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**A quota for women in science?  
Conference with top-class experts at the German Cancer Research Center**

**Attracting more women to senior positions in science is a challenge most research institutes in Germany are presently facing. Whether and how this can be achieved as well as the potential role of imposing a “quota for women” will be discussed at a conference entitled “Quote, Quark(s) und Qualität” (quota, quark(s)\* and quality) that will be held on November 26-27, 2015, at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) in Heidelberg. The conference is organized by the working group “Women in Research Centers” of the Helmholtz Association.**

At the 2-day event, selected experts from industry, science and medicine will present their disparate views on the topic. For example, Burkhard Schwenker, former head of Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, considers a quota system indispensable in order to take a systematic step forward towards increasing the proportion of women in executive positions. Gabriele Kaczmarczyk from Charité Hospital in Berlin, who heads the “ProQuote” association, also demands a quota in order to get more women into top jobs. Sociologist Stefan Hirschauer, by contrast, regards a quota system as a “desperate act of those who want to promote women in science”, with a danger of “sexist side effects”. Equally interesting will be the talk presented by Curt Rice, who describes himself as a “sexist man”. Rice, who is the first American to head a Norwegian university, has intensively looked into the subject of gender issues.

DKFZ’s equal opportunities officer Karin Greulich-Bode, who has organized the conference, considers Germany’s largest biomedical research institute to be the ideal venue for this debate. “Most staff scientists at the DKFZ have degrees in biology or medicine, which are precisely the disciplines with far more women than men among graduates. Nevertheless, women are substantially underrepresented as group leaders or department heads. It will be most interesting for us to hear field reports from countries that have already introduced a quota for women in research such as the U.S. and Norway. And we will also be eager to hear about answers from other sectors.”

“We will have to overcome the obstacles that block the road leading to executive positions for talented and motivated women,” says acting DKFZ Chairman and Scientific Director Michael Boutros about the conference’s main objective.

Journalists are very welcome to attend the conference.  
Please find the conference program at <http://www.dkfz.de/de/akfifz/programm.html>.  
For interview requests, please contact the Press Office.

\* *The German word “Quark” also means “nonsense”.*

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 3,000 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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