

**Laudatory speech for postdoctoral researchers
by Prof. Dr. Jörg Hacker**

[Check against delivery.]

[Address]

Each year, the Robert Koch Foundation, together with the German Societies for Hygiene and Microbiology, Immunology and Virology, presents three awards to outstanding young scientists. Since 1998, these societies have been asked to nominate suitable candidates for the awards on an annual basis. From the shortlists provided by the societies, the Scientific Advisory Council and the Board of Directors of the Robert Koch Foundation choose the respective award winners.

I am particularly delighted that we succeeded in organising an alumni get-together for former winners of the postdoctoral prizes this year. That gave them an opportunity to talk to one another and also allowed the young scientists to share their experiences and exchange contact details. I am sure that we will be organising this event again regularly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, the Postdoctoral Award for **Virology** goes to **Dr. Jens Bosse** from the Heinrich Pette Institute in Hamburg.

Mr Bosse studies virus-host interactions and the transport processes involved. In particular, he analyses the interactions of the host cell nucleus with DNA viruses, especially herpes viruses such as the cytomegalovirus. He hopes his research will build a foundation for developing new antiviral active ingredients. To do so, he uses and develops new quantitative methods based on microscopy. Among other things, Mr Bosse develops high-contrast, high-resolution and colourant-free transmitted light microscopy, which allows viral life cycles to be tracked in living cells.

Mr Bosse has already successfully published his results, with 16 publications, including renowned journals like *Cell* or *PNAS*.

Mr Bosse studied Biotechnology at RWTH Aachen, and worked as an intern at the Institute of Virology of the Cambridge University. He wrote his doctoral thesis on the previously poorly understood principles of virus particle transport at the laboratory of Prof. Dr. Ulrich Koszinowski at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. Mr Bosse then went to Princeton University, where he worked on intranuclear morphogenesis of herpes viruses in Prof. Dr. Lynn Enquist's working group. Since March of this year, he has headed up the Quantitative Virology working group in the Structural Biology of Viruses department at the Heinrich Pette Institute in Hamburg.

I wish to congratulate Mr Bosse sincerely on winning the Robert Koch Postdoctoral Award.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's winner of the Postdoctoral Award for **Immunology** is **Dr. Andreas Schlitzer** from the University of Bonn.

Mr Schlitzer's research focuses on the development and differentiation of myeloid cells, using state-of-the-art molecular immunology methods – such as fate mapping analyses or transcriptome analyses at a single cell level. His results have made important contributions to our understanding of the origin and variety of the different myeloid cells in human and animal tissues. For example, he discovered that the CD14-positive cells in the human dermis are a transient population of macrophages derived from monocytes.

He has published his results highly successfully in top immunology journals, with many articles as a lead author, e.g. in *Immunity* and *Nature Immunology*.

Mr Schlitzer first studied Biology at the University of Marburg, during which he completed an internship at the Paul Ehrlich Institute in the Virology department. He obtained his Master's degree at the *University of Manchester*. Mr Schlitzer wrote his doctoral thesis, which already focused on the function and development of myeloid cells, in Prof. Anne Krug's working group at Klinikum rechts der Isar of the Technical University of Munich. For his postdoctoral work, he initially transferred to the laboratory of Dr. Florent Ginhoux in Singapore. Since December 2015, he has headed up an Emmy Noether research group at the *Life and Medical Sciences Institute (LIMES)* of Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Bonn.

I wish to congratulate Mr Schlitzer sincerely on receiving the Robert Koch Postdoctoral Award.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, the Robert Koch Postdoctoral Award for **Microbiology** goes to **Dr. Alexander Westermann** from Julius Maximilian University in Würzburg.

Mr Westermann's work centres on bacterial regulation via small RNAs in models of infection. With his paper on dual RNA sequencing, published as sole lead author in *Nature*, he achieved a highly recognised technological and scientific breakthrough. This new method allows us to show what actually happens in pathogens and the cells they attack during infections in far greater detail than ever before. For the first time, he succeeded in showing which genes become active in the pathogen and host cell during an infection.

Mr Westermann studied Biology at the University of Heidelberg, obtaining a "Bachelor of Science" degree in Biology and a "Master of Science" degree in Molecular Cellular Biology. He completed his doctorate at the University of Würzburg in Professor Vogel's working group, where he began to focus on bacterial regulation in models of infection. Three years of his doctoral research were funded by a scholarship from the Elite Network of Bavaria. Since April 2015, Mr Westermann has worked as a postdoctoral researcher under Professor Vogel.

Dear Mr Westermann, I am very pleased to congratulate you on your Robert Koch Postdoctoral Award, too.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to ask the three Robert Koch Postdoctoral Award winners to join me on stage to accept their certificates.