

Jakob-Herz-Prize

Speaker

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Aims and structure

Since 2009, the Faculty of Medicine together with the Research Foundation of Medicine has been awarding the Jakob-Herz-Prize for medical research. This prize is named after Prof. Dr. J. Herz, the famous physician from Erlangen and the first Jewish professor in Bavaria. The award is granted for outstanding scientific success in the whole field of theoretical and clinical medicine. Both, individual achievements in research as well as lifetime achievements, can be honored. The prize is awarded biannually in the course of a ceremony organized by the Faculty of Medicine. This ceremony includes a talk given by the laureate.

Adequate candidates can be recommended by all professors of the Faculty of Medicine. The prize committee consists of the professors of the research committee within the Faculty of Medicine who evaluate the proposed candidates. The final decision is made by the faculty council. The prize comprises the amount of 10,000 euros and a certificate.

History and funding

This prize has been designed in honor of the prominent physician and researcher from Erlangen, Prof. Dr. J. Herz (1819-1871). Prof. Dr. J. Herz was among the leading instructors of pathological anatomy and surgery of his time and is considered the founder of surgical anatomy. In 1869, Prof. Dr. J. Herz was appointed full professor in the kingdom of Bavaria. At this time he had already been honorary citizen of Erlangen for two years. Prof. Dr. J. Herz died in 1871 as a consequence of his tireless commitment to his patients and to science. His larger than life memorial at the Hugenottenplatz in Erlangen was destroyed by the Nazis. During the National Socialism, his native town Bayreuth removed a memorial plaque at his birthplace and renamed streets which were previously named after him.

Therefore, the religious persecution did not end for the Jewish physician, scientist, and philanthropist with his death. It was only in 1983 that the citizens of Erlangen regretted the destructions dating from the Third Reich and installed a new memorial at the corner Universitätsstraße/Krankenhausstraße. This memorial can be regarded as a compensation for the destroyed one and shows the following sentence: "We remember Jakob Herz to whom citizens of Erlangen erected and destroyed a memorial". In 2000, the president of FAU at that time, Prof. Dr. G. Jasper, unveiled a bronze memorial plaque in honor of Jakob Herz at the Hugenottenplatz.



Jakob Herz (1816-1871), around 1850, StadtAE V.A.b.3

In 2018, the Faculty of Medicine elected Prof. Laurence Zitvogel, MD, PhD, for the Jakob-Herz-Prize. Prof. L. Zitvogel from Paris is widely recognized for being a pioneer in the field of oncology and for her innovative achievements in the field of cancer immunotherapy. In the focus of her research is the influence of the immune system on the genesis and treatment of cancer.

Prof. L. Zitvogel is scientific directress at the Gustave Roussy Cancer Center in Villejuif, France, and professor of immunobiology at the University of Paris XI Medical School. She was convinced that killing cancer cells cannot be the only treatment option for cancer. This conviction finally led to the concept of immunogenic cell death. She could prove that the classical cancer treatment (chemotherapy, radiotherapy) only is effective against cancer (at least in parts) with the help of the immune system. Not only, but also thanks to her successful research, clas-

sical cancer treatment has expanded by two new fields, i.e. targeted therapy and immunooncology.

Prof. L. Zitvogel's current research is divided into three main areas. First, she is studying different modes of action of immune checkpoint inhibitors and looking for predictors of response to immune-modulation. Second, Prof. L. Zitvogel is trying to characterize how the gut microbiome plays a part in cancer immune-surveillance. Finally, she is working to identify the molecular mechanisms behind immunogenic cell death, a form of cancer cell death that triggers the activation of T-cells towards the remaining cancer cells.

Prof. L. Zitvogel has published more than 452 papers, quite a few of them in high ranking journals, such as „Nature Reviews Immunology“, „Science“, and „Nature Medicine“. She has been awarded several prizes.



Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. J. Schüttler, Dean, and the awardee, Prof. Dr. L. Zitvogel