

Press Release

Tumor immunologist Muhammad Asif Qureshi will use his Humboldt Research Fellowship to conduct research at the Mainz University Medical Center

Research focus on immunotherapeutic approaches for the treatment of liver cancer



(Mainz, 1 June 2016) The number of people who are diagnosed with cancer worldwide each year is expected to almost double by the year 2030 according to the World Health Organization (WHO). New strategies for fighting cancer are thus in demand. The goal of tumor immunologist Dr. Muhammad Asif Qureshi from Pakistan is to develop immune mediated approaches to combat cancers. He wants to find out specifically how different cancers can be slowed down or even reversed. He will be undertaking this research project in the coming two years with a research fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation as a member of the research group of Professor Detlef Schuppan, Director of the Institute of Translational Immunology (TIM) at the Mainz University Medical Center. In his research project, Dr. Muhammad Asif Qureshi is focused on liver cancer, globally the fifth most common type of cancer in men and the ninth most common in women.

In his research lab at the Mainz University Medical Center, Professor Detlef Schuppan puts great emphasis on investigating new immunological treatment concepts in liver and lung cancers. A core objective is the development of new types of diagnostics, mainly serum markers, which can be used as a blood test in early detection of cancer and for therapeutic monitoring of cancer patients. In addition, together with the cooperation partners at the Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 1066, which is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and located at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU), nano-dimensional polymer therapeutics are to be developed for tumor treatment, which will enable new cancer medications to reach their site of action, that is, the cells of the body's own immune system, in a more targeted manner. Furthermore, the aim is to study mechanisms which target the activation of the immune system. "By means of such mechanisms, we could potentially slow down cancers or even reverse them. Researching these types of mechanisms is thus very promising", said Dr. Muhammad Asif Qureshi. "The conditions for this research project at the Mainz research lab are ideal. It offers, for example, links to the

Research Center for Immunotherapy at Mainz University and various research activities at the University Center for Tumor Diseases at the Mainz University Medical Center."

Professor Detlef Schuppan and Dr. Muhammad Asif Qureshi first met in 2014, when Qureshi was one of the participants in the annual Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings at Lake Constance and visited Schuppan's lab in Mainz. "I was immediately excited about the pioneering work done at the Institute of Translational Immunology at the Mainz University Medical Center. Ultimately it was the openness of Professor Detlef Schuppan and his team regarding research collaborations which made me decide to select the Mainz University Medical Center for my Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship."

In Pakistan, Dr. Muhammad Asif Qureshi, who was born in 1982 in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, last held a position as tenure track assistant professor at the Dow University of Health Sciences in Karachi. He previously studied medicine and completed a post-doctoral program at the University of Glasgow, UK. In addition, he holds a Master's degree in International Relations.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation enables more than 2,000 researchers from around the world to experience a research sojourn in Germany each year. Its grants include the Humboldt Research Fellowships, which are awarded annually to about 450 up-and-coming scientists with a doctoral degree from other countries. Based on this type of research scholarship, a long-term research project can be implemented. The scholarship holders of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation select their own work group for their research stay at a German university or research institution. To be granted a Humboldt Research Fellowship, the young scientists must demonstrate scientific excellence, also as evidenced by their publications in renowned professional journals.

Image:

http://www.uni-mainz.de/presse/bilder_presse/04_unimedizin_immunologie_qureshi_schuppan.jpg
(fltr) Humboldt Research Fellow Dr. Muhammad Asif Qureshi and Professor Detlef Schuppan,
Director of the Institute of Translational Immunology (TIM) at the Mainz University Medical Center
photo/©: Dr. Muhammad Asif Qureshi

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