



Dr. Maria Vittoria Mazzuoli is a postdoctoral fellow in the "Synthetic and system biology" laboratory of Prof. Jan-Willem Veening at the University of Lausanne. Her research focuses on the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*, one of the major causes of infectious diseases worldwide. She aims to highlight the genetic requirements and unexplored mechanisms used by this bacterium to infect and survive in the host. Understanding these mechanisms will bring useful knowledge to the treatment of this pathogen, which has been challenged in the past years by the spread of strains resistant to

various classes of antibiotics.

Maria Vittoria was born in a small town in the very heart of Italy. Her higher education path in Genetics and Molecular Biology started in Rome, and then moved between universities in Rome and Paris. During university studies, she became extremely intrigued by the bacterial world. These very small (-micro!) living organisms with fascinating abilities have a major impact on our everyday life. To learn more about bacteria, Maria Vittoria went to the Pasteur Institute in Paris, where she conducted her master's research and earned her PhD there, as well. Surrounded by some of the most renowned scientist in the microbial world, she became more and more intrigued by this science. Maria Vittoria first investigated the mechanisms of plasmid replication in *Vibrio cholerae*, and later during her PhD, the regulation of virulence mechanisms in the opportunistic pathogen *Streptococcus agalactiae*.

Intrigued by gram-positive pathogens and their major health impact in humans, she joined the laboratory of Jan-Willem Veening at UNIL in Lausanne and the NCCR AntiResist consortium, to study the biology of *Staphylococcus aureus*.

An interview with Maria Vittoria Mazzuoli:

The biggest challenge facing women scientists today is...

... still being a minority in higher positions (Principal Investigator, Professor, etc.).

Having to face the fear of being judged for one's personal and family life choices when seeking a position or aspiring for higher positions.

A typical day for me working on the AntiResist project looks like...

...First thing I do when I arrive in the lab, is check how my bacteria are doing and if they have grown well during the night. Then, my day can start! It could be either doing experiments (from microscopy, biochemistry to genetics and molecular biology) in the lab or analysing new data. Training students is also a big part of my day. I also enjoy attending seminars or courses as much as possible.



I chose a scientific career because...

...doing science is the most stimulating, challenging and enriching job. I feel incredibly privileged to be in a profession where there is a continuous sharing of knowledge and one is able to learn and teach something new every day.

If I were not a scientist, I would be...

...an everlasting traveller! My main hobby is to travel around the world in a completely unplanned and adventurous way whenever I can.

What I like most about being part of the NCCR AntiResist project...

...having the opportunity to interact and collaborate with a large number of extraordinary scientists who have expertise in very different fields that can complement each other.

What I am most proud of...

...having always followed my instincts and desires when I had to decide each training and career step.