

University of Tampere awarded a leading German scientist with its international celiac disease prize

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Rector Kaija Holli presented the prize to Prof. Detlef Schuppan. Photo: Jonne Renvall

Professor **Detlef Schuppan** is the first recipient of the international celiac disease prize awarded by the University of Tampere in Finland. The *Maki Celiac Disease Tampere Prize* was awarded on Friday 17 April in an event to celebrate the farewell lecture of Professor **Markku Mäki**.

Professor Schuppan is a leading German scientist in medicine and gastroenterology who is well known for his research into celiac disease but who has also researched the molecular and cellular biology of chronic liver diseases and fibrosis. His more recent research also includes food intolerances.

In 1997, Schuppan and his research team were able to identify tissue transglutaminase as the autoantigen in the gluten-triggered celiac disease. That discovery took the research on celiac disease to an entirely new level.

Professor Schuppan is the Director of the Institute of Translational Immunology and the Celiac and Small Intestinal Disease Center at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. He also works as a professor and senior researcher at Harvard Medical School. Schuppan's research publications have been cited for more than 18,000 times.

In the event where the prize was awarded, Schuppan gave a talk on celiac disease and related wheat sensitive reactions, the mechanisms that cause the disease and how the body's autoimmune system turns against its own tissue transglutaminase. Schuppan is developing a new treatment method based on the inhibition of tissue transglutaminase.

"We wanted to award Professor Schuppan because his scientific breakthrough in 1997, which identified tissue transglutaminase, is one of the three most important milestones in the

diagnosis and treatment of celiac disease. The other two are the discoveries of gluten and the HLA tissue type,” Professor Markku Mäki says.

The name of the prize is an abbreviation of “multiple approach as key in celiac disease”. The University of Tampere established the prize to honour Markku Mäki, professor of paediatrics, now emeritus researcher at the university.

International experts were asked to propose suitable candidates for the prize, which was now awarded for the first time. The University of Tampere decided on the recipient of the prize after hearing the experts.

The prize is EUR 15,000 and it will be awarded every other year.

The next awardees will be selected on the basis of an open competition by a panel that consists of a representative of the University of Tampere, the first awardee, Professor Markku Mäki, and other experts, including the executive director of the Finnish Coeliac Society.

The prize will be awarded in an international symposium on celiac disease that will be started in Tampere and organised in cooperation by the University of Tampere, researchers of celiac disease, the Finnish Coeliac Society and Tampere Hall.

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