



Winter Newsletter of the PostDoc Network

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Editorial

Dear PostDocs,

Another year is ending soon. We hope that this year was productive for all of you and that you will enjoy the coming Christmas break. We at the PDN are looking at the work we have done the past year and already making plans for the year to come. You should check the last page of this newsletter for the events plan for early 2014.

Below is a report on the third DKFZ PostDoc Retreat, which took place in the beginning of November in Diez. As in previous years, the retreat was a platform for social and scientific exchange, and this time we invited Sven Diederichs to give a talk on academic career perspectives. Sven stayed for an in-depth discussion of scientific networking and the strategies one can use to achieve his career goals. Some of his valuable advice is summarized in the article. We also plan to address the topic of academic career in more detail in the next Career Day in February (see the ad on the last page).

We try to promote interactions between PostDocs not

only at the retreats, but throughout the year. Page 3 of this newsletter features the regular Get-Together organized by Hadeel Khallouf. You all receive the invitations by e-mail: just join the next event and get to know your fellow PostDocs!

Many of you attended the Medical Physics & Computer Science Career Day on the 26th of November. It collected a lot of people working at DKFZ and other institutes in Heidelberg, and you can find a brief report on page 4. We are pleased with the success of the Career Seminars, especially when the topic is relevant for highly specialized groups. If you would like to explore your career paths in a particular area of science, you are always welcome to send us a suggestion for the next Career Day. Even better, you can join the PDN committee and take part in our activities! This way your ideas will be put into action.

We wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Olga Ucar

Editor of the PDN Newsletter

Third PostDoc retreat

Like last year, this year's PDN Retreat—the third retreat dedicated specifically to PostDocs—was held in the 11th century castle Grafenschloss Diez on November 7th and 8th. The historical setting provided a stimulating environment for both scientific presentations and discussions on career perspectives and scientific networking.

Apart from the excellent scientific contributions of the participants, each of whom gave a talk or presented a poster, the retreat offered a session dedicated to the institutional support for PostDocs at DKFZ. In this session Celina Cziepluch discussed success factors for scientific careers in- and out-side of academia. In this context she presented various lines of institutional support provided to PostDocs by the DKFZ, e.g. Advanced Training. Marion Gürth introduced the dedicated Career Service.

The second major topic, scientific networking, was comprehensively addressed by our guest speaker Sven Diederichs, who gave a personal insight into the necessity and practice of building up a scientific network whose importance for a successful ca-

reer in science (and also in industry) is often underestimated. Sven Diederichs portrayed his career path and gave a unique and deep insight into his strategies for a successful academic career. His talk was outstanding and polarizing and therefore was well accepted by all attendees.

Institutional support for PostDocs - Overview

| Advanced training | Your supervisor | Add-on |
|---|--|-----------------|
| Technical skills Wet lab Animals, IT | Mitarbeiter Jahresgespräch Appraisal Interviews | Career Service |
| Personal skills Communication Leadership | Lab seminars | PostDoc Network |
| | Good scientific practice | PDN |
| Scientific meetings, workshops etc. Core Facilities, Networks, Industrial partners | | |

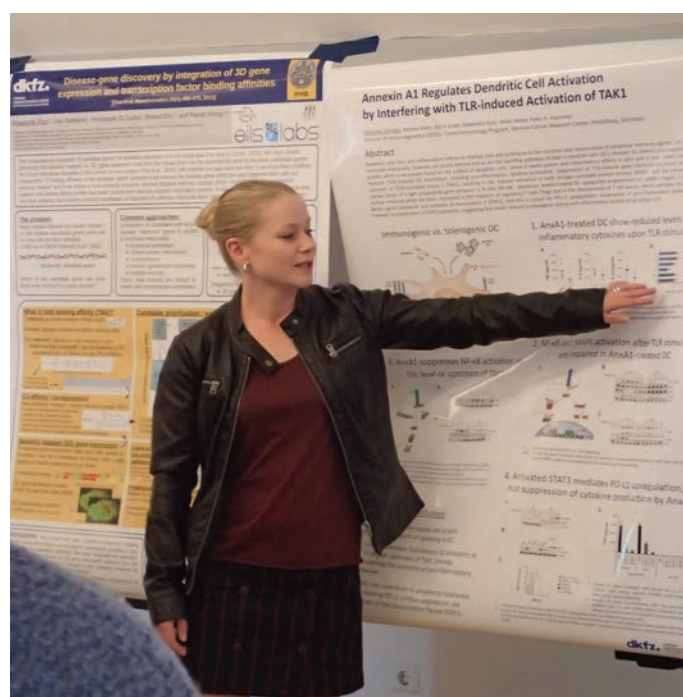


network of mentors and scientists of all ages and career stages – starting with your immediate colleagues (PDN!) and your postdoctoral advisor. In general, personal networking is superior to any virtual social networks like LinkedIn. Taken together, his talk— linked with the personal insights during the session, at dinner, and the get-together afterwards —was vibrant and encouraged us to reflect and invest even more energy into our own career paths.

It's hard to segregate single points out of his all-embracing talk without losing the context, nevertheless some concise statements could be good advice for young PostDocs and PhD students:

The DKFZ offers an excellent platform for career development with impressive research groups, outstanding equipment and techniques as well as advanced training possibilities and huge networking possibilities like the PDN Network. Nevertheless, it's up to every single one to get active and use these tools for his or her advancement. Therefore some advice from our discussions is: (1) Decide early whether you aim for a career in academia or industry. (2) Make up your mind about your own competences, regularly evaluate your achievements compared to your peers and choose your future career accordingly. Be open for alternative career paths and talk to people who actually took these to form an opinion. (3) Follow your aims; be aware that only you can take your future into your own hands. (4) Work hard and stay focused on your science and your career - academia is not different from industry in this regard. Be aware and get training in qualifications you might need for either career path early-on. (5) Scientific achievements have a half-life – so make good use of your successes to get to the next level in your career. (6) Promote your research effectively to ensure visibility and successful networking (conferences, talks, invitations, reviews, refereeing). (7) Build and maintain a professional

Despite the lower number of participants, stemming from a number of cancellations due to illness (including one of the guest speakers) this year's retreat turned out to be extraordinarily productive, proving that quality is more important than quantity. To appropriately valorize this high quality, we conferred for the first time a prize for the best contributed



talk or poster. The prize was awarded to Veronika Jahndel who had been a PostDoc for only two weeks.

The Organizing Team





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 & other institutes in Heidelberg.



Over the last few months, several events have been organized including activities such as BBQ, picnic, middle-eastern dinner & Jazz, brewery tour & lately Christmas market visit. It was great to meet many of you not only those working at DKFZ but also other Heidelberg institutes & hope to see you again in future events & to welcome new PostDocs & colleagues.

The next Get-Together will take place at the end of January 2014 and you will get more detailed information about it soon. 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>

If you have difficulties signing up, write us an email to pdn@dkfz.de.

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

Imagine your future job: Medical Physics & Computer Science Career Day

Physicists at DKFZ? Aren't there just biologists and medical doctors doing the research here? No! On November 26th, approximately 160 scientists from the DKFZ and other institutes in Heidelberg came together for the first career day in the field of medical physics and computer science. PhD and Master students from one of the biggest medical physics research departments in Germany - Research Area E at DKFZ - took the initiative and with support of the DKFZ career service and PDN invited 18 speakers working in various fields outside academia. They presented their personal career paths, gave an insight to their daily work and sometimes also mentioned the salary to be expected! Presentations comprised the classical career option as a clinical medical physicist, areas like research & development in industry, consulting, management, patent

attorney up to air traffic control research and working as a school teacher.

A get together for lunch allowed the young researchers to pepper the speakers - most of them were alumni from the Medical Physics Department - with all kind of questions they had on the tips of their tongues. At the end of the day, the take home message for many participants was that career paths don't have to be straightforward and that there are lots of different ways to finally find a fulfilling and satisfying job. The career day was a real success and will hopefully be repeated.

Nora Hünemohr and Julia-Maria Osinga

Info and slides on phdcareers sharepoint (careers@dkfz.de)



Upcoming events:

PDN committee meeting: 13th of January, 12:00, D0.02.079

Get-Together: end of January (check your e-mail!)

For those of you interested in academic careers:

Do not miss the Academic Career Day!

**7th of February (Communication Center)
(organized together with PhD council and DKFZ Career Service)**