

### **My summer at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston**

The Paul Janssen Fellowship allowed me to spend a summer at the Harvard School of Public Health. At this prestigious and competitive university, I acquired a fundamental understanding of epidemiology and biostatistics, which both are prerequisites for clinical trials design.

My classes not only covered classic fields such as epidemiology and biostatistics, but also quality improvement and ethics. In the epidemiology classes we covered various study designs, causal and statistical inference, classic controlling for confounders including matching, stratification, restrictions, standardization, randomization, and analysis of effect modification. In biostatistics, the essential concepts such as linear and longitudinal regression and Kaplan-Meier product-limit estimation, Cox proportional hazards models and competing risks analyses were discussed. All concepts were applied on a daily basis to numerous studies in familiar and also less familiar fields, including for example *Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology* or *Social and Behavioral Health*. Furthermore, I attended classes with a focus on Improvement in Quality of Health Care and Ethics, classes for which I had had no clear expectations but which fundamentally changed my understanding of health care.

Apart from daily homework and bi-weekly exams, the class instructors expected students to spend weekends to work on letters or study proposals as final assignments. Those challenging and high expectations resulted in several letters, data analysis plans and even a promising proposal for a randomized controlled trial, all of which will keep me busy for at least several months. It is thanks to the Paul Janssen fellowship, which allowed me to acquire fundamental skills, that I am keen on continuing my education and working on new clinical trials proposals within the SAKK network in the future.