9th October 2014
The Ulrich-Hagen Prize goes to Professor Bernd Kaina at the University Medical Centre in Mainz

The Society for Biological Radiation Research acknowledges Toxicologists with respect to their work in the field of Radiation Research.

It is well known that rays can have a carcinogenic effect, but what about its correlations? This is one of Prof. Dr. Bernd Kaina’s central research questions, as Director of the Institute of Toxicology at the University Medical Centre in Mainz. Furthermore, Professor Kaina analyses how effective radiation is in anti-inflammatory treatments and tumour therapy. The Society for Biological Research Radiation awarded him the Ulrich Hagen Prize 2014. It is considered the highest official award in the biological radiation research field.

"I am very grateful for the recognition of my team’s long-standing work", said Professor Kaina. The awarding of the prize to the researcher from Mainz stresses the importance of his continuous work published in internationally renowned journals. Professor Kaina is concerned with the damage to genetic material, i.e., DNA, through ultraviolet and ionizing radiation as well as chemical substances that are present in the food we eat, in the tobacco smoke we inhale and in the environment. Additionally, the research focus on the DNA damage repair and cellular processes that originate from unrepaired DNA damage, including the mechanisms that lead to cell death and tumor development.

The toxicologist discovered DNA repair factors in the shape of enzymes that are mainly produced in the cells, once DNA is damaged. His research group was able to show that the inducible repair functions of these cells protect not only from UV rays but also from the effect of other genotoxins such as carcinogenic chemicals and medicine used in cancer treatment. On the one hand, this is positive for the human health as a reinforced DNA repair of the healthy tissue protects from mutations, cell degradation, aging and cancer. On the other hand, these repair systems act simultaneously as resistance factors in tumor therapy. The key aspect here is to switch off the targeted DNA repair in tumour cells and to reinforce it in normal tissue. This points out the strong translational character of prof. Kaina’s research work. The results of his basic research have a direct influence on clinical practice.

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About the University Medical Centre of the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz

The University Medical Centre in Mainz is a unique medical facility of supra-maximum medical care in Rheinland-Pfalz and an internationally recognized scientific centre. It encompasses more than 60 clinics, institutes and departments that cooperate on an interdisciplinary basis. Highly specialized patient care, research and training form an inseparable unit at the University Medical Centre in Mainz. Approximately 3300 medical and dental students are trained in Mainz. Additionally, the University Medical Centre is one of the largest employers in the region with around 7500 employees. It is also an important driver of growth and innovation. Further information is available online under www.unimedizin-mainz.de

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