

Nationwide Alliance Against Cancer

With the attendance of Germany's Federal Minister Professor Dr. Annette Schavan and State Minister Theresia Bauer, the official launch of the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research (DKTK) was celebrated today in Heidelberg.

The German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and Heidelberg University Hospital celebrated "Innovation in Oncology" today during a joint event. The Federal Minister of Education and Research, Professor Dr. Annette Schavan, said: "The establishment of the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research opens up new possibilities to develop new ideas and to achieve real innovations in the treatment of cancer patients, as the best researchers from 20 institutions will cooperate on an interdisciplinary basis. We have created a unique setting where top-level oncology research can serve the benefit of people."

Professor Dr. med. Dr. h.c. Otmar D. Wiestler, DKTK's chief coordinator and Chairman of the Management Board of DKFZ: "We now aim to transfer the exemplary collaboration between cancer researchers and physicians we have established at the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg to the whole of Germany in the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research." Theresia Bauer, Minister of Science, Research and the Arts of the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg, added: "Combining excellent university hospitals with high-profile research at a Helmholtz Center is an important contribution to improving the chances of cancer patients."

Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Harald zur Hausen gave an account of the long journey which led from the discovery of papillomaviruses as a cause of cancer to a vaccination against cervical cancer. Nobel Prize winner zur Hausen emphasized the obligation of cancer researchers to continuously consider whether their results may be a starting point for new approaches in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. More than 160 scientists and physicians with their working groups at DKTK's eight locations will be committed to this "translational" idea.

In a panel discussion scientists and oncologists of DKTK presented aspects of individual programs in the new consortium. These include radiation therapy, which is fighting cancer with unprecedented precision. Technical innovations like the unique gantry of Heidelberg Ion-Beam Therapy Center (HIT) contribute to this aim. Using the example of pediatric cancer, DKTK researchers explained the chances for improved cancer therapies emanating from sequencing individual tumor genomes. Efforts to develop targeted anti-cancer drugs will require a much higher number of clinical trials in the future, but each of these will include a smaller number of patients. The Clinical Communication platform of DKTK will ensure that patients have the possibility to participate in clinical trials best suited for them anywhere in Germany.

The partnership of the German Cancer Research Center with seven university hospitals has evolved from a joint initiative by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), German Cancer Aid (Deutsche Krebshilfe) and the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ). The consortium will help to translate current research results even more swiftly into patient care. At each of the partnering sites, a translational center will be established, which will be a joint project of DKFZ and the respective university hospital.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the participating states will provide funds of approximately €12 million for the consortium this year. The annual budget will be

successively raised to reach about €28 million by 2014. In addition, German Cancer Aid (Deutsche Krebshilfe) will provide additional funding for defined research projects upon request after evaluation.

The general scientific concept of the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research provides for seven translational research programs in the areas of *Signaling Pathways of Carcinogenesis, Molecular Diagnosis of Cancer, Tumor Immunology, Stem Cells and Cancer, Imaging and Radiation Therapy, Therapy Resistance, and Cancer Prevention and Early Detection*. Several sites will participate in each of the programs.

Furthermore, research platforms will be available for all partnering sites. A *Clinical Communication* platform will ensure uniform diagnosis standards for all patients so that they may then be offered innovative treatment protocols in clinical trials. Various *Service* units will facilitate outsourcing of routine laboratory work and conducting it according to uniform standards. *Preclinical Models* will facilitate common access to animals that have been genetically modified to develop specific cancers. *Substance Development* will focus on collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry. Finally, the *School of Oncology* will provide education and training for natural scientists and medical researchers in the area of translational cancer research at the highest level.

Partnering sites and their coordinators

Berlin

Charité University Medicine Berlin
Professor Dr. Reinhold Schäfer
*Charité Comprehensive Cancer Center
Berlin University Medicine*

Dresden

University Hospital Carl Gustav Carus of Dresden Technical University
Professor Dr. Michael Baumann
*University Cancer Center Dresden
University Hospitals Carl Gustav Carus of Dresden Technical University
Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics
Helmholtz Center Dresden-Rossendorf*

Essen/Düsseldorf

Essen University Hospital of the University of Duisburg-Essen
Professor Dr. Martin Schuler
*West German Cancer Center
Essen University
Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf*

Frankfurt/Mainz

University Hospital Frankfurt/M.
Professor Dr. Hubert Serve
*Tumorzentrum Rhein-Main of Frankfurt University Hospital
Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt/Main
Georg-Speyer-Haus, Frankfurt
Northwest Hospital, Frankfurt
University Medical Center of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz*

Freiburg

University Medical Center of the Albert Ludwigs University Freiburg
Professor Dr. Christoph Peters
Comprehensive Cancer Center Freiburg

*Freiburg University Hospital
Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology*

Heidelberg

German Cancer Research Center (core center of the consortium)
Professor Dr. Otmar D. Wiestler,
Professor Dr. Josef Puchta
*German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) Heidelberg
University Medical Center of Ruprecht Karls University Heidelberg
National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg
Associated Partner: Paul Ehrlich Institute, Langen
Associated Partner: University of Cologne*

Munich

Ludwig Maximilians University Munich
Professor Dr. Wolfgang Hiddemann
*Ludwig Maximilians University Munich
Munich Technical University*

Tübingen

University Medical Center of Eberhard Karls University Tübingen
Professor Dr. Klaus Schulze-Osthoff
*Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of Tübingen
Faculty of Life Sciences of Eberhard Karls University Tübingen*

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 2,500 employees is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany. At DKFZ, more than 1,000 scientists investigate how cancer develops, identify cancer risk factors and endeavor to find new strategies to prevent people from getting cancer. They develop novel approaches to make tumor diagnosis more precise and treatment of cancer patients more successful. Jointly with Heidelberg University Hospital, DKFZ has established the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg where promising approaches from cancer research are translated into the clinic. The staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. The center is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers. Ninety percent of its funding comes from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the remaining ten percent from the State of Baden-Württemberg.

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