

High Distinction for Heidelberg Neuroradiologist

Dr. Alexander Radbruch is honored with the Coolidge Award granted by GE Healthcare for his work on the use of new imaging techniques in brain cancer diagnostics. He leads the research group “Neuro-oncologic Imaging” at Heidelberg University Hospital and the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ).

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) uses a sequence of magnetic impulses to create detailed cross-section pictures of individual organs that make it possible to discern pathogenic changes. MRI scans are a standard procedure in cancer diagnostics. Susceptibility-weighted imaging (SWI) is a special MRI technique that delivers very high-resolution 3D images of the venous vascular system.

Dr. Alexander Radbruch was the first to apply SWI for systematic examinations of patients suffering from a brain tumor. He discovered that the new method has two significant advantages over conventional MRI scans for these patients: The sharper 3D images it creates enable clinicians not only to determine the type of brain tumor more precisely, but also, through control examinations, to assess at an earlier time whether a tumor responds to the chosen therapy.

Alexander Radbruch studied Law and Medicine in Heidelberg and Munich, Germany, and in Houston, Texas, U.S.A. Aged 36, Radbruch has been working as an assistant physician at the Neuroradiology Department of Heidelberg University Hospital since 2009. Since September 2012, he has led the joint research group “Neuro-oncologic Imaging” at Heidelberg University Hospital and the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ).

The Coolidge Award, now in its 20th year, is an innovation award for radiology diagnostics presented by GE Healthcare. The award is named after American physicist William D. Coolidge, who constructed a predecessor model of the later X-ray tubes as early as in the first half of the 20th century. The award recognizes young scientists under 38 years of age for their outstanding work in the field of radiology. Dr. Alexander Radbruch shares the €15,000 award with Dr. Peter Isfort from RWTH Aachen University.

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. The staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. 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. In the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research (DKTK), one of six German Centers for Health Research, DKFZ maintains translational centers at seven university partnering sites. Combining excellent university hospitals with high-profile research at a Helmholtz Center is an important contribution to improving the chances of cancer patients. DKFZ is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers, with ninety percent of its funding coming from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the remaining ten percent from the State of Baden-Württemberg.

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