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Biography

I am an assistant professor at the Central Diagnostics Laboratory which is part of the Circulatory Health Program at the University Medical Center Utrecht and University of Utrecht and work with professor dr. Gerard Pasterkamp and professor dr. Folkert W. Asselbergs. My research interest is focused on the genetic and epigenetic causes of carotid and coronary atherosclerosis underlying *ischemic stroke* (IS) and *coronary artery disease* (CAD), and their intermediate traits such as *carotid intima media thickness* (cIMT) and *arterial calcification*. Large-scale genome-wide association studies (GWAS) have identified hundreds of genetic loci robustly associated to these diseases and traits. With my work I ultimately aim to move from GWAS loci to novel therapeutic targets for cardiovascular diseases through extensive *in silico*, and *in vitro* modeling.

As a means to this end, I am currently working on integrating Bayesian fine-mapping methodology, co-localization, causal inference through Mendelian Randomization, expression and methylation quantitative trait loci analyses, GWAS, single-cell RNA sequencing, and plaque characterization based on high-throughput imaging of histological slides and machine learning algorithms. This has resulted in the identification of 28 loci with a substrate in plaques that harbor genes potentially causal to atherosclerosis and amenable to therapy. We are currently pursuing several targets *in vitro*. My vision is that this holistic approach will identify the truly viable targets to feed the drug developmental pipeline to combat the cardiovascular disease epidemic. This approach is entirely human-centered and does not involve new *in vivo* experiments.

I actively contributed to the International Stroke Genetics Consortium. In addition, I made some contributions to international consortia, including GENIUS-CHD, GIANT, GLGC, GoDMC, and various other international consortia. Since 2011 I am (or was) a member of the European Atherosclerosis Society, European Society of Human Genetics, American Society of Human Genetics, the Netherlands Vereniging voor Humane Genetica, and the European Society of Cardiology.

I support and promote principles of **Open Science** by letting values of quality and integrity, science for the benefit of all, fairness, equity, diversity and inclusiveness guide my work. I value transparency, reproducibility, and critique, accountability, responsibility, and collaboration. The Future of Science is Open, as is my Science.

I hold a degree in **Biology (BSc)** and **Medical Biology (MSc)** from the Utrecht University, Utrecht, the Netherlands. I obtained my PhD in 2016 entitled "The genetics of carotid atherosclerosis - Associations with clinical outcome and histological plaque characteristics" under supervision of professor Gerard Pasterkamp, professor Paul I.W. de Bakker, and doctor Jessica van Setten.

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Research output

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Activities

European Society of Cardiology (ESC) (External organisation)

Sander van der Laan (Member)
2017 → 2018

Genetic analyses of atherosclerosis and plaque characteristics

Sander van der Laan (Speaker)
19 Mar 2016

Atheroma tissue and pathway validation (Athero-Express)

Sander van der Laan (Speaker)
11 Mar 2016

Human Genetic Evidence that Common Variants near PIK3CG are Associated with Atherosclerotic Plaque Hemorrhage and Vessel Density

Sander van der Laan (Speaker)
2014

Human Genetic Evidence that Common Variants near PIK3CG are Associated with Atherosclerotic Plaque Hemorrhage and Vessel Density

Sander van der Laan (Speaker)
2013

A Genome-Wide Association Study of Plaque Phenotypes in the Athero-Express Biobank Study

Sander van der Laan (Speaker)

2012

Nederlandse Vereniging voor Humane Genetica (NVHG) (External organisation)

Sander van der Laan (Member)

2012 → 2018

European Society of Human Genetics (External organisation)

Sander van der Laan (Member)

31 Dec 2011 → 31 Dec 2018

European Atherosclerosis Society (External organisation)

Sander van der Laan (Member)

4 Apr 2011 → 4 Apr 2018

American Society of Human Genetics (External organisation)

Sander van der Laan (Member)

8 Jan 2011 → 8 Jan 2018