

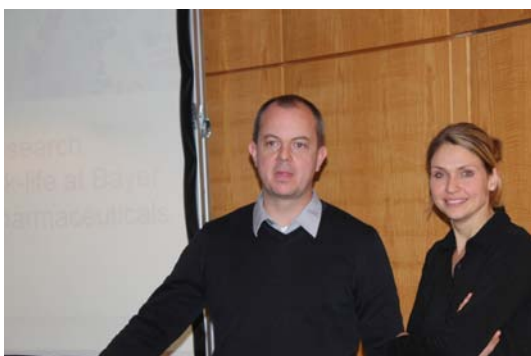
# Winter Newsletter of the PostDoc Network

**dkfz.**

## Editorial



PostDoc Retreat: group picture



Dr. Sven Christian and Dr. Cora Mund, speakers of the Bayer HealthCare Seminar



Members of the PDN Committee

The PostDoc Network (PDN) had a very successful year in 2011, and we are planning to continue like this in 2012!

We have made a major step in networking by organizing the first DKFZ PostDoc Retreat, which took place in November in Bruchsal. Over 30 PostDocs attended this two-day event, where they had the opportunity not only to present their research, but also to get feedback on their presentation skills from fellow PostDocs. A great party followed a very busy first day, where we definitely got to know each other better. All in all, the retreat was a great success, and we hope it will become an annual event (p.2).

One of the major and regular events organized by the PDN, the PDN Career Seminar Series, presented speakers from various non-academic fields and welcomed many interested PostDocs. In this issue of the PDN Newsletter you will find a report on the last seminar that we hosted together with the DKFZ PhD Career and the Bayer HealthCare Alliance (p.4).

The PDN Committee is constantly working on improving PostDocs visibility. Keeping in mind how different PostDocs can be, we have compiled and launched the annual PostDoc survey. Many thanks to those who have taken time to go through it! You shared with us very important information about you and your needs. It gave us a chance to learn more about DKFZ PostDocs.

A PostDoc's stay at the DKFZ is often very brief, and keeping contact with former DKFZ PostDocs is very important. We are happy to share with you the contributions of Torsten Hechler, a former PostDoc and PDN Committee member (p.5).

The success of the PDN relies on the involvement of motivated PostDocs in the PDN Committee. We are always happy to welcome new members! You can find our meeting schedule on the last page of this newsletter. We have many exciting plans for this year. Join us!

We wish you a happy and productive year 2012!

**Olga Ucar**

**PDN committee, 01-2012**

(Photos: Nick Kepper)

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## The first DKFZ PostDoc retreat – the birth of a great networking event

The idea to organize a retreat specifically designed for PostDocs arose at the beginning of 2011 and raised a lot of enthusiasm among us. We were convinced that it would be a great opportunity for developing scientific and social networking at the PostDoc level. So we dived into the adventure of organizing the first DKFZ PostDoc Retreat.

Finally, on November 25th, around 30 PostDocs gathered in front of the main building to leave for the first PostDoc retreat. Actually, the first teamwork appeared to be the fitting of the poster boards into the bus! With so many great brains, this worked quickly and we could leave on time. After a short bus transfer we arrived at our venue, the Naturfreundehaus Bruchsal.

### Getting started

Following a short introduction, we went through a little warm-up game to get to know each other, moving in the room according to our place or date of birth, years spent as a PostDocs and so forth. The first surprise was to see that among the 30 participants there were people from all over the world and also from very different scientific fields. This game was followed by a successful and enthusiastic scientific speed dating session, which also served to establish the first contacts between participants.

### Enjoying PostDocs scientific excellence

After the first social activities we could appreciate the high scientific quality of PostDoc research. In two talk sessions we heard excellent presentations from a great variety of research fields. It was amazing to see the diversity of research projects that DKFZ PostDocs are working on. During all sessions, there was a nice atmosphere and presentations were followed by lively discussions. We also used the discussion time to give professional feedback on presentation style. The quality of the feedback was appreciated, knowing that it is valuable for every speaker to get feedback from his or her peers once in a while. Sometimes the discussion was more animated, and we found that there often is no 'right' or 'wrong' but it is a matter of the personal point of view. During the two poster sessions, there

were even more scientific discussions, as many great projects were presented. Here we saw again, how valuable networking between PostDocs really is. It is helpful to have discussions with people from very different scientific backgrounds - or people that actually know a lot about your scientific area, who you did not have the chance to talk to before.

### Getting the party started

The scientific part of the first day was ended with a welcoming 'Happy Hour', and

after a Flammkuchen dinner we transformed the seminar room into a nice party room. It was really great fun - thanks again to 90's hits DJane Maiwen and the king of the beat DJ Timo for the music. Not to forget the brave SingStar heroes (who were many more than expected at first!).



### Learning from a successful predecessor

The second day started with the third and again excellent talk session, which also included a presentation given by Barbara Janssens, PhD Career Manager at the DKFZ, who gave us an overview about the Career Service at the DKFZ. The session was followed by the presentation of our guest speaker, Gary Davidson (photo bottom left), who is currently a group leader at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). He showed us some of his ongoing research and gave us an insight into his career path from being a PostDoc at DKFZ to starting his own lab at the KIT. He reflected on the steps he made during his career and shared with us his personal view on a career in academic research and the requirements and demands that come with it. Of course, we had a lot of questions and after his presentation we had such an inspiring discussion that we even went late for lunch.

### Plenary discussion

During the last session of the retreat we discussed the needs of DKFZ PostDocs. Celina Cziepluch, head of the Advanced Training Department gave a short overview of the trainings and supports that are already available for PostDocs at DKFZ and we discussed if and how the PDN and the DKFZ could support PostDocs even more in their career development. This information is very important for the PDN committee to adjust the activities to the actual demands of the DKFZ PostDocs.





### Thanks for making the retreat a successful event!

Finally, we, the Retreat Organizing Team, would like to thank all the participants for joining this retreat, for the effort put into posters and presentations, for all the discussions, for the fun and for making this event such a great success. Thanks for the very positive feedback!

It was really an adventure to organize a retreat like this, and we had a great deal of fun. In addition, we would like to thank Gary Davidson for his presentation and for sharing his personal view with us. Thanks to Celina Cziepluch, Lindsay Murrells and Barbara Janssens for joining us and discussing with us. Last but not least, we would like to thank the DKFZ management board for the support and encouragements.

We hope to see you next time!

Christina Laufer



## 3 questions to Celina Cziepluch, head of the Advanced Training Department

**PDN:** What does the DKFZ do to support PostDocs in their career development?

**C. Cziepluch:** Knowing that the opportunity to successfully conduct exciting and groundbreaking research is the key factor to attract the best PostDocs, the DKFZ offers several intramural or international collaborations as well as interdisciplinary scientific projects and thereby good opportunities for PostDocs to build up scientific networks and an own scientific reputation. In addition, there are several very attractive PostDoc programs to foster institutional collaborations, organized by Dr. Jana Grünewald. Finally, the **intramural funding program** offers several great opportunities for PostDocs to obtain independent funding for their projects. More information with respect to the DKFZ Young Investigator Grant or the Intramural Collaboration Grant can be found here: [https://intranet/Zentraldatenbank/Freigegebene%20Dokumente/F%C3%B6rderprogramme%20und%20Kooperationen/Intramural\\_Funding\\_Program.pdf](https://intranet/Zentraldatenbank/Freigegebene%20Dokumente/F%C3%B6rderprogramme%20und%20Kooperationen/Intramural_Funding_Program.pdf) (contact [j.gruenewald@dkfz.de](mailto:j.gruenewald@dkfz.de)).

Besides the opportunity to attend internal and external scientific meetings and workshops, the DKFZ supports the careers of PostDocs by offering attractive advanced training, again both internal and external, in technical skills, soft skills and leadership. The new **advanced training program 2012**, which is now available through the Intranet, offers several courses exclusively for PostDocs (contact [m.kunz@dkfz.de](mailto:m.kunz@dkfz.de)). Finally, Dr. Barbara Janssens, since 2011 Career Manager in the frame of the Helmholtz-International Graduate School, also makes her Career Service available to PostDocs, who can benefit from workshops, seminars and personal advice (contact [phd-careers@dkfz.de](mailto:phd-careers@dkfz.de) or [b.janssens@dkfz.de](mailto:b.janssens@dkfz.de)).

**PDN:** Why do you think it is important to support the PostDoc Network?

**C. Cziepluch:** The PostDoc Network at DKFZ offers formal and informal opportunities to meet fellow PostDocs and serves as an exquisite platform for scientific networking, interdisciplinary scientific discussions and the advancement of PostDoc careers. The PDN is precious and PostDocs who are part of the PDN benefit most from the activities and the information flow offered through the network. All active members emphasize that joining the PDN has improved their understanding of the DKFZ and its organizational development, which enables them to actively contribute to and shape their working environment. Perfect examples are the very successful PostDoc career seminars and the PostDoc retreat, which are organized by the PDN and supported by the management board.

**PDN:** You participated in the first Postdoc Network Retreat, what was your take home message?

**C. Cziepluch:** The broad range and the quality of scientific topics, which were presented, as well as the ease and intensity at which interdisciplinary discussions were led, were very impressive. I had the impression that all participants very much enjoyed the possibility to build ties with fellow PostDocs from DKFZ. In addition, the guest speaker, Gary Davidson from KIT, was obviously well chosen, since his personal account on how he built his scientific career hit the spot with most retreat participants. So: Congratulations to the organizers! The success should encourage PostDocs to establish this retreat as a regular event at DKFZ.

Interview by Mäiwen Caudron-Herger



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## Career Seminar - Bayer HealthCare

The last PDN Career Seminar in 2011 took place on December 2<sup>nd</sup> in a successful cooperation between the DKFZ-Bayer HealthCare (BHC) Alliance, represented by Dr. Ruth Wellenreuther, the PhD Career service, represented by Dr. Barbara Janssens and the PDN Career Seminar group, represented by Dr. Frank Götschel. More than 100 Postdocs, PhD and Master students attended the seminar during which Dr. Sven Christian and Dr. Cora Mund from the BHC Oncology Department in Berlin talked about general aspects of the work in a pharmaceutical company and their personal career paths.

After a short welcome by Dr. Barbara Janssens, **Dr. Sven Christian** gave a brief introduction about the organization of Bayer Healthcare. Thereafter, he showed the auditorium the different requirements in the long and ambitious process to bring a new pharmaceutical compound to the clinical market. Even if it needs a lot of effort to establish a new drug, he finds the work very interesting, because there are many disease-relevant proteins, which are not targeted yet. In the second part of his presentation, Dr. Christian focused on his personal career path. He gained his first experience in working for Boehringer-Ingelheim (Biberach) during his PhD thesis. From 2004 to 2006 he went to the USA for a PostDoc and came back to Germany to work as a junior group leader in the department of Prof. Helmut Augustin at the DKFZ. In this position he taught students, supervised technicians, and gained experience in project management and scientific writing. In 2008 he decided to leave academia, seeing better chances for his personal future in working for a pharmaceutical company. Dr. Christian likes his current position as a lab head in the Oncology department of BHC very much. His motivation is that his research can be a direct help for people with cancer. Moreover, he has a high personal responsibility with regards to financial, technical and personal aspects in his group. Finally, he enjoys working in interdisciplinary teams with people from different scientific backgrounds like biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics or engineering.

**Dr. Cora Mund** gave the second presentation. She first pointed out that people with a PhD in the natural sciences have opportunities at BHC to start a career, either focused on management or on scientific research. She joined BHC directly after her PhD thesis, which she did in the group of Prof. Frank Lyko at the DKFZ. Her example shows that it is possible to move from academia to industry directly after graduation. Dr. Mund was an ideal candidate to get a lab head position at BHC because during her PhD thesis she was responsible for a collaboration project between the division of Prof. Lyko and BHC.

Therefore, she already had some good personal contacts and the people from Bayer knew well about her personal abilities. Nevertheless, the first months at BHC were quite laborious for her. She felt that the jump from being a PhD student in academia to leading a lab in the industry was very big. With a lot

of personal enthusiasm and help from the company, she managed to grow into her new responsibilities. She likes to work for BHC, where she can combine her scientific knowledge with creativity in searching for new drug targets. Her work is always an integral part of a big research project, and she often gets in contact with many people from other disciplines. Dr. Mund also mentioned that BHC provides her with the possibility to manage a good work-life balance. An important aspect for her is that she can bring her children to the "BHC-Kindergarten" which is close to her office. If needed, she has the possibility to work from home.

Interestingly, regarding their career path, both speakers mentioned the **importance of networking** and they emphasized the **requirement for the ability to work in a team** and to **properly present scientific data**.

After the interesting reports of our invited speakers we started a lively discussion, which was followed by an informal get-together with snacks and drinks in front of K1/K2. Many participants came together and had time for further discussion with Dr. Sven Christian and Dr. Cora Mund.

The PDN Career Seminar group thanks all people for attending and supporting our seminars in 2011. We hope to see many of you at our events this year.

**Frank Götschel**

In autumn 2010, a former PostDoc fellow from my division asked me, if I would like to join the PostDoc Network Organizing Committee. During that time I was not aware of the structure and objectives behind this organization, but my colleague told me about the interesting topics which are discussed in the PDN meetings and about the versatile activities organized by the PDN. After a short time in the



PDN, I was able to take over responsibility by actively participating in the organization of the Career Seminar Series. My commitment to the PDN gave me the chance to improve my personal soft skills in many different work-related fields. It was always a pleasure for me to work for the PDN, because I met a lot of nice and enthusiastic people there. But now it is time to say good-bye, because I will soon leave the DKFZ to start a career in industry at Roche Diagnostics. From my personal perspective, I would highly recommend every PostDoc to join the PDN because your active contribution will give you new insight into project management and networking in science, and you will get in contact with many different interesting people from inside and outside the DKFZ.

**Frank Götschel**

*"The PDN Committee – one of my best decisions"*

When I started my PostDoc at the DKFZ I was a little surprised that there was nothing similar to the PhD school dedicated to PostDocs. Thus I was very enthusiastic when INESS invited the DKFZ PostDocs for a first get-together to start a PostDoc Network. From this first meeting I was actively participating in most of the activities that led at the end to the PDN as it is today. This experience opened my eyes to the world beyond science and the daily lab-routine. I got insights into the administrative structure of a research organization, I learned about management in science, I could train how to negotiate with decision makers and I increased my networking abilities dramatically. Besides I came in contact with a lot of really nice and highly motivated people, all of which contributing to the fact that the time in the PDN was one of the most interesting experiences in my career. I do not know if participating in the PDN can raise someone's chances to get a particular job, but it can for sure give everyone more self-confidence and provides a much broader view on science and its different perspectives than working in a lab could ever do.

Today I am working as a group leader at the Heidelberg Pharma GmbH, a small company mainly conducting research and development of anti-cancer drugs (Antibody Drug Conjugates- ADC). My daily tasks are a little bit outside of my original field and I am still feeding on my PDN-experiences that helped me a lot to get started in my new position. Finally I can strongly recommend to anyone who is thinking about joining or supporting the PDN: just do it, it will be definitely worth it.

**Torsten Hechler**

Group Leader Biochemistry at Heidelberg Pharma

**Join us on facebook!****PDN@DKFZ****Upcoming events**

**Get-together:** Bellini's Bistro, 18:30, 14<sup>th</sup> of February (every second Tuesday of the month)

**PDN committee meeting:** BioQuant (room 655), 17:00, 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 14<sup>th</sup> of February, and every 2 weeks

**Next career seminar:** "Patenting and Technology Transfer", 17:00, 20<sup>th</sup> of March, K1+K2  
**Speakers from EMBL and DKFZ**

More career events in Heidelberg: <http://tinyurl.com/5wuerfx>