



## The Vienna Bone and Growth Center – care and research in the field of rare diseases

Gabriele Haeusler · Rudolf Ganger · Roland Kocijan · Nadja Fratzi-Zelman

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Dear colleagues,

It is our pleasure to present this special issue of the *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift* (WMW) on the occasion of the designation of our center of expertise for rare disorders of bone, mineralization, and growth—the Vienna Bone and Growth Center (VBGC)—by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care, and Consumer Protection in April 2020. In a unique collaboration of four spe-

cialized centers in Vienna, a multidisciplinary team within the VBGC cares for patients with these rare disorders from birth to adulthood.

Care for rare disorders has become an important topic within the European Union. European reference networks (ERNs) have been set up with the goal of offering patient care at the highest level in member states. At the same time, ERNs facilitate international expert rounds on individual patients and offer new possibilities in teaching as well as clinical and basic research. Last but not least, ERNs offer support of patient advocacy groups.

The VBGC is structured paninstitutionally, bringing together multidisciplinary teams consisting of clinicians (pediatric and adult endocrinologists, osteologists, clinical geneticists, pediatric and adult orthopedic surgeons, radiologists), basic scientists, and functional therapeutic teams specialized in bone and growth disorders. Detailed information on our teams can also be found on our website [www.vbgc.at](http://www.vbgc.at).

The articles presented in this issue of the WMW provide a selection from the broad spectrum of disorders treated at the VBGC. In the present issue, we give a short overview on the clinical work and the research activities of the Vienna Bone and Growth Center for the interested reader.

We hope that you enjoy these articles.

The coordinators of the Vienna Bone and Growth Center

**Conflict of interest** G. Haeusler, R. Ganger, R. Kocijan, and N. Fratzi-Zelman declare that they have no competing interests.

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G. Haeusler (✉)  
 Department of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine,  
 Comprehensive Center for Pediatrics, Medical University of  
 Vienna, Waehringer Guertel 18–20, 1090 Vienna, Austria  
[gabriele.haeusler@meduniwien.ac.at](mailto:gabriele.haeusler@meduniwien.ac.at)

R. Ganger  
 Department of Pediatric Orthopaedics, Orthopaedic  
 Hospital Speising, Speisinger Straße 109, 1130 Vienna,  
 Austria

R. Kocijan  
 1st Medical Department at Hanusch Hospital, Hanusch  
 Hospital of the OEGK, Heinrich-Collin-Str. 30, 1140 Vienna,  
 Austria

R. Kocijan · N. Fratzi-Zelman  
 1st Medical Department Hanusch Hospital, Ludwig  
 Boltzmann Institute of Osteology at the Hanusch Hospital  
 of OEGK and AUVA Trauma, Centre Meidling,  
 Heinrich-Collin-Str. 30, 1140 Vienna, Austria

G. Haeusler · R. Ganger · R. Kocijan · N. Fratzi-Zelman  
 Vienna Bone and Growth Center, Vienna, Austria