

**One Million for Cancer Research:
Manfred Lautenschläger Foundation supports the development of new vaccines
against cancer**

When Harald zur Hausen was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2008, Manfred Lautenschläger spontaneously offered to support the Nobel laureate's scientific work by funding a new research team. These funds will now go to Angelika Riemer, a young scientist who plans to advance the development of a vaccine which is able to cure existing infections with carcinogenic human papillomaviruses at the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ).

Dr. h.c. Manfred Lautenschläger vividly remembers how thrilled he was about the Nobel Prize for Harald zur Hausen, former Scientific Director of DKFZ: "At the time, I spontaneously decided to support zur Hausen's fascinating research," said Lautenschläger, founder of financial services company MLP. Thanks to this support – one million euros over a four-year period – Associate Professor ('Privatdozentin') Dr. Dr. Angelika Riemer can now start a new junior research group at DKFZ devoted to new vaccines against carcinogenic human papillomaviruses.

Manfred Lautenschläger is very pleased about the choice of this young researcher. "She is the right person for this project: an excellent scientist with a great deal of charisma and personality – in short: Angelika Riemer impressed me in our very first conversation." The donor's explicit goal is to contribute to accelerating cancer research and making it more dynamic.

"We are happy that the generous support by the Manfred Lautenschläger Foundation allows us to attract such a brilliant young scientist to the German Cancer Research Center. In order to compete internationally, our research relies increasingly on additional funding from private bodies," says Professor Dr. Otmar D. Wiestler, DKFZ's Scientific Director.

From the beginning of her scientific career, Angelika Riemer has focused on the development of tumor vaccines. "At DKFZ, Harald zur Hausen and his coworkers have created the scientific basis for the first vaccine against carcinogenic human papillomaviruses. I am proud to be able to continue this work here. The Center with its excellent virology and immunology departments provides an ideal environment for my research."

The immunologist takes vaccine development one step further. Her research concentrates on human papillomavirus 16, which causes half of all cervical cancers and can also cause several other cancers of the genital tract and the oropharynx. As opposed to the vaccine available to date, which prevents infections with the carcinogenic viruses, the new therapeutic vaccine will also cause the immune system to recognize and eliminate cells which are already virus-infected and transformed. Angelika Riemer has developed a special method for finding out which parts of the viral proteins in infected cells are specifically recognized by the human immune system. Using these protein portions called epitopes Riemer plans to specifically activate killer cells against virus-infected, transformed cells.

Harald zur Hausen is pleased that his Nobel Prize has been the cause for this research support and he thanks Manfred Lautenschläger: "The study of virus-induced cancers promises many more exciting discoveries. New findings in this area may contribute to a better prevention of cancer in the future."

The funding of the new working group is not the first time that Manfred Lautenschläger supports DKFZ's work. In 2003, Professor Peter Krammer received the €250,000 Lautenschläger Research Prize; in 2008, the proceeds of the Rhine-Neckar Cycling Club's charity tour initiated by Manfred Lautenschläger went to Dr. Stefan Pfister, a researcher of childhood brain tumors. Furthermore, at his 70th birthday celebration Manfred Lautenschläger asked his guests to refrain from presents and make a donation to DKFZ instead; the money was given to pediatric oncologist Professor Dr. Olaf Witt.

Angelika Riemer was born in 1976 in Salzburg, Austria, and studied medicine at the Universities of Vienna, Melbourne and Bristol. She received her doctoral degrees in both medicine and molecular biology with outstanding grades. She is a doctor of immunology and is currently training to become a doctor of dermatology. In 2007, she finished her postdoctoral lecture qualification in immunology. From 2008 to 2009, Angelika Riemer was a researcher at the Cancer Vaccine Center of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Harvard Medical School in Boston.

A picture of Angelika Riemer is available on the Internet at:

http://www.dkfz.de/de/presse/pressemitteilungen/2010/images/Riemer_Angelika.jpg

Picture source: Brigitte Engelhardt, German Cancer Research Center

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany and is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers. More than 2,000 staff members, including 850 scientists, are investigating the mechanisms of cancer and are working to identify cancer risk factors. They provide the foundations for developing novel approaches in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer. In addition, 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 funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (90%) and the State of Baden-Württemberg (10%).

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