

Press release

Innunity Therapeutics receives CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick to tackle innate-immune-driven chronic inflammation at its source

St.Gallen/Zurich/Lausanne, October 1, 2026 — The UZH spin-off Innunity Therapeutics has obtained CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick to advance a new treatment approach for chronic inflammatory diseases driven by the innate immune system. By targeting the initiating step of the inflammatory cascade, the biotech startup aims to help patients who are poorly served by today's therapies.

Millions of patients live with chronic inflammatory diseases, from inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and multiple sclerosis (MS) to rarer conditions like Behçet's disease. Behçet's strikes young adults with recurrent painful ulcers, eye inflammation that can cause blindness, and damage to blood vessels and the nervous system. Many of these diseases are set in motion by the innate immune system, the body's first line of defense. Today's therapies act on broad downstream mechanisms and leave this initial trigger untouched. As a result, many patients respond poorly, lose their response over time, or face serious side effects.

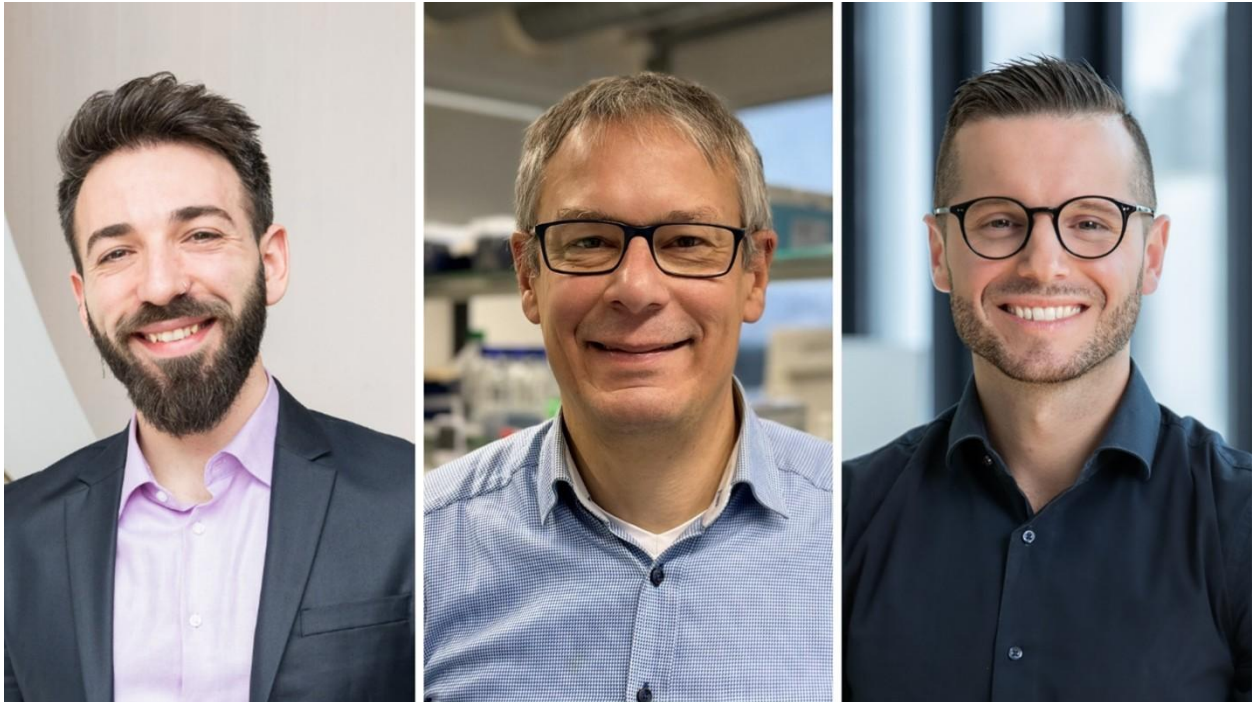
[Innunity Therapeutics](#) is developing INNU-1, an oral drug designed to calm an overactive immune response. The company will first test it in mucocutaneous Behçet's disease, a rare inflammatory disease that affects the skin and mouth. The disease allows doctors to see relatively quickly whether a treatment is working. If successful, Innunity plans to expand the drug's use to more common diseases, including inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and multiple sclerosis (MS).

Innunity's long term goal: A clinical proof of concept in Behçet's disease would open the door to a broad pipeline, since the same pathway is involved in several major inflammatory diseases. IBD and MS alone affect nearly 10 million people worldwide, many of whom still lack an effective long-term treatment.

The CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick will help Innunity design new compounds by combining computational methods with validated lab assays, bringing it closer to a development candidate.

Innunity Therapeutics was co-founded by CEO Dr. Antonios Katsoulas, Prof. Dr. Thorsten Buch, who serves as mentor, and COO Dr. Barna Gal. The team combines expertise in immunology, drug development, and the translation of scientific discoveries into new therapeutic approaches.

"Venture Kick pushed us to translate complex immunology into a clear business case in just a few minutes. The jury's honest and direct feedback made us a stronger company. We are grateful to be part of Venture Kick and their support comes at exactly the right moment for Innunity," highlights Antonios Katsoulas.



Innunity Therapeutics Co-Founders: CEO Dr. Antonios Katsoulas, Mentor Prof. Dr. Thorsten Buch, and COO Dr. Barna Gal

[Innunity Therapeutics' profile on Venture Kick](#)

About Venture Kick

The Venture Kick philanthropic initiative provides more than 1 million in seed funding to Swiss startups and offers a well-structured entrepreneurial path toward building a winning business. Startups pitch to Venture Kick juries in three stages to obtain CHF 150,000, gain direct feedback, and access a network of 250 international investors. Winners of Venture Kick are eligible for an InnoBooster grant of CHF 150,000 and an additional CHF 850,000 investment from the Kickfund.

Since its launch in 2007, Venture Kick has supported 1,286 Swiss startup projects with CHF 103 million from private donors. Thanks to financial support, coaching, and networking with investors, this initiative has led to the emergence of 1,000+ thriving startup companies and the creation of 16,100+ jobs. Venture Kick alumni companies have attracted investments of CHF 10.2 billion and represent 66 companies ranked in the Top100 Swiss Startups in 2025 (<https://www.top100startups.swiss>).

Venture Kick is an initiative by the Kick Foundation, supported by a private consortium and operated by Venturelab. The supporting foundations and private philanthropic partners include Gebert Rüt Stiftung, Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Fondation ALCEA, Hauser-Stiftung, André Hoffmann, Hansjörg Wyss, Martin Haefner, Fondation ProTechno, ESA BIC Switzerland, Swisscom, Lichtsteiner Foundation, and Deep Tech Nation Switzerland Foundation.

Find more information on venturekick.ch, with [all startup projects supported by Venture Kick](#), and follow the success stories of our startups on [LinkedIn](#).

Management contacts

Beat Schillig, Co-Managing Director, +41 79 358 04 19 (DE/EN)

Jordi Montserrat, Co-Managing Director, +41 78 708 18 04 (FR/EN)

Media contacts

Rita Longobardi, +41 58 767 00 20 rita.longobardi@venturelab.swiss (EN/IT/DE)