

Anja Helmer is a third year PhD student in the Translational Cardiac Surgery Laboratory in the Department of Cardiac Surgery at Bern University Hospital. She holds a Master's degree in Molecular Life Sciences from the University of Bern, where she first developed an interest in transplantation immunology and graft preservation, specifically focusing on improving immunosuppressive drug delivery systems in vascularized composite allotransplantation. Her current research is aimed at identifying sex-specific transcriptomic changes that alter cardiac graft quality in heart transplantation with donation after circulatory death (DCD) and to evaluate their therapeutic potential. She is committed to translational research that bridges lab discoveries with patient care. With her research, Anja's overall research goals are to improve DCD transplantation and *ex-situ* perfusion protocols, thereby contributing to increased cardiac graft availability and improving outcomes for patients with advanced heart failure.