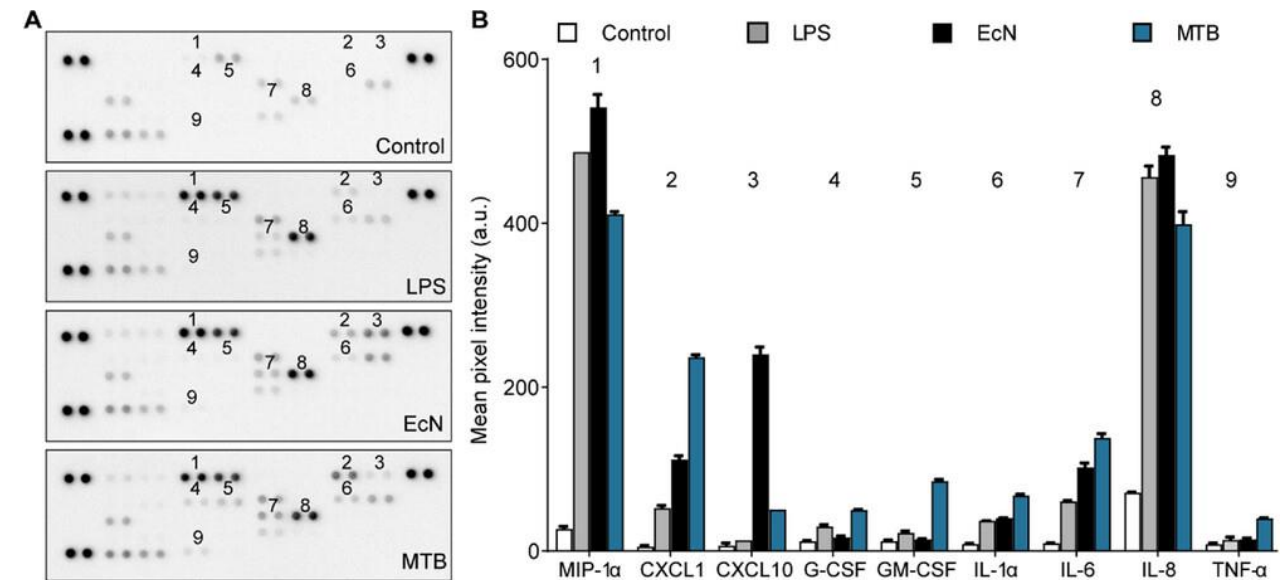




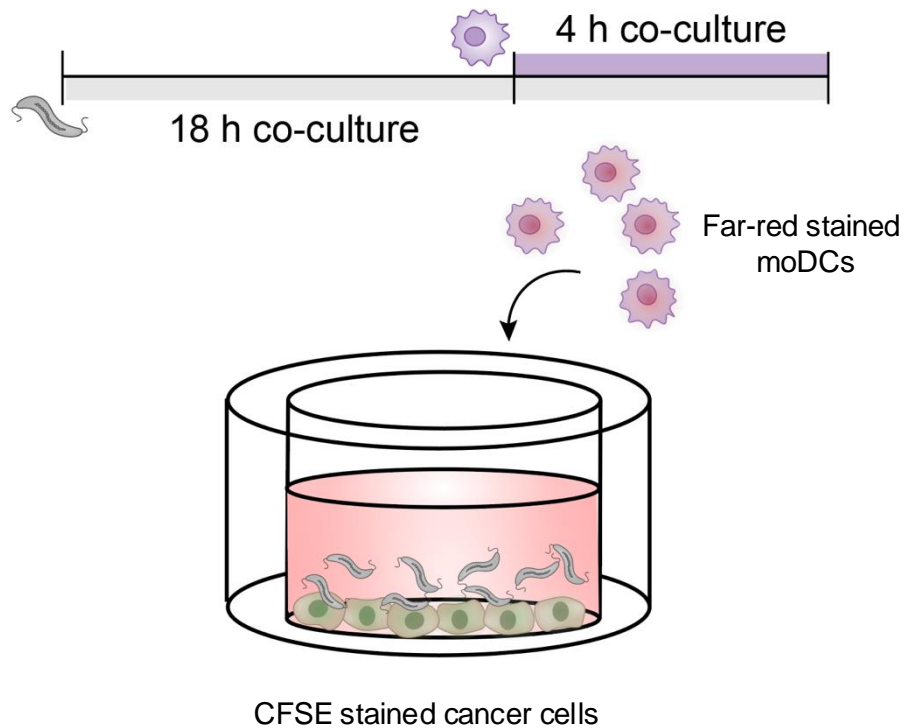
# AMB-1 increases expression of proinflammatory cytokines



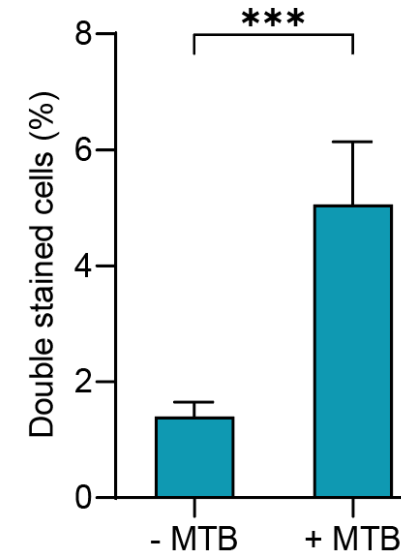
## Macrophage cytokine production



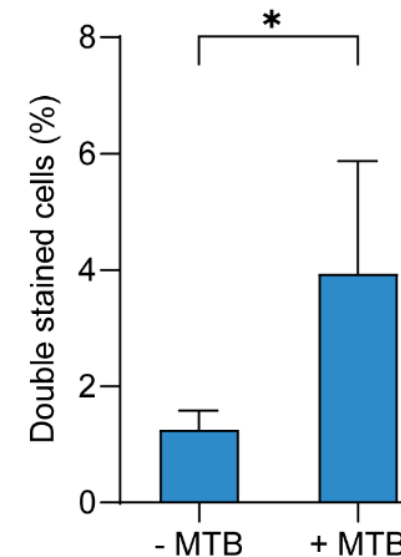
# AMB-1 induce moDC maturation and increase the uptake of cancer cell material



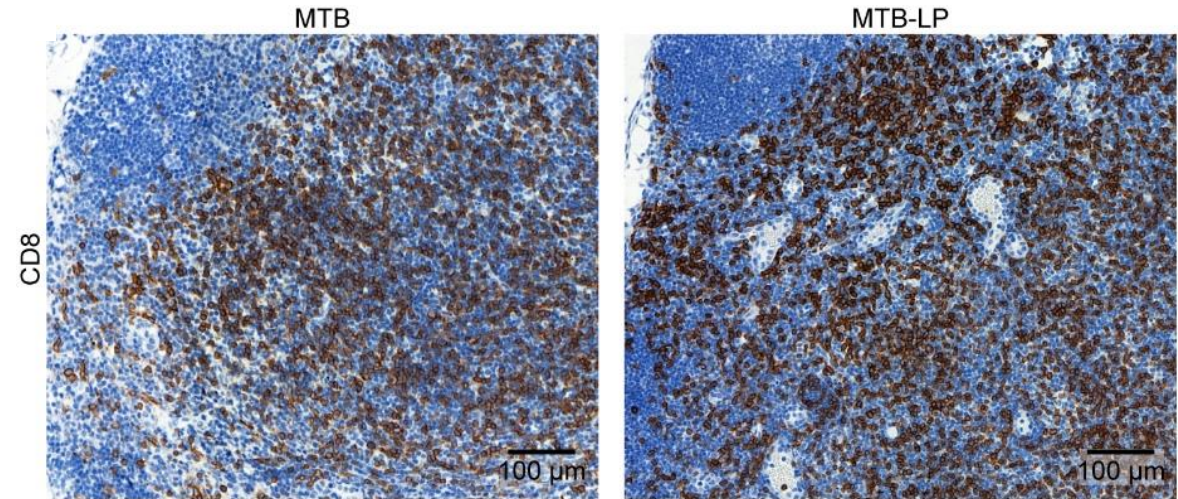
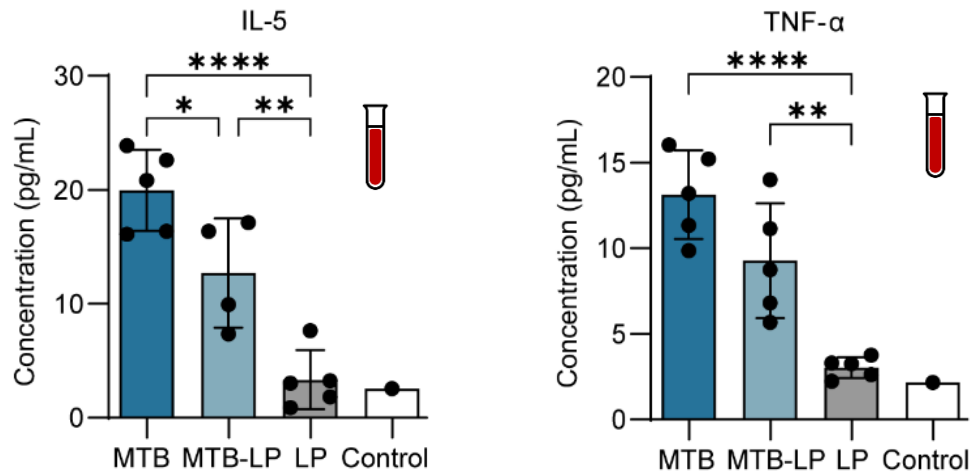
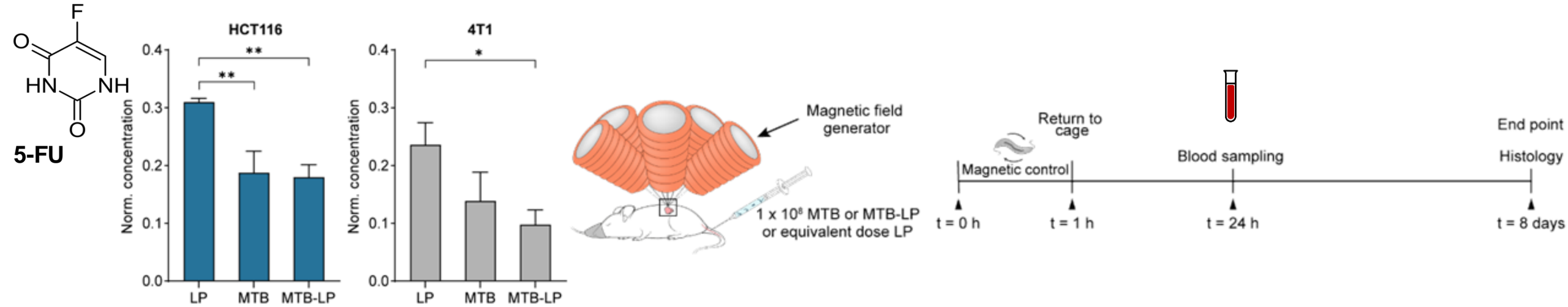
Far red & CFSE  
positive cells



Far red & CD83  
positive cells



# Bacterial microrobots: AMB-1 with cargo trigger desired immune response



Increased serum level cytokines with positive consequences regarding differentiation and recruitment of T helper cells

CD8+ cells and CD4+ cells infiltration into tumors

# Can we make synthetic microrobots similar to the desired properties of bacteria?



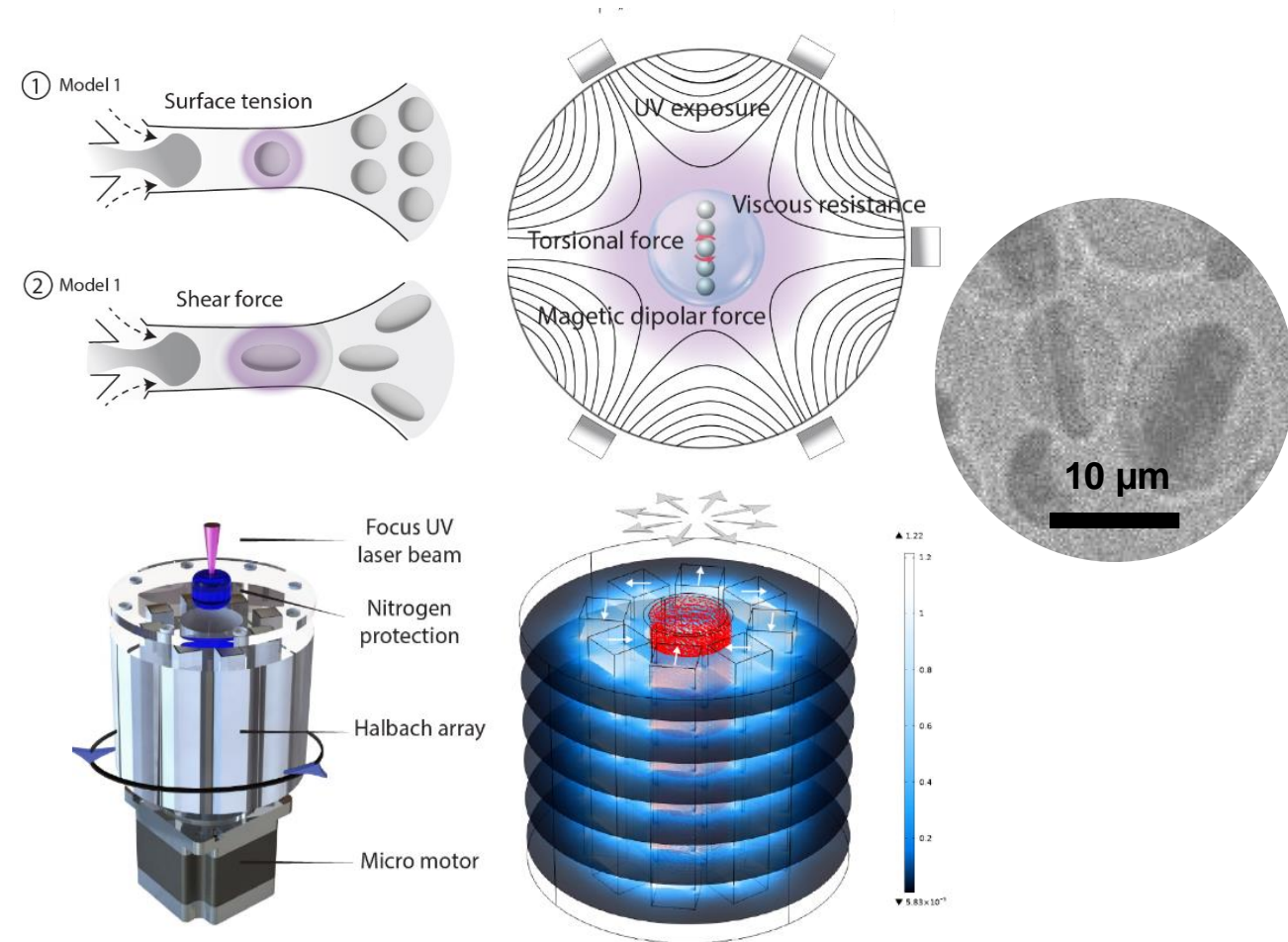
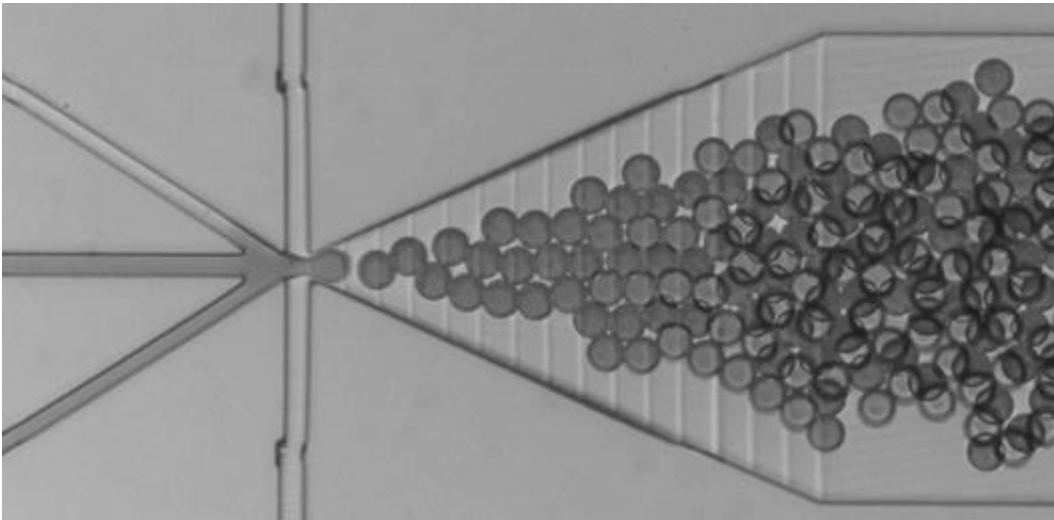
Yimo Yan

## Droplet-based microfluidics for synthesis of microrobots inspired by magnetotactic bacteria

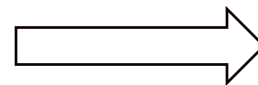
**Hydrogel:** Poly(ethylene glycol) diacrylate (PEGDA)

**Photo imitator:** Lap

**Magnetic particle:** Magnetite MNPs, 10nm



**Magnetic hydrogel droplet generation**

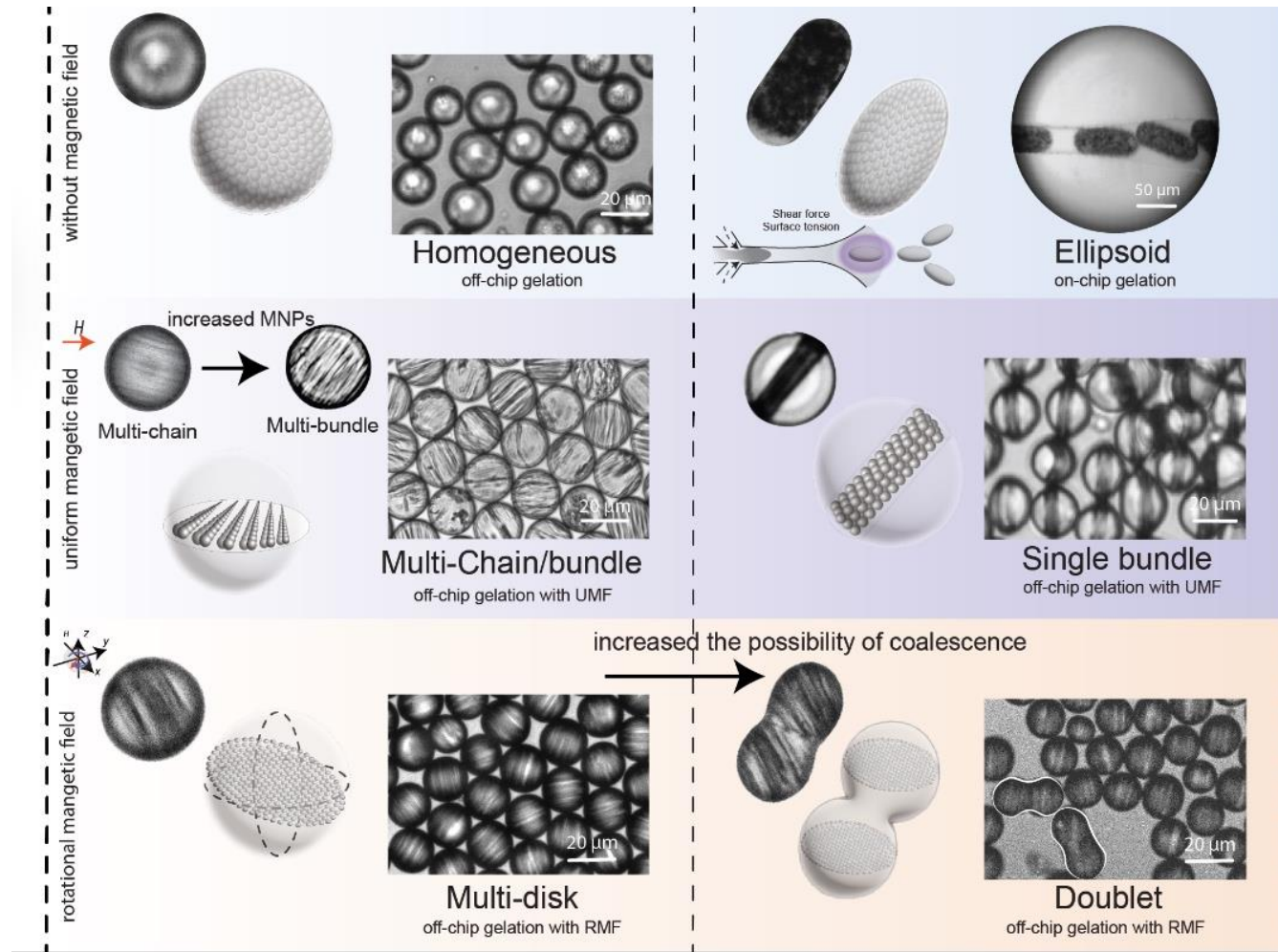


**Photopolymerization under magnetic field**

in collaboration with Prof. Andrew deMello



# Encoding magnetic responsiveness



Distinct  
supradomains

Distinct  
interactions

Multi-chain microrobot

Multi-disk microrobot

22%

23%

26%

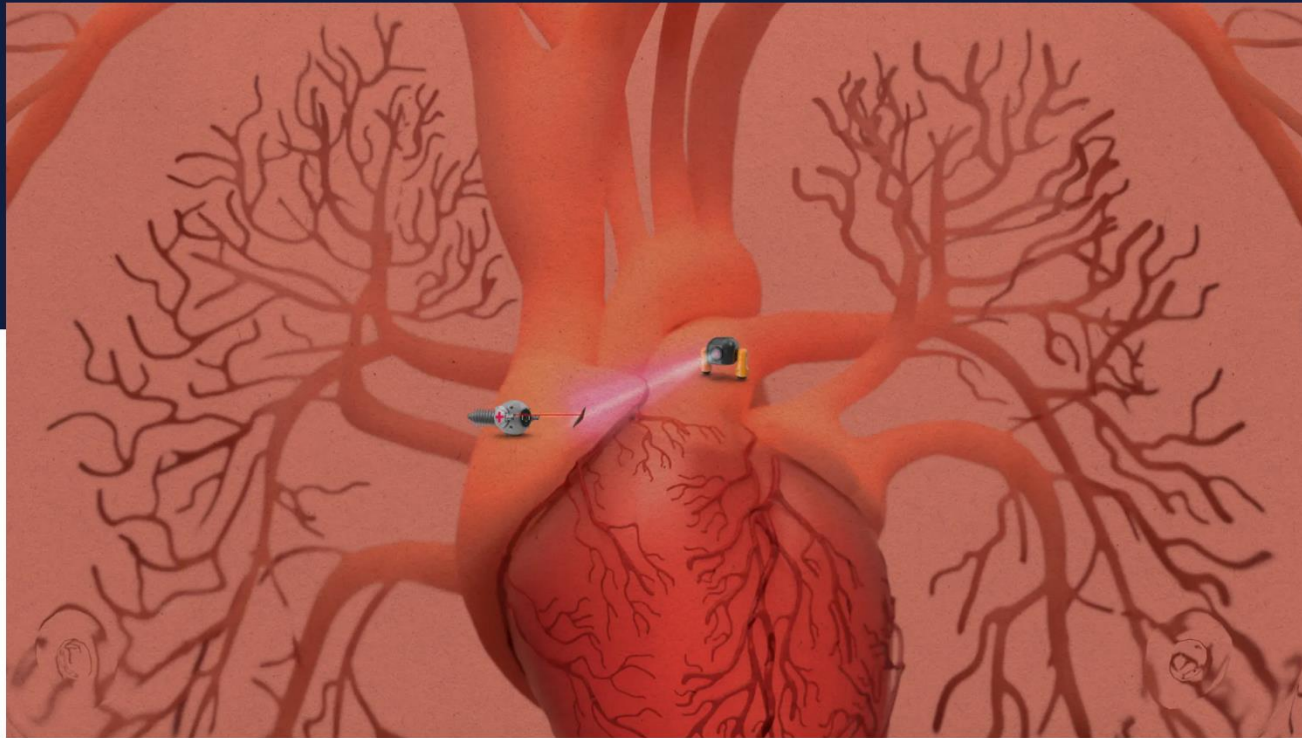


# Medical microrobots that can travel inside your body are (still) on their way

Microrobots released into the body could bust up clots, deliver cancer drugs, and even guide listless sperm to their target.

By Cassandra Willyard

December 8, 2023



## Microrobots are helpful tools

- To study mechanical cues at the cellular scale
- To locally report protease for diagnostics
- To improve efficacy of drug delivery

Vast biomedical application space to explore



# THANKS to my team, collaborators and funding agencies



## Team

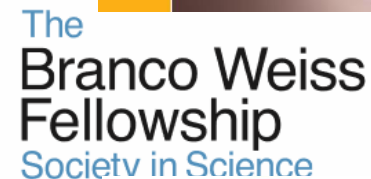
- Dr. Claire Schirmer
- Dr. Michael Christiansen
- Dr. Cameron Forbrigger
- Dr. Johannes Bücheler
- Yimo Yan, PhD student
- Pascal Poc, PhD student
- Ines Oberhuber, PhD student
- Xiang Wang, PhD student
- Fan Li, PhD student
- Elena Totter, PhD student
- Tim Grossrieder, PhD student
- Emilie Einsiedel, PhD student
- All MML semester students

## Alumni

- Dr. Nima Mirkhani  
(Postdoc, Oxford University)
- Dr. Tinotenda Gwisai  
(Postdoc at Novartis)
- Dr. Stefano Menghini  
(CEO of biomed startup)

## Collaborators

- Prof. Nicola Aceto, ETHZ
- Prof. Andrew Di Mello, ETHZ
- Prof. Volkmar Falk, Charité Berlin
- Dr. Nikola Cesavoric, ETHZ
- Prof. Tal Danino, Columbia University



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SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS  
FONDO NAZIONALE SVIZZERO  
SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION



A fluorescence micrograph showing a circular structure with a bright green ring and a dark center. The green ring has a textured, granular appearance. The background is black.

THANK YOU

 MEDICAL  
MICROSYSTEMS

Questions?