

Joint press release of the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research and the University Hospital Frankfurt



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DKTK Frankfurt: German Cancer Award for Simone Fulda

Professor Simone Fulda, a pediatrician and cancer researcher in the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research (DKTK) of the University Cancer Center (UCT) of the University Hospital Frankfurt, has been honored with the 2014 Cancer Research Award in the category “Translational Research.”

Simone Fulda studies the molecular mechanisms of programmed cell death, or apoptosis, in malignant tumors in children. She discovered disruptions in the normal cell-death program of cancer cells that can be used as targets for the development of new anticancer drugs. For her work, Fulda has now received the German Cancer Award 2014, sponsored by the German Cancer Society and the German Cancer Foundation. The award, which is one of the most important distinctions in cancer medicine in Germany, was presented to Fulda at the 2014 German Cancer Congress in Berlin.

“The German Cancer Award demonstrates a high appreciation of our work,” said Fulda, who investigates apoptosis with her working group. She is particularly interested in finding out why the normal “suicide program” that usually rids the body of defective cells fails in cancer cells. The aim of the research is to find drugs that will restart the cell death program to fight the cancer. Fulda is a joint coordinator of the DKTK research program on “Signaling Pathways of Carcinogenesis” with Professor Wolfgang Hiddemann (Munich) and Professor Roland Schüle (Freiburg).

Simone Fulda, born in 1968, studied medicine in Cologne, Boston, San Francisco, Phoenix and Dublin, supported by grants from the German National Academic Foundation and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Fulda graduated and received her PhD in 1995. In 2001, she qualified as a medical specialist in pediatrics and attained her qualification to give lectures (‘Habilitation’). From 2002 to 2007, she was a recipient of a Heisenberg grant from the German Research Foundation (DFG); from 2007 to 2010, she worked as a DFG research professor at the University of Ulm. Since mid-2010, Fulda has been director of the Institute for Experimental Cancer Research in Pediatrics at the University Cancer Center (UCT) Frankfurt. The institute is financed by the Frankfurt Foundation for Children with Cancer. In 2012, Fulda was appointed a member of the German Science Council by the Federal President. In this advisory body, she helps draw up recommendations for the federal and state governments on developing the content and structure of higher education institutions, science and research. Fulda has already been distinguished with numerous national and international awards for her research work.

Besides Fulda, other award winners were Professor Martin Schrappe of Kiel University Hospital in the category “Clinical Research” and Professor Christoph Klein from Regensburg University Hospital in the category “Experimental Research.”

In the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research (DKTK), the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) joins up with university hospitals all over Germany. Assembled around a core at the DKFZ in Heidelberg, the consortium unites twenty high-ranked institutes from seven partner sites: Berlin, Dresden, Essen/Dusseldorf, Frankfurt/Mainz, Freiburg, Munich and Tübingen, all specialized in research and treatment focused on oncological

diseases. The DKTK was founded to promote translational research, bringing together scientists, physicians and associates to work jointly toward the main goal of enhancing the translation of research from bench to bedside. New approaches in prevention, diagnostics and treatment will be applied to cancer in common translational centers at all partner sites. Patients will be recruited at all partner sites for innovative studies to be carried out by the consortium as a whole. All the data from this work will be collected in a universal system. The harmonization of techniques and methods used in laboratories will ensure identical standards for all researchers and physicians in the consortium. A joint infrastructure will make them available for joint research. With the school of oncology, the consortium is additionally dedicating itself to the education of new physicians and scientists. Talented young people will be trained in cancer medicine and translational cancer research in a common effort involving all members. The German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research is a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the participating German states, German Cancer Aid and the German Cancer Research Center. It is one of the six German Centers for Health Research (DZG).

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