



From Risk Factors to Modification

# Persistent SOMatic Symptoms aCROSS Diseases

SOMACROSS Research Unit (RU 5211)

Closing symposium of the 1<sup>st</sup> funding phase

25 March 2026

Dear colleagues,

We cordially invite you to the closing symposium marking the completion of the first funding phase of the DFG-funded Research Unit RU 5211 SOMACROSS:

### Persistent SOMatic Symptoms aCROSS Diseases

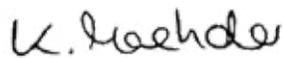
Over the past four and a half years, the SOMACROSS Research Unit has pursued a comprehensive, interdisciplinary research programme on persistent somatic symptoms across a wide range of medical conditions and clinical disciplines. The overarching aim has been to generate robust evidence on disease-specific and transdiagnostic risk factors for symptom persistence and to explore initial, theoretically grounded approaches for their modification.

The closing symposium will provide a forum to present the central findings of this first funding phase, to reflect critically on their implications for research and clinical practice, and to discuss perspectives for future collaborative work in this field. We look forward to an in-depth scientific exchange on how the insights gained may inform the next steps in advancing research on persistent somatic symptoms.

Yours sincerely



Prof. Dr. med. Dipl.-Psych.  
Bernd Löwe  
Spokesperson of  
RU 5211 SOMACROSS



Dr. rer. biol. hum.  
Kerstin Maehder  
Scientific coordinator of  
RU 5211 SOMACROSS

## Program

- 14.00 **Welcome** | Prof. Dr. Bernd Löwe
- 
- 14.10 **Transdiagnostic Risk Factors and Therapeutic Approaches in Persistent Somatic Symptoms: Introducing the SOMACROSS Research Unit (RU 5211)**  
Prof. Dr. Bernd Löwe
- 
- 14.30 **Fatigue in Primary Biliary Cholangitis and Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis: Factors Associated with Severity and Persistence as Future Therapeutic Targets (SOMA.LIV)**  
Prof. Dr. Christoph Schramm, Laura Buck
- 
- 14.50 **Persistence of Gastrointestinal Symptoms in Irritable Bowel Syndrome and Ulcerative Colitis: From Risk Factors to Modification (SOMA.GUT-RCT)**  
Dr. Kerstin Maehder, Luisa Peters, Dr. Anna Matysiak
- 
- 15.10 **Targeting Mechanisms of Symptom Persistence in Long COVID: Results of the SOMA.COVID-RCT**  
Dr. Dr. Petra Engelmann, Clara Stein, Max Reinke
- 
- 15.30 **Understanding Persistent Symptoms in Chronic Kidney Disease: Insights from SOMA.CK**  
Prof. Dr. Meike Shedden Mora, Dr. Leonie Dreher
- 
- 15.50 **Coffee break**
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- 16.20 **Biological and Psychosocial Factors associated with Pruritus Persistence: Results of the Prospective Observational SOMA.PRU Project**  
PD Dr. Angelika Weigel, Dr. Stefan Kahnert
- 
- 16.50 **Modifiable Factors for Somatic Symptom Persistence in Patients with Somatic Symptom Disorder: Key Findings of the SOMA.SSD Project**  
Prof. Dr. Yvonne Nestoriuc, Kristina Blankenburg, Henrike Wittenbecher
- 
- 17.10 **Social Inequalities in Aggravating Factors of Persistent Somatic Symptoms: Key Findings of the SOMA.SOC Project**  
Prof. Dr. Olaf von dem Knesebeck, Dr. Anna Makowski
- 
- 17.30 **SOMA.STATS: A Statistical Perspective on Persistent Somatic Symptoms**  
Prof. Dr. Antonia Zapf, Philipp Weber
- 
- 17.50 **Conclusions and Outlook** | Prof. Dr. Bernd Löwe
- 
- 18.00 **End of program**

## Speaker

### Kristina Blankenburg

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, UKE

### Laura Buck

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, UKE

### Dr. Leonie Dreher

III. Department of Medicine, UKE

### Dr. Dr. Petra Engelmann

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, UKE

### Dr. Stefan Kahnert

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, University Hospital Münster

### Prof. Dr. Bernd Löwe

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, UKE

### Dr. Kerstin Maehder

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, UKE

### Dr. Anna Makowski

Institute of Medical Sociology, UKE

### Dr. Anna Matysiak

I. Department of Medicine, UKE

### Prof. Dr. Yvonne Nestoriuc

Department of Clinical Psychology, Helmut-Schmidt-University/University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg

### Luisa Peters

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, UKE

## Speaker

### Max Reinke

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and  
Psychotherapy, UKE

### Prof. Dr. Christoph Schramm

I. Department of Medicine, UKE & Martin Zeitz Center  
for Rare Diseases, UKE

### Prof. Dr. Meike Shedden Mora

Institute for Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy,  
Medical School Hamburg

### Clara Stein

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and  
Psychotherapy, UKE

### Prof. Dr. Olaf von dem Knesebeck

Institute of Medical Sociology, UKE

### Philipp Weber

Institute of Medical Biometry and Epidemiology,  
UKE

### PD Dr. Angelika Weigel

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and  
Psychotherapy, UKE

### Henrike Wittenbecher

Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and  
Psychotherapy, UKE

### Prof. Dr. Antonia Zapf

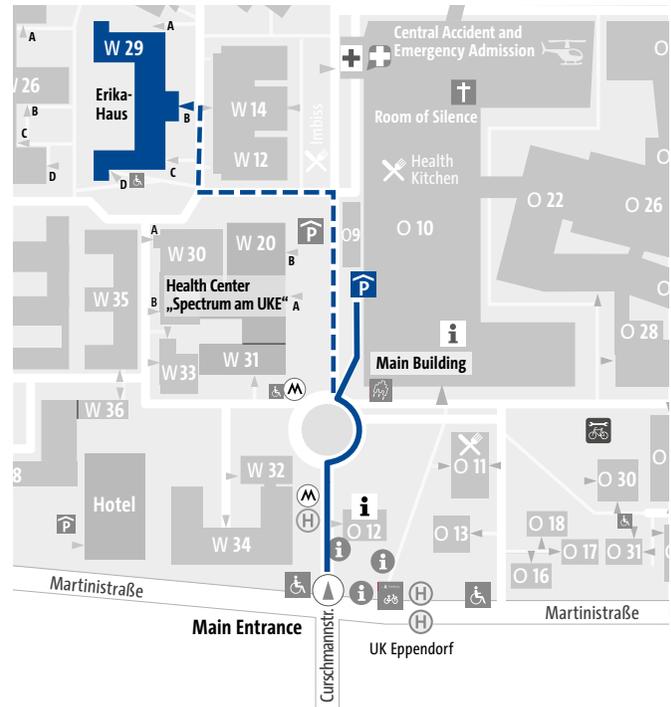
Institute of Medical Biometry and Epidemiology,  
UKE

SOMACROSS Research Unit (RU 5211)

## Closing symposium of the 1<sup>st</sup> funding phase

Wednesday, 25 March 2026 | 14:00 - 18:00

UKE, Erika-Haus, Building W29 Entrance B



CME credits have been applied for.

Attendance at the symposium is free of charge.

We kindly ask you to register by 11.03.2026 via email  
to Angelika Strauß: [an.strauss@uke.de](mailto:an.strauss@uke.de).

We thank the German Research Foundation (DFG) for  
funding the SOMACROSS Research Unit (RU 5211)!

**DFG** Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft