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PRESS RELEASE

Stem cell research for medical translation

From the beginning of 2021, the German Stem Cell Network (GSCN) and the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH) have entered into a close cooperation. The GSCN networks and promotes stem cell research in Germany with the aim of expanding basic research, accelerating the translation of research results into therapies and linking scientists from the various research fields. The GSCN and the BIH are now joining forces to advance translation with the help of stem cell technologies. They are founding the "Dialog Platform for Stem Cell Research", which will network and promote national and international stem cell research even more effectively.

Research on stem cells, the jack-of-all-trades among cells, has revolutionized medical research in recent years. Their ability to proliferate indefinitely and develop into different cell types of the body allows a deeper understanding of the molecular processes in the cell, and on the other hand brings forth new application ideas. For example, the development of organoids allows new insights into active substances and disease processes, and the cultivation of a patient's own immune cells allows targeted therapy for cancer.

The German Stem Cell Network GSCN and BIH are now joining forces on a new "Dialog Platform Stem Cell Research". Joint activities will be launched and expanded, such as conferences, workshops, advanced training for young scientists, and events for the public such as the UniStem Day for high school students. "We are very much looking forward to the close cooperation with the BIH, because we pursue the same goals: We want to connect scientists, initiate new collaborations and translate research results into therapies for patients," explains Hans Schöler, director at the Max Planck Institute for Molecular Biomedicine in Münster and acting president of the GSCN. Structurally, the German Stem Cell Network GSCN will continue to exist as a Germany-wide association with many international collaborations.

The Chairman of the BIH Board of Directors, Christopher Baum, also welcomes the close collaboration with the GSCN. "Our two BIH focus areas 'Regenerative Therapies' and 'Single Cell Approaches for Personalized Medicine' are closely linked to stem cell research: In both, research on and with stem cells plays an important role. Collaborations already exist, and new research alliances will be formed. We look forward to working together with the GSCN to expand the activities of the BIH beyond Berlin across Germany."

About the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH)

The mission of the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH) is medical translation: transferring biomedical research findings into novel approaches to personalized prediction, prevention, diagnostics and therapy and, conversely, using clinical observations to develop new research ideas. The aim is to deliver relevant medical benefits to patients and the population at large. The BIH is also committed to establishing a comprehensive translational ecosystem as translational research unit at Charité – one that places emphasis on a system-wide understanding of health and disease and that promotes change in the biomedical research culture. The BIH is funded 90 percent by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and 10 percent by the State of Berlin. The two founding institutions, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin and Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association (MDC), were independent member entities within the BIH until 2020. As of 2021, the BIH has been integrated into Charité as its third pillar, the so-called translational research unit; the MDC is privileged partner of the BIH.

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About the GSCN

The German Stem Cell Network (GSCN) aims at creating synergies between all areas of basic and applied stem cell research and to provide an interface between science, education, politics and society as a whole. Its central task is to pool expertise in stem cell research in Germany and develop synergies between basic research, regenerative medicine, and pharmacology. The initiative will promote innovative research activities on a national and international level. In addition, targeted information and events will be developed to stimulate public discourse on stem cell research.

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