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Changeover in the Cancer Prevention Unit: Ute Mons is taking over from Martina Pötschke-Langer

On September 1, 2016 Dr. Ute Mons will take over as Head of the Cancer Prevention Unit at the German Cancer Research Center, which also serves as the WHO Collaboration Center for Tobacco Control. She will be replacing Dr. Martina Pötschke-Langer, who headed the unit since it was established 19 years ago, and is now retiring.

“The aim of the unit has always been to make a significant contribution to reducing tobacco consumption, as this is the most important single risk factor for cancer”, explains Professor Michael Boutros, Acting Scientific Director of the DKFZ. Around 120,000 people in Germany die every year as a direct consequence of smoking, 35,000 of them from lung cancer.

Martina Pötschke-Langer and her team have produced numerous publications, fact sheets and background information on the subject of smoking, tobacco, and protection of non-smokers, and acted as a consultant for political decision-makers. She made an important contribution to significantly reduce tobacco consumption since 2002, especially amongst adolescents and young people. She points out that they also “contributed significantly towards the introduction of the legislation on nonsmokers' protection, and the transposition of the European Tobacco Product Directive into national law”.

Ute Mons studied sociology and epidemiology and already worked in the Cancer Prevention Unit as a research assistant from 2007 until 2012. She subsequently changed to the Division of Clinical Epidemiology and Aging Research under Prof. Hermann Brenner, where she investigated the correlation between smoking and chronic diseases associated with old age. Mons has set herself a big challenge: “It is particularly important to me to continue promoting cancer prevention in Germany.”

Ute Mons plans to extend the central area of tobacco prevention by the prevention of other avoidable cancer risk factors, such as excess weight. “Above all, we want to continue raising public awareness with our results. The only successful way to really prevent cancer is to inform opinion leaders and policy makers about scientific evidence on cancer risk factors, as well as effective measures and prevention strategies.”

An image for this press release is available for download at
www.dkfz.de/de/presse/pressemitteilungen/2016/bilder/mons-poetschke-langer.jpg

Legend:

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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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