CIOMS webinar on *Reciprocal Effects of Drugs and the Microbiome*

10 June 2026
14:00 - 15:30 CEST*

*Corresponds to 05:00 - 06:30 PDT, and 08:00 - 09:30 EDT

Biographical notes



Lembit Rägo
Secretary-General,
CIOMS, Switzerland

Lembit Rägo, MD, PhD, was a Professor of Clinical Pharmacology (Tartu University, Estonia) and founder and first Director General of the Estonian Drug Regulatory Authority, State Agency of Medicines. In December 1999, he joined the World Health Organization (WHO) Headquarters, Geneva, as Coordinator of Quality Assurance and Safety: Medicines (QSM) team which included activities related to International Nonproprietary Names (INNs), Quality Assurance, Pharmacovigilance, Regulatory Support and Fighting Falsified Medicines. In 2001, Dr Rägo laid the foundations for the WHO Prequalification of Medicines Programme, which he continued to develop until he left WHO. From September 2013, Dr Rägo served as the Head/Director of WHO's Regulation of Medicines and Other Health Technologies unit which for the first time united all regulatory activities related to medicines, vaccines, biologicals and medical devices into one single entity. Since 2000, he has served as observer to ICH, first representing WHO and now CIOMS.

He is well known to many senior regulators in all parts of the world, frequent speaker in different international fora and has numerous publications including on several aspects of regulatory affairs.

He was appointed Secretary-General of CIOMS in April 2016.



Elin Org
Professor of Microbiomics; Head of the Estonian Genome Centre, Vice Director of University of Tartu Institute of Genomics,
University of Tartu, Estonia

Elin Org is Professor of microbiomics at the Institute of Genomics, University of Tartu, Estonia. She earned her PhD in Molecular Biomedicine from the University of Tartu and completed postdoctoral research at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in the laboratory of Professor Aldons J. Lusis from 2011 to 2015. In 2013, she received a Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowship. After returning to Estonia in 2015, she established her research group at the Institute of Genomics with support from an EMBO Installation Grant and starting grants from the Estonian Research Council. Her group

investigates the role of the human microbiome in health and disease, including its contribution to disease development, drug interactions, and treatment responses. She also established the Estonian Microbiome Cohort (EstMB), a nationwide initiative comprising stool and oral samples from around 3,000 Estonian Biobank participants, linked with genetic, clinical, lifestyle, and electronic health registry data. Her work was recognized with the Estonian National Science Prize in 2025.



Lisa Maier
Professor for Microbiome-Host Interactions, *University of Tübingen, Germany*

Lisa Maier is a biochemist and infection biologist by training. She received her PhD from the Institute of Microbiology at ETH Zurich in 2014. During her postdoctoral work at EMBL Heidelberg, she developed high-throughput methods for the systematic study of drug–microbiome interactions — an area she has continued to advance throughout her independent career.

Since 2019, Lisa has led her research group at the University Hospital of Tübingen, where she was appointed Full Professor in 2022. Her lab investigates how drugs can be harnessed to specifically modulate the human gut microbiome, and how they cause collateral damage to microbial communities or drive the emergence of antibiotic resistance. She also coordinates a Germany-wide research programme aimed at illuminating gene function in human gut bacteria.

Her work has received wide international recognition, including an ERC Starting Grant (2022), the Main Award of the German Society for Hygiene and Microbiology (DGHM, 2025), and the Sir John Kendrew Award (2026). In 2024, she was named among the Cell Press 50 Scientists that Inspire — an international selection of rising stars in the life sciences.



Michael Zimmermann
Group Leader, European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), Heidelberg, Germany

Michael Zimmermann is a Group Leader at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg, a Group Leader in the Molecular Medicine Partnership Unit, and Head of EMBL's Metabolomics Core Facility. His research investigates metabolic microbiome-host interactions, focusing on how microbes recognize, transform, and exchange metabolites that influence host physiology, health, and responses to drugs. Zimmermann earned a Bachelor's degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of Basel and a Master's degree in Biotechnology from the École Supérieure de Biotechnologie de Strasbourg. He completed his PhD at ETH Zurich in metabolomics and systems biology and then pursued postdoctoral training at Yale University. Since joining EMBL in 2019, his group has combined high-throughput mass spectrometry, bacterial genetics, metabolomics, and gnotobiotic mouse models to map metabolic interactions within microbial communities and between microbiomes and their hosts. His work has been recognized with the Daimler Benz Scholarship, the Agilent's Steve Berger Award, the FEBS Anniversary Prize, and an ERC Starting Grant.



Oliver Aasmets
***Research Fellow**, University of Tartu, Estonia*

Oliver Aasmets, PhD, is a research fellow of statistical metagenomics at the Institute of Genomics, University of Tartu, with over a decade of academic and professional experience in mathematical statistics and molecular biomedicine. A statistician by training, Oliver received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Mathematical Statistics from the University of Tartu, where he also earned his PhD in Molecular Biomedicine.
Oliver brings deep expertise in analyzing extensive electronic health records data to uncover complex drug-microbiome interactions in real-world settings. His landmark research pioneered the discovery of "hidden confounders" in microbiome studies, systematically demonstrating how both antibiotics and human-targeted medications—including antidepressants, benzodiazepines, and beta-blockers—leave multi-year, cumulative "additive" signatures on the gut ecosystem long after treatment ends. He has contributed to leading scientific journals, including Nature Communications, Cell, and Microbiome.

Currently, Oliver serves as a Research Fellow at the University of Tartu's Institute of Genomics. In this role, Oliver leads the advancement of statistical methodology and analysis of real-world data, applying predictive multi-omics to deliver transformative solutions for personalized medicine.



Kertu Liis Krigul
***Research Fellow**,*
University of Tartu, Estonia

Kertu Liis Krigul, PhD, is a Research Fellow of Microbial communities at the Institute of Genomics, University of Tartu, where her work focuses on the relationship between the gut microbiome, medication use, and human health. She completed her doctoral degree in Gene Technology at the University of Tartu in 2024 with a dissertation examining how the gut microbiome influences and reflects disease processes, particularly in relation to long-term antibiotic exposure. Her research combines microbiome science, population-based biobanks, and electronic health record data to better understand host–microbe interactions and their implications for precision medicine.

Dr. Krigul has contributed to several high-impact studies using the Estonian Microbiome Cohort within the Estonian Biobank and has co-authored publications in international peer-reviewed journals, including Nature Communications and Gut Microbes. In addition to her scientific work, she is an active science communicator and educator, contributing to public engagement initiatives and personalised medicine outreach projects in Estonia. She is also a recently elected member of the Estonian Young Academy of Sciences.