

# Autumn Newsletter of the PostDoc Network

**dkfz.**

Dear PostDocs,

We would like to thank those who have participated in the Annual Survey and invite everyone to read about its outcome (page 2). There you can find information on why PostDocs come to DKFZ and what career paths they choose.

Many of us often ask ourselves: "What can I do to improve my career perspectives?" Well, you can always make use of the DKFZ Career Service (see interview with Barbara Janssens on page 3). One of the tips Barbara and others can give you is that you have to improve your networking. And it does not only include attending international conferences and getting known in your field. We at the PostDoc Network feel that improving your network within DKFZ can contribute to your scientific development, whether you opt for an academic career or a job in industry.

How can a PostDoc improve his network? Join our regular meetings! This year's Retreat is coming up, and you can already register online. PostDocs, who have joined previous retreats, found them very stimulating on a personal and scientific level (see page 4). On the same page you will also find information about the regular PostDoc Get-Together.

Page 5 features an article on the different types of residence permit in Germany. This information might be useful for PostDocs from abroad. We at the PDN are always happy to welcome new PostDocs and help them with general information about DKFZ and living in Heidelberg. If you have a specific question, please contact us! If you feel that you could help in organizing events or if you have ideas for the PDN, come to our meetings! The network's activities depend on all PostDocs.

Olga Ucar,  
Editor of the PDN Newsletter

## PostDoc Network Retreat



**07-08 November 2013**

**Jugendherberge Grafenschloss Diez**

Registration open:

<http://www.dkfz.de/en/postdoc-network/Post-Doc-Retreat.html>

**Number of participants is limited to 40  
Submit your abstract for a poster or oral  
presentation!**

### Upcoming events:

**Get-Together: 26<sup>th</sup> of September, 20:00, Bier Brezel Restaurant (Hauptstr. 184)**

**PDN committee meeting: 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 12:00, D0.02.079**

**PostDoc visit to KID: 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 16:00**

**(to join the visit to KID, please contact Ines [i.ulibbarri@dkfz.de](mailto:i.ulibbarri@dkfz.de))**

## PostDoc Survey 2012/13

In the PostDoc survey 2012/13 we had 65 participants (25 male and 40 female), which constituted almost 50% of the registered PostDocs at that time. 58% of the participants were below the age of 34 and most (73%) did not have children. 49% of them were German and most (>87%) received their PhD more than 1 year ago. PostDocs from all research departments answered our survey and 66% of those PostDocs work in established groups that exist for more than five years.

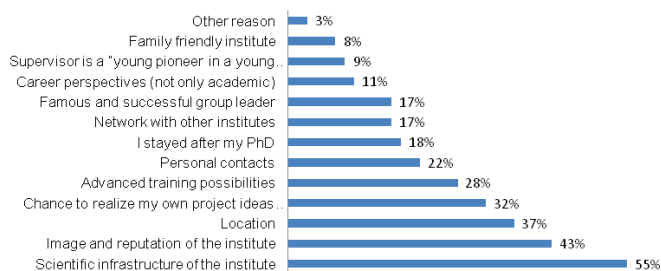
The main reasons for PostDocs to join DKFZ are the scientific infrastructure, the image of the institute and the location. The possibility to work on own projects and advanced training possibilities are also a relevant factor.

53% of the PostDocs aim for a career in academia and most of them (77%) for a professorship. Surprisingly, only 12 (34%) of the PostDocs aiming for tenure have a five year research plan to develop their own research group. A career outside academia is a back-up plan for 47% of all PostDocs and was the first career choice for only 11 PostDocs (17%). 77% of all PostDocs answering the survey consider missing long term perspective in academia the major reason why a career in academia would fail. The second most probable reason would be a lack of scientific publication (50%). Interestingly, only 10% of the PostDocs considered the lack of networking, which was mentioned as an important reason for failing in personal interviews with more senior scientists.

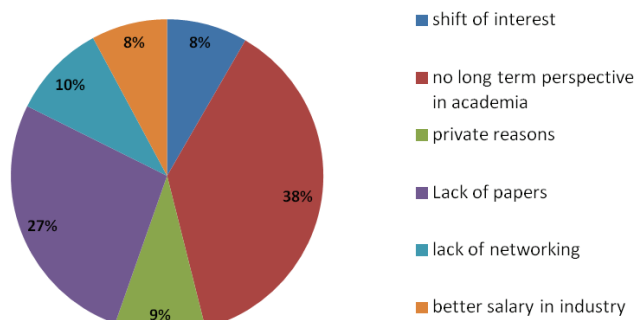
The publication record of the PostDocs is similar to the one presented in last year's survey. 58% of the PostDocs published in journals with impact factors (IF) higher than 5 and 15% published in journals with IF > 10. 43% of the PostDocs answering this survey stated that they had not published as first or last Author during their PostDoc time. 32% of these PostDocs without first or last author publication are in their second or third year of PostDoc time. The majority (76%) of the PostDocs are active participants in international conferences. Only 18% of the PostDocs do not attend international scientific meetings.

Most PostDocs feel supported by their supervisors, especially by personal feedback and the possibility to discuss their personal professional future. This and the importance of a stimulating working environment explain why the PostDocs like working at the DKFZ. In most cases

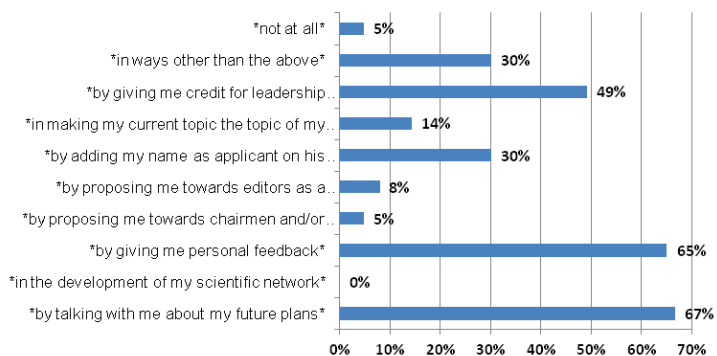
### Reasons to join DKFZ



### Why would a career in academia not work out?



### Support by Supervisor



(81%) the positions meet the expectations, which PostDocs had upon applying.

The PDN-Committee would like to thank all participants for taking the time for this survey and for the great feedback on our work.

Sarah Mang, Coordinator of the PDN Survey Group

**Coming soon:**  
**Medical Physics and Computer Science Career Day**  
 26<sup>th</sup> of November, 9:00 - 17:15

## Career Service for PostDocs

### PDN Interview with Dr. Barbara Janssens, DKFZ Career Manager

#### PDN: What exactly is the DKFZ Career Service?

**BJ:** The aim of the DKFZ Career Service is to support young scientists at the DKFZ, from Masters to PhD students and PostDocs in planning their professional future. Three milestones of the service consist of personal counseling, training and workshops and networking activities.

#### PDN: So PostDocs can ask you for advice?

**BJ:** Yes indeed! The initiative to recruit a Career Advisor at the DKFZ came from Lindsay Murrells and the Helmholtz International Graduate School, who financed the position during the two pilot years in 2011-2012. From the beginning, PostDocs knocked on the door as well and this is how in 2013 the Career Service has been established as a team within our Human Resources department.

#### PDN: Who else is there in the team?

**BJ:** I'm lucky to have the help of excellent student aids from the Major in Cancer Biology Programme: first Larisa Condurat and Kathrin Jansen, and now Soumya Mohapatra and Christopher Domnick. On July 1<sup>st</sup> Marion Gürth joined us as Project Coordinator. With her help, we will expand the Career Network and stay in touch with young scientists who left the DKFZ.

#### PDN: Do you have information for PostDocs who want to pursue a career in academia, or rather in industry?

**BJ:** We support all options to ensure your professional development can be based on truly informed decisions and planning. Whereas information about academic careers is readily available from your lab and supervisors or mentors, support consists in helping you to start planning early. To provide information about alternative careers, we support initiatives and organize career days.

#### PDN: Like the recent Project Management Career Day on March 1?

**BJ:** Exactly, as a joint initiative this was a nice balance to show opportunities in Project Management in Academia

as well as in Industry and the feedback from more than 160 participants was excellent – they said this day really brought them insights into project management options! In July we had a career day on Science Communication and we are planning similar events for the near future, for example on Medical Physics and Computer Science Careers in Academia.

#### PDN: Which career courses could you recommend?

**BJ:** This year you can find a list of 21 possible workshops in the overview booklet from our Advanced Training (“Weiterbildung”), ranging from CV and application skills to business, planning, presentation and networking skills. Courses will be organized upon request and as soon as sufficient numbers of interested persons have registered – so don't hesitate to let us know!

#### PDN: How important do you think it is to make up your mind early and decide to pursue a career in academia?

**BJ:** I think you should inform yourself as early as possible, and my advice is to have a concrete plan B (or even C and D) at all times. But you don't really have to make a clear cut between both, I think it is just as important to be open and see that there are opportunities in many directions.

#### PDN: If I have a plan A, but no real plan B, can I seek your advice to develop one?

**BJ:** Yes, that is precisely what we do, either in groups or individually. And I can tell you that most of career planning comes down to active networking, especially in science and academia – one contact is worth about 40 anonymous applications!

#### PDN: Thank you, Barbara!

Links

[www.dkfz.de/careers](http://www.dkfz.de/careers)

[www.facebook.com/phdcareers](https://www.facebook.com/phdcareers)

[www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) -> groups -> DKFZ Career Network

See Intranet for more.

Dr. Barbara Janssens is the Career Manager at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) in Heidelberg since January 2011. Barbara advises PhD students and PostDocs for their scientific future and organises workshops and conferences.

Barbara studied Biotechnology in Ghent (Belgium) and spent some research time at the Uppsala BMC (Sweden), the EMBL (Heidelberg) and the NKI (Amsterdam). After a PostDoc in molecular and cell biology (Institut Curie in Paris, France) she was an editor with Wiley-Blackwell from 2005 to 2010. She still regularly teaches freelance workshops on Scientific Writing.





## PostDoc Retreat: why should I join?

**PDN interview with Alvaro Mateos Gil, a PostDoc in the Department of Molecular Neurobiology**

**PDN: Did you join the PostDoc Retreats before?**

**Alvaro:** Yes, I have joined the two previous PostDoc Retreats.

**PDN: What was your motivation to join?**

**Alvaro:** Initially, my main motivation to join the retreats was social networking. This is especially true for the first year as I had started to work at DKFZ only 2-3 months before and didn't know many people.

Once there, besides enjoying the social activities I was very kindly surprised with the career advice session, and learned that this is a very strong area at DKFZ, which I think is great. I also enjoyed the very relaxed atmosphere during the scientific sessions (posters and presentations) allowing for constructive discussion. These two reasons added then to the social motivation for joining the second year.

**PDN: Did you like previous retreats? What did they give you personally?**

**Alvaro:** Yes, I liked them. Personally, I got the opportunity to meet other PostDocs. I think social contacts at work can make the day by day much easier.

**PDN: Would you recommend PostDocs to join? Why?**

**Alvaro:** Yes, I recommend it. As explained above, it is clear that I think it is a very nice and useful experience.

**PDN: Thank you very much, Alvaro!**

The registration for this year's PostDoc retreat is open (see page 1 of this newsletter). Join us and expand your network!

Photo: Alvaro Mateos Gil giving a talk at the second PostDoc Retreat (October 2012)



## Welcome and Get-Together Group

The aim of this group is to:

- Welcome new PostDocs and give them useful information about life in Heidelberg & work at DKFZ.
- Encourage networking & exchange of ideas by organizing Get-Together-events for PostDocs from DKFZ & also other Heidelberg-institutes.

Over the last three months, three events have been organized including activities such as BBQ, picnic, middle-eastern dinner & Jazz.

The next Get-Together will take place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September at 8 pm in the restaurant Bier Brezel, Hauptstrasse 184. If you are interested, please sign up in our mailing list so that you can get the invitation for future get-together events and other relevant information:

<https://listhost.inet.dkfz-heidelberg.de/mailman/listinfo/postdocs-network>

And please spread the word especially among new PostDocs in your group.

If you have any questions or suggestions, do not hesitate to contact:

Hadeel Khallouf [h.khallouf@dkfz.de](mailto:h.khallouf@dkfz.de)



BBQ-Picnic on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July



Falafel and Jazz on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August

## German residence permits for foreign PostDocs

According to the last PostDoc survey, 51% of our respondents are not German citizens. Those who come from outside the European Union know the huge list of documents and the need to queue before official permit to stay and work in Germany could be granted.

As a DKFZ PostDoc, one could have a stipend (fellowship) or a salary contract. Most stipends are non-taxable in Germany, whereas in salary contract one has to pay all the social taxes depending on your family status (married, children). These contracts are also different with regard to the types of residence permit you can obtain.

Issue of residence permits is regulated by German law – the so-called Aufenthaltsgesetz. Various paragraphs of this law describe the issue and expiry regulations of residence permits obtained by foreigners for different purposes (work, studies, joining family, asylum etc.). You can find the paragraph that applies to you in your residence permit card.

Depending on personal situation, postdoctoral scientists usually obtain one of the following:

- 1) §18 of residence act: Aufenthaltserlaubnis for stipend or salaried contract, valid for contract duration and only permitted to work at DKFZ;
- 2) §19a of residence act: Blue card for highly qualified employment for a salary contract;
- 3) §19 no. 2 (1) of residence act: Niederlassungserlaubnis for highly qualified, granted immediately;

4) §20 of residence act: Aufenthaltserlaubnis for scientists, for 1 year or more depending on research project duration. Requires signing a hosting agreement with DKFZ.

If you have worked in Germany for 5 years, you can apply for an unlimited residence permit. Note that the requirements include 60 months of social (pension) payments and German proficiency (level B1). The types of permanent resident permit are §9 – Niederlassungserlaubnis and §9a, known as Daueraufenthalt-EG (permanent residence in the European Union).

These are the main types of permits a DKFZ PostDoc could apply for depending on individual circumstances. If you would like to get more information or help, International Staff Services (ISS) office within our Human Resources Department could be contacted. Ms Heike Langlotz at ISS is helping many foreign scientists and guests at DKFZ to receive their required permit since several years. She is very friendly, experienced and well informed of in-out laws and bureaucracy at Bürgeramt Heidelberg. For a list of documents required in any residence permit application please refer to the intranet: <http://intranet/Deutsch/adminstab/persabt/iss/Seiten/default.aspx>

PDN committee thanks Ms Heike Langlotz for providing information and valuable suggestions in preparing this report.

Apar Jain

## Rowing against cancer

“Rudern gegen Krebs” is a regular event organized by the National Center for Tumour diseases (NCT) and Rudergesellschaft Heidelberg. This year it took place on the 8th of September. Many DKFZ PostDocs competed in the regatta, which, in spite of not perfect weather, turned out to be fun. We hope to join again next year!

