Saskia de Jager, associate professor of Experimental Cardiology at the UMC Utrecht, is investigating the role of inflammation patients with chronic heart failure and aims at identifying potential drugs. Saskia started her career at Leiden University, where she used animal models to study inflammatory reactions in blood vessels and atherosclerosis. At the UMC Utrecht, she was able to switch gears to heart failure and translate her research into clinical practice. Saskia is best known for her work on cardiovascular immunology. She and her colleagues found that the two forms of chronic heart failure are characterized by different inflammatory responses. After an infarction, inflammatory cells infiltrate the heart to clean up the damage and in patients with chronic heart failure they never disappear completely. The lingering cells damage the heart muscle cells that are still healthy and the inflammation thereby contributes to the progression of the disease. Saskia's research is designed to find a better-tailored therapy for patients with heart failure. She hopes that in time she will be able to make risk assessments for them based on inflammation profiles, who has a higher risk of rapid progression, and who does not?"

Since obtaining her PhD, Dr. de Jager has worked for more than 12 years on the problem of cardiovascular disease, leading to the publication of 90 articles. Her research has been funded by the European Commission, the Dutch Heart foundation, the initiative CardioVascular Research Netherlands and the Dutch Cardiovascular Alliance.