

COREnews

DECEMBER 2023



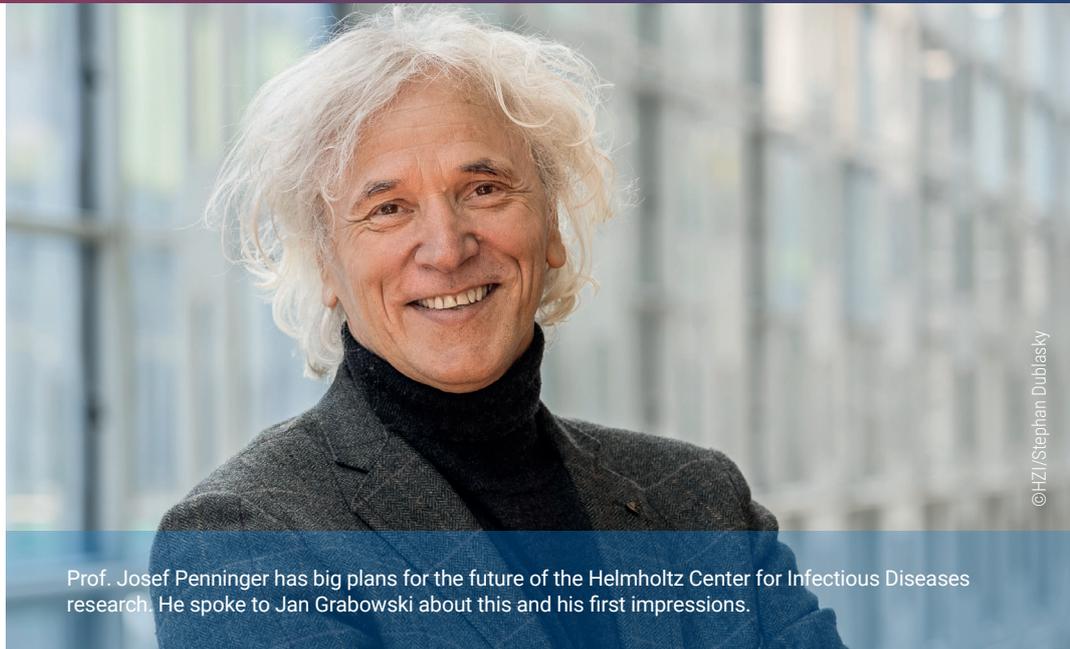
Dear Colleagues,

Josef Penninger is the new Scientific Director of the HZI since July 2023. He has appointed Thomas Pietschmann as Co-Director and with Christian Scherf as Administrative Director and Jörg Schinkel as his deputy, the entire top management of the HZI has been reorganized. Former Scientific Director Dirk Heinz has dedicated the HZI to clinically relevant infection research over the past 12 years. What changes are in store for us as a result of the change in the HZI's management team? Josef Penninger provides first insights into his plans in the interview in this issue. In any case, TWINCORE will continue to expand its focus on clinical collaborations and contribute to the further integration of the HZI Campus Braunschweig and the HZI Campus Hannover.

With best wishes



Yours, Ulrich Kalinke



©HZI/Stephan Dublasky

Prof. Josef Penninger has big plans for the future of the Helmholtz Center for Infectious Diseases research. He spoke to Jan Grabowski about this and his first impressions.

A GOOD PLACE FOR INFECTION RESEARCH

PROF. JOSEF PENNINGER HAS BEEN THE NEW SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR OF THE HZI SINCE JULY 2023. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH CORENEWS, HE DESCRIBES HIS FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF TWINCORE AND HIS PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE HZI AND ITS BRANCHES.

Prof. Penninger, what was your impression of the TWINCORE before you started at the HZI?

I am an immunologist. So I was already familiar with TWINCORE because you do great immunology here. Of course I knew that it was one of the best places for immunology and infection research in Germany.

Have you already been able to complete this picture with impressions on site?

I am still learning. I attended the interim evaluation in Braunschweig at the beginning of July. I was very impressed by the TWINCORE projects and the technologies used here.

What role does TWINCORE play for the HZI as a whole?

TWINCORE plays a very important role. All parts of the HZI are absolutely important, otherwise they would not be part of the HZI. Immunology is a very critical building block in the whole concept. We need to promote this and incorporate it into the new HZI concept that we are now developing.

What will the interaction between the headquarters in Braunschweig and the branches be like in the future?

Hanover and Braunschweig have always been very close. This is our central region. It is very important that projects are advanced together here. The new money we are receiving from the Ministry also includes a flex fund that is

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>> CONTINUATION OF THE INTERVIEW

intended to promote precisely these projects between the different locations.



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And how does TWINCORE, as part of the HZI, contribute to this success?

Quite simply, by continuing to carry out world-class research at TWINCORE.

Ulrich Kalinke and his team have done a great job building up TWINCORE. I hope that we can continue to work together very closely, that we work on projects together and that we can

Networking even more closely is essential.

enjoy each other's work. Just have fun together. I think that's the most important thing. The world is complex enough. We are lucky to play in an arena where we can discover things that benefit people. My wish would be to develop this culture further – with mutual respect and enjoyment. We can learn so much from each other.

TWINCORE also has a very important role as a link to Hannover Medical School. We want to expand this even further and create even more clinician scientist positions. This will enable us to work even more closely with the MHH through TWINCORE and CiM. It is essential that we network even more closely. And we need TWINCORE to do that. This is vital for my future considerations.

Thank you very much for the interview!

WORKSHOP

STRESS REDUCTION AND MENTAL STRENGTHENING WORKSHOP

Based on the risk assessment of mental stress, a four-hour workshop on the topic of „Mental Strengthening“ was offered in September.

Together with MHH occupational psychologist Christian Bock, a total of seven TWINCORE employees addressed the questions of what stress actually is, how it arises and, most importantly, how best to deal with thoughts of stress.

Christian Bock conveyed the theoretical aspects of the workshop in an extremely entertaining way and very intensive discussions ensued on the respective topics. Bock provided various exercise materials on the basis of which, for example, personal stress amplifier profiles were created. This created an „aha“ effect for most of the participants, as the respective classifications were individually perceived as very accurate. The participants were not left alone with the identification of these stressors, but Bock provided a variety of tools on a cognitive level for coping with stress and



strengthening inner resilience in everyday life. As a practical exercise, attention training was carried out, which is intended to ensure that attention is refocused in the long term when thoughts of stress and worry arise. This can minimize negative stress.

In summary, it was a really great workshop in which very valuable elements for strengthening one's own resilience were conveyed and from which the participants - each for themselves - were able to take with them the appropriate tools for coping with stress.

In the future, there will be further offers with Christian Bock on the topic of mental stress in the workplace.

by Elisabeth Janecek-Erfurth
Picture: © Canva

THIS & THAT

Farewell from committees



At the end of his term of office as Scientific Director of the HZI, Dirk Heinz has also left the Scientific Advisory Board and the Supervisory Board of TWINCORE. We sincerely thank him for the successful collaboration over the past years!

Open Science at TWINCORE



At the invitation of the Science Communication Working Group, Marina Wurzbacher (Photo) & Anna-Lena Lorenz from the Open Research Knowledge Graph project of the TiB Hannover held a seminar and workshop on the topic of Open Science at TWINCORE in November.

TRAIN Academy enters its 8th round



In October, 20 scientists from the Hannover-Braunschweig-Göttingen region began the education programme „Translational Research and Medicine: From Idea to Product“ organised by the Translational Alliance in Lower Saxony.

LISA SUMMER SCHOOL



From 27 August to 15 September 2023, the LISA (Lower Saxony International Summer Academy in Infection and Immunology) took place for the 12th time at TWINCORE. Twenty-one students from seventeen countries and four continents were able to attend numerous talks and lectures, give poster presentations and complete laboratory stays as part of the three-week summer school in Hanover. The participating Bachelor and Master students mainly came from life science disciplines and medicine.

The RESIST Cluster of Excellence contributed to the funding of LISA for the first time. Further financial support came from the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture (MWK), the VHV Foundation, Milteny Biotec and the European Federation of Immunological Societies (EFIS).

Two of the participants were unable to be on site for organizational reasons and were therefore integrated into the event via video conference. This allowed them to attend both the presentations and the poster session via Zoom and they were even involved in discussions during the official program and afterwards, for example at the barbecues.

Aparna Shandheep, former LISA participant and now a doctoral student at the TWINCORE Institute for Experimental Infection Research, gave the alumni lecture. She used a cell phone to broadcast the poster sessions for the hybrid participants, thus enabling active participation. Aparna also supervised two participants in the laboratory internship, in which nanoparticles were produced, which was new and exciting for them.

TWINCORE postdoc Andreas Pavlou, who attended LISA in 2017, supervised the poster sessions and was impressed by the structure of the posters and, in particular, the participants' enthusiasm for discussion.

„It was the liveliest discussion of a poster session that I have ever experienced“, Andreas says. One reason for this could have been the smaller group size. The discussions would probably not have ended if they had not been broken off by the moderators.

This particularly active attitude of the participants was also noticed by keynote speaker Anna Överby. „I have never experienced such a lively and proactive audience of students“, she reported after holding her seminar.

Some of the participants will continue the next step of their career in the environment of the participating institutions MHH, Fraunhofer-ITEM, HZI and TWINCORE. In this way, LISA has shown some options for the careers of these students and created connections to research institutions.

This year's LISA was certainly a very special one, which we will remember for its motivated participants and contagious energy.

by Olivia Luise Gern

EAT CAKE, HELP BIRDS

As part of the Hanover Environmental Center's „Nature Outpost“ project, we at TWINCORE are striving to make our outdoor area as nature-friendly as possible. The old population of trees already offers good conditions for birds. However, we do not yet have nesting boxes to provide our feathered residents with a protected place to raise their offspring.

The sustainability working group collected donations for the purchase of such nesting aids with a cake bazaar on 10 October. Numerous members of the TWINCORE community donated cakes and pastries for bird protection, so the range on offer ranged from apple muffins to lemon cake. The motto „Donate a cake, help the birds“



attracted numerous visitors from TWINCORE, but also from MHH and the surrounding institutes in the Medical Park.

Not only the baked goods at the cake bazaar were plentiful, but also the background in-

formation. The organizers Annett Ziegler and Frauke Lange had put together scientific publications on species extinction and the decline of wildlife habitats in addition to a quiz on the most common native songbirds.

At the end of the day, over €300 was in the donation box. „I think that's a great result, and I honestly didn't expect it“, says Frauke Lange. „I would call it a success.“ In consultation with the experts from the Hanover Environmental Center, suitable nesting aids will now be purchased and distributed in the TWINCORE garden in time for the start of the breeding season in spring

by Jan Grabowski

WELCOME AT TWINCORE! NEW EMPLOYEES:

Institute for Experimental Infection Research

Francisco Javier Alvarez de Miranda Rodriguez, Guest scientist
Raziyeh Nasrejalali, Master's student
Clarisse Peßler, FWJ

Junior Research Group Translational Immunology

Finja Borchers, StrucMed student
Michel Decker, Intern
Emily Jo Winter, StrucMed student

Helmholtz Young Investigator Group Antiviral Antibody Omics

Tom Daniel, Master's student
Imke Hinrichs, PhD student

Institut for Experimental Virology

Caitlin Lamb, Student

Research Group Pathogenesis of Bacterial Infections

Imke Janssen, Intern

Lena Maria Salgueiro Marti, Student
Verena Winstel, Technician

Institute for Molecular Bacteriology

Camille Andrieu, Postdoctoral fellow
Laura Matos da Silva, PhD student

Junior Research Group Translational Virology

Nele Meyer, Technician
Christine Wundes, Technician

Administration

Lena Apholz, Administrative assistant
to the head of administration
Dyari Mohammed,
Assistant to the head of administration

TRAIN Office

Thomas Damm, Communication and Media

CiiM group Immunology of Viral Hepatitis

Yin-Han Chou, PhD student

Ayesha Lietzau, PhD student
Julia Moch, PhD student
Valerie Ohlendorf, Assistant physician
Paulina Schröter, PhD student
Noemi Siegert, FWJ

CiiM group Clinical Bioinformatics

Onkar Singh, Postdoctoral fellow

CiiM

Christiane Patzelt, Project manager

JOBS
AT TWINCORE



THOMAS PIETSCHMANN

ELECTED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DZIF

At the DZIF General Assembly on 8 November 2023, Prof. Thomas Pietschmann, Director of the Institute of Experimental Virology at TWINCORE, was unanimously elected as a new member of the five-person Executive Board of the German Center for Infection Research (DZIF). In addition to his roles at three closely linked DZIF member institutions - the HZI in Braunschweig, the MHH and TWINCORE - Pietschmann has held a variety of other roles at the DZIF over many years. Among other things, he has served as spokesperson for the DZIF Hannover-Braunschweig partner site since 2019 and as a member of the DZIF's Internal Advisory Board.

Thanks to his many years of work at TWINCORE, on the steering committees of DFG Review Boards and the RESIST Cluster of Excellence - a network of six German partner institutions led by the MHH - and as a programme spokesperson at the HZI, Pietschmann brings a wealth of experience at the interfaces between Helmholtz and university medical research to his new role.

„I am delighted to have been elected to the DZIF Executive Board,” says Pietschmann. „With my experience in science management and as a virologist and institute director, I hope to help strengthen translational infection research in Germany and make further important contributions to the fight against infectious diseases as a member of the Board,” he adds. (dzif)



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NEW CORPORATE DESIGN

As you will hopefully have noticed when looking at this *corenews*, we have given our in-house magazine a fresh look.

Together with MHH Digital Media, we are currently revising the corporate design of TWINCORE and we have made a start with *corenews*. With a new font and updated colour scheme, our in-house magazine has a new appearance. The templates for presentations, posters and other printed materials, including business cards, will also be updated shortly (jg)

IMPRINT

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