PROGRAM BOOK

2nd International Conference on INDIVIDUALIZED INFECTION MEDICINE

19-21 MARCH 2026

ORGANISERS

CiiM CENTRE FOR INDIVIDUALISED INFECTION MEDICINE

HZI HELMHOLTZ Centre for Infection Research

MHH Hannover Medical School

VolkswagenStiftung

DEAR PARTICIPANTS,

We are delighted to welcome you to the 2nd International Conference on Individualized Infection Medicine held at Herrenhausen Palace in Hannover. The conference is organised by the Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine (CiiM) in cooperation with Hannover Medical School (MHH), Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) and the Volkswagen Foundation.

Infectious diseases remain a major challenge to global health. At the same time, advances in biomedical research, data-driven approaches, and clinical innovation are creating new opportunities to tailor prevention, diagnostics, and therapy to the individual patient. Individualized infection medicine seeks to translate these developments into improved clinical care, combining maximum efficacy with reduced toxicity and more efficient use of resources.

CiiM was established as a joint initiative of MHH and HZI, bringing together clinical excellence and cutting-edge infection research within a shared translational framework. Its mission is to combat complex infectious diseases through the close integration of experimental, theoretical, and clinical research, to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and to strengthen the interface between laboratory research and patient care in infection medicine.

This conference brings together an international and interdisciplinary community to discuss recent scientific advances, open research questions, and future perspectives in individualized infection medicine. In addition, it provides a platform to reflect on the translational, ethical, and structural conditions required to implement individualized approaches in routine clinical practice.

The meeting is held in special remembrance of CiiM's founding director, Michael Manns, whose vision, leadership, and commitment to translational medicine were instrumental in shaping CiiM as a cooperative center uniting clinicians and scientists across institutions. His legacy continues to guide our efforts toward truly personalized infection care.

We are pleased to host you at Herrenhausen Palace, a venue with a long tradition of intellectual exchange. We hope this inspiring setting will encourage open dialogue, critical discussion, and the development of new collaborations.

We wish you a stimulating and productive conference.

Yours sincerely,

Yang Li	Markus Cornberg	Jennifer Debarry
Director CiiM	Director CiiM	Head CiiM Office & Conf. Secretariat

CONTENT OVERVIEW

FACULTY

SPEAKER

Facundo Batista – Ragon Institute of Mass General, MIT and Harvard, Cambridge (USA)

Christine Stabell Benn – University of Southern Denmark, Copenhagen (Denmark)

Tobias Boettler – Medical Center - University of Freiburg, Freiburg (Germany)

Dirk Busch – Technical University of Munich, Munich (Germany)

Triantafyllos Chavakis – University Hospital Carl Gustav Carus, Dresden (Germany)

Markus Cornberg – Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Hannover (Germany)

Davide Corti – Vir Biotechnology, Bellinzona (Switzerland)

Jennifer Debarry – Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Hannover (Germany)

Jaques Deguine – Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cambridge (USA)

Nataliya Di Donato – Hannover Medical School, Hannover (Germany)

Lars Dölken – Hannover Medical School, Hannover (Germany)

Britta Eiz-Vesper – Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany

Luis Graca – Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine, Lisboa (Portugal)

Sabra L. Klein – Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore (USA)

Yang Li – Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Hannover (Germany)

Kerstin Ludwig – University of Bonn, Bonn (Germany)

Mala Maini – University College London, London (UK)

Nisar Malek – University Hospital Tübingen, Tübingen (Germany)

Mihai Netea – Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen (Netherlands)

Ulrike Protzer – Helmholtz Munich/Technical University of Munich, Munich (Germany)

Bali Pulendran – Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford (USA)

Leif Erik Sander – Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Berlin (Germany)

Till Strowig – Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Braunschweig (Germany)

Annapurna Vyakarnam – King's College London, London (UK)

Heiner Wedemeyer – Hannover Medical School, Hannover (Germany)

Ramnik Xavier – Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cambridge (USA)

CHAIRS

Marylyn Addo – University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg (Germany)

Georg Behrens – Hannover Medical School, Hannover (Germany)

Dunja Bruder – Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Braunschweig (Germany)

Luka Cicin-Sain – Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Braunschweig (Germany)

Kathrin de la Rosa – Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Hannover (Germany)

Christine Falk – Hannover Medical School, Hannover (Germany)

Ulrich Kalinke – TWINCORE, Hannover (Germany)

Percy Knolle – Technical University of Munich, Munich (Germany)

Anke Kraft – Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Hannover (Germany)

Michael Meyer-Hermann – Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Braunschweig (Germany)

Thomas Pietschmann – TWINCORE, Hannover (Germany)

Hortense Slevogt – Hannover Medical School, Hannover (Germany)

Natalia Torow – Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Braunschweig (Germany)

Cheng-Jian Xu – Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Hannover (Germany)

PROGRAM

THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 2026

10:00 **REGISTRATION**

WELCOME AND OPENING / SETTING THE STAGE

10:30 *Welcome*
Georg Schütte, Volkswagen Foundation

10:35 *Opening and Setting the Stage*
Yang Li, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine
Markus Cornberg, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine

10:45 *Opening addresses*
Falko Mohrs, Ministry of Culture and Science of Lower Saxony (video)
Josef Penninger, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research
Heiner Wedemeyer, Hannover Medical School

11:05 *Big Data Meets Infection: Predicting Immune Response and Aging with AI*
Yang Li, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine

11:45 COFFEE BREAK

SESSION I: Ancestry effect on immune responses and susceptibility

*Chairs: **Dunja Bruder**, Helmholtz* Centre for Infection Research & ***Georg Behrens**, Hannover Medical School*

12:15 *Innate Immune Variation Across Populations: Novel Lessons for Understanding Host Immunity*
Annapurna Vyakarnam, King's College London

12:50 *Selected lightning talks from abstracts*
Mohamad Ballan | Epigenetic regulation of cytokine responses in aging populations
Tao Yang | Non-linear immune aging of human γδ T cells and age-specific responses in acute CMV infection

13:00 LUNCH BREAK

SESSION II: Understanding the heterogeneity of immune response in healthy

*Chairs: **Dunja Bruder**, Helmholtz* Centre for Infection Research & ***Georg Behrens**, Hannover Medical School*

14:20 *Immune cell atlas reveals complex disease drivers*
Ramnik Xavier, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard

14:55 *Selected lightning talks from abstracts*
Berislav Bošnjak | Differentiation-induced reduction in functional diversity restricts the ability of cytomegalovirus-specific CD8 T cells to eliminate virus-infected cells
Axel Schmidt | Host control of persistent Epstein-Barr virus infection

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*Chair: **Michael Meyer-Hermann**, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research*

15:05 *Informing vaccine design by defining the rules of antibody responses*
Facundo Batista, Ragon Institute of Mass General, MIT and Harvard

16:05 **COFFEE BREAK**

THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 2026 – CONTINUED

SESSION OF THE EXCELLENCE CLUSTER RESIST

*Chair: **Kathrin de la Rosa**, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine*

16:45 *Insights into the Cluster of Excellence RESIST*
Lars Dölken, Hannover Medical School

17:05 *Genomics of Immune Deficiencies*
Nataliya Di Donato, Hannover Medical School

17:25 *Gamma Delta T Cells as Emerging ADCC Effectors in Chronic HBV infection– The New Kid on the Block*
Markus Cornberg, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine

17:45 *Bacterial Crosstalk in Host-Associated Microbiomes*
Till Strowig, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research

18:05 *Hijacking the Off-Switch: An Arms Race of Immune Evasion and Control in HSV-1 and IAV infection*
Lars Dölken, Hannover Medical School

18:30 **END OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM**

CiiM Evening with Pretzels & Beer

19:00 *A New Home for CiiM: Infrastructure Enabling Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation*
Jennifer Debarry, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine

FRIDAY, 20 MARCH 2026

08:00 **REGISTRATION**

SETTING THE STAGE FOR PERSONALIZED MEDICINE

*Chair: **Thomas Pietschmann**, TWINCORE*

09:00 *Variation and adaptation in human immune responses*
Mihai Netea, Radboud University Medical Center

SESSION III: Variation in human response to vaccination

*Chairs: **Marylyn Addo**, University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf*

09:35 *Systems Vaccinology*
Bali Pulendran, Stanford University School of Medicine

10:10 *Estrogen as a Master Regulator of Sex and Age Differences in Vaccination Responses*
Sabra L. Klein, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

10:45 **COFFEE BREAK**

11:10 *Beyond Targeted Immunity: Epidemiological Evidence for the Broader Health Effects of Vaccines*
Christine Stabell Benn, University of Southern Denmark

11:45 *Selected lightning talks from abstracts*
Eirini Nikolouli | IFNAR1 deficiency impedes the regulation of immediate early viral genes and impairs viral immunity in human macrophage models
Lennart Riemann | Systems Immunology Reveals Distinct Immune Signatures of Inhaled and Intramuscular SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination in Humans

SETTING THE STAGE FOR PERSONALIZED MEDICINE

*Chair: **Thomas Pietschmann**, TWINCORE*

11:55 *Personalized Medicine in Infectious Diseases – Quo Vadis*
Leif Erik Sander, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin

12:30 **LUNCH BREAK**

SESSION IV: Heterogeneity of immune response to infection (part 1)

*Chairs: **Natalia Torow**, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research & **Percy Knolle**, Technical University of Munich*

13:30 *Trained immunity in inflammatory disease and cancer*
Triantafyllos Chavakis, University Hospital Carl Gustav Carus

14:05 *Immunoprofiling responses to past and current infections*
Jacques Deguine, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard

14:40 *Host genetic contributions to infection outcomes*
Kerstin Ludwig, University of Bonn

15:15 *Selected lightning talks from abstracts*
Saumya Kumar | A distinct monocyte transcriptional state links systemic immune dysregulation to pulmonary impairment in long COVID
Qiuyao Zhan | Long COVID Imprints a Persistent IL-6–Driven Trained Immunity Program That Bridges Infection to Autoimmunity
Zheng Song | Decade-long persistence of adaptive γδ T effectors in recurrent malaria

15:30 **COFFEE BREAK**

FRIDAY, 20 MARCH 2026 - CONTINUED

POSTER WALK

16:00 *Chairs: **Hortense Slevogt**, Hannover Medical School, **Anke Kraft**, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, **Luka Cicin-Sain**, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research & **Cheng-Jian Xu**, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine*

SESSION IV: Heterogeneity of immune response to infection (part 2)

*Chairs: **Natalia Torow**, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research & **Percy Knolle**, Technical University of Munich*

16:45 *Can the heterogeneity of HBV immune responses be used to personalise management?*
Mala Maini, University College London

17:20 *Therapeutic vaccination to cure HBV - from bench to bedside*
Ulrike Protzer, Helmholtz Munich/Technical University of Munich

17:55 *How Checkpoint Blockade during T cell priming shapes their fate and heterogeneity: Implications for personalized vaccination strategies*
Tobias Böttler, Medical Center – University of Freiburg

18:30 **END OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM**

CONFERENCE DINNER

19:00 Conference venue Schloss Herrenhausen
[registration needed]

SATURDAY, 21 MARCH 2026

08:00 **REGISTRATION**

SETTING THE STAGE FOR PERSONALIZE MEDICINE

*Chair: **Christine Falk**, Hannover Medical School*

09:00 *The German Centers for Personalized Medicine – A Versatile Structure for Precision Healthcare*
Nisar Malek, University Hospital Tübingen

09:20 *Building the Foundations for Personalized Infection Medicine*
Markus Cornberg, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine

09:40 *Hepatitis D as a Model for Precision Infection Medicine: From Research to Personalized Care*
Heiner Wedemeyer, Hannover Medical School

SESSION V: Individualized therapy in infection

*Chairs: **Kathrin de la Rosa**, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine & **Ulrich Kalinke**, TWINCORE*

10:00 *Engineering Precision Immunity: Personalized TCR-T Cell Therapy Against Infections*
Dirk Busch, Technical University of Munich

10:35 **BREAK**

11:00 *Tailored T-cell therapy for viral infections in immunocompromised patients*
Britta Eiz-Vesper, Hannover Medical School

11:35 *The impact of specialised regulatory T cells on humoral responses and antibody production*
Luis Graca, Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine

12:20 *Advances in monoclonal antibodies for the treatment and prevention of viral infections*
Davide Corti, Vir Biotechnology

12:55 *Selected lightning talks from abstracts*
Agnes Bonifacius | HLA-independent Chimeric Ligand Receptor (CLR)-T cells recognizing the HCMV immune evasion protein UL18 for universal HCMV immunotherapy
Simon Krooss | Targeted degradation of viral RNA by Cas13d enables strong antiviral activity against both positive- and negative-sense RNA viruses.

SUMMARY & CLOSING

13:05 **Announcement of the Poster Award**

13:15 **Yang Li and Markus Cornberg**, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine

13:30 **END OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM**

SPEAKER DETAILS

Facundo D. Batista | The Ragon Institute of Mass General Brigham, MIT, and Harvard; Department of Biology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Department of Immunology, Harvard Medical School, USA

Dr. Batista is a leading expert in immunology, specializing in the antibody-producing B cells. His scientific career has focused on B cell activation, fate determination, and antibody production. More recently, his lab has engaged in therapeutic and vaccine research for infectious diseases, including HIV, malaria, and influenza, developing preclinical mouse models to accelerate research in these fields. Dr. Batista is the first Associate and Scientific Director of The Ragon Institute of Mass General Brigham, MIT, and Harvard. He holds the Phillip T. and Susan M. Ragon Chair in the MIT Department of Biology and is Faculty at the Department of Immunology at Harvard Medical School. He is an elected Fellow or Member of EMBO, the American Academy of Microbiology, the Academy of Medical Sciences (UK), the Latin American Academy of Sciences (ACAL), and the National Academy of Medicine (US), and he serves as Chief Editor for The EMBO Journal.

Christine Stabell Benn | University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Christine Stabell Benn, MD, PhD, DMSc, MAE, has worked at the Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) site Bandim Health Project in Guinea-Bissau (www.bandim.org) since 1993. Dr Benn holds a position as a Professor of Global Health at University of Southern Denmark. She is also a Chair at the Danish Institute for Advanced Study. Dr Benn's research focuses on health interventions and their effect on overall health in real life. Vaccines and vitamins affect overall health to a much larger extent than explained by their well-known specific effects; they also have so-called "non-specific effects". These effects are often sex-differential, and they may affect each other, making the sequence and combination of health interventions more important than usually thought. Dr Benn has taken the observations on non-specific effects forward to randomised controlled trials testing the effects of vitamin A supplementation, BCG, oral polio, and measles vaccine on overall health, not just the targeted condition(s). She also tested whether non-specific effects of vaccines are important in high-income settings.

Tobias Böttler | Department of Internal Medicine II, University Hospital Freiburg, Germany

Tobias Boettler was born in Berlin and graduated from Freiburg Medical School, Germany, in 2007. After two years of clinical training, he spent three years as a postdoctoral researcher at the La Jolla Institute in La Jolla, California, USA. Back in Freiburg, he continued his clinical training and became an attending physician at the Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Endocrinology and Infectious Diseases, University Hospital Freiburg. His research group has since focused on T cell immunology with a particular interest in virus-specific CD4 T cell responses in the context of viral hepatitis.

Dirk Busch | Institute for Medical Microbiology, Immunology and Hygiene, Technical University of Munich, Germany

Prof. Dirk Busch, MD, is a clinician-scientist and specialist for medical microbiology and immunology. He is director of the Institute for Medical Microbiology, Immunology and Hygiene at the Technical University of Munich (TUM). His research is focused on the investigation of T cell immunity, especially to isolate or engineer antigen-specific T cells for (adoptive) immunotherapies to treat infections or cancer. Prof. Busch is the chairman of the German Center for Infection Research (DZIF). He is speaker of the SFB initiative TRR338 LETSimmun (Lymphocyte Engineering for Therapeutic Synthetic immunity), and an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. Since 2024, he is a member of the Cancer Grand Challenges "MATCHMAKERS" consortium. He has received various awards and honors, among them the Robert Koch and Howard-Hughes Medical Institute Postdoc Prizes, the Sir-Hans Krebs Prize and the Wilhelm Vaillant Prize. Prof. Busch was co-founder of two spin-off companies, STAGE cell therapeutics (now Juno/BMS) and T Cell Factory (now Kite/Gilead).

Triantafyllos Chavakis | Institute for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine, University Hospital and Faculty of Medicine, Dresden University of Technology, Germany

Prof. T. Chavakis is a clinician-scientist. From 2005-2010 he was principal investigator and head of the Inflammation Biology section of the Experimental Immunology Branch of the National Cancer Institute, NIH, Bethesda MD, USA. Since 2010 he is professor at the University Hospital Dresden and since 2017 he is director of the Institute for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine of the University Hospital Dresden, TU Dresden, Germany. His work focuses on innate immunity, trained immunity and immunometabolism. He has received 3 ERC Grants (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced) and is a member of the German National Academy of Sciences (since 2023).

Markus Cornberg | Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Infectious Diseases and Endocrinology, Medical School Hannover & Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Germany

Markus Cornberg is Full Professor for Infectious Diseases with a focus on Hepatology and Deputy Director of the Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Infectious Diseases and Endocrinology at Hannover Medical School, Germany. Since 2019, he has also served as Clinical Director of the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research and Director of the Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine (CIIM). Prof. Cornberg is the Medical Executive Director of the German Liver Foundation. Since 2006, he has coordinated the German guideline on the management of hepatitis B virus infection and he has served as coordinator of the 2025 EASL Hepatitis B Clinical Practice Guidelines. From 2017 to 2020, he was a member of the Scientific Committee and Governing Board of the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL). He was Associate Editor of the Journal of Hepatology from 2019 to 2024 and currently serves as Associate Editor of Hepatology. His basic science research focuses on the role of cellular immune responses in the progression and treatment of viral hepatitis. Prof. Cornberg has authored over 400 original scientific papers and reviews and has an h-index of 87 (google scholar).

Davide Corti | Department of Antibody Research, Vir Biotechnology, Switzerland

Dr. Davide Corti is Senior Vice President of Antibody Research at Vir Biotechnology and a world-renowned expert in human monoclonal antibody discovery. He earned his Ph.D. in Immunology from the University of Bern and completed postdoctoral training under Antonio Lanzavecchia at the Institute for Research in Biomedicine. Dr. Corti co-founded Humabs BioMed SA in 2009, serving as Chief Scientific Officer until its acquisition by Vir in 2017. He pioneered innovative methods for isolating human monoclonal antibodies from memory B cells, leading to breakthrough therapeutic developments against infectious diseases. His research has directly resulted in two FDA-approved treatments: Ebanga (ansuvimab) for Ebola and Xevudy (sotrovimab) for COVID-19. Additional clinical candidates include tobevibart (Phase 3 for hepatitis D) and VIR-2482 for influenza A. Dr. Corti has authored 167 peer-reviewed publications with nearly 39,000 citations, earning recognition as a Highly Cited Researcher by Clarivate (2021-2024). He is a member of the Henry Kunkel Society and holds over 100 patents in antibody therapeutics.

Jennifer Debarry | Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Germany

Jennifer Debarry has led the joint activities of the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research and Hannover Medical School in individualised infection medicine since 2015. As Head of the Coordination Office of the CiiM, she orchestrates strategic planning and forges interdisciplinary partnerships to accelerate innovations in infection research. Jennifer earned her degree in Biology from Leibniz Universität Hannover, completed her diploma thesis at the Fraunhofer Institute for Toxicology and Experimental Medicine, and performed her doctorate work at the Borstel Research Centre. She undertook targeted management training at Leibniz Universität Hannover and gained hands-on professional experience in the USA. With extensive experience navigating the German research-organization landscape, authoring numerous peer-reviewed publications, and managing high-stakes international projects she brings a unique blend of rigorous scientific expertise and strategic coordination to every project.

Jacques Deguine | Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard; Center for Integrated Solutions for Infectious Diseases, USA

Jacques Deguine is scientific director of the Immunology Program at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, under the leadership of Ramnik Xavier. He also directs the Immunoprofiling Innovation Lab as part of the Center for Integrated Solutions for Infectious Diseases and is an institute scientist at the Broad. His group focuses on multiple aspects of the interactions between the immune system and organ function across multiple tissues. Specifically, he leverages single cell genomics to understand how the immune, epithelial, stromal and neuronal compartments are perturbed in human inflammatory, autoimmune and allergic diseases as well as murine models. The Immunoprofiling Innovation Lab develops and scales novel technologies to measure immune function and antibody responses during acute infections and chronic diseases. Dr. Deguine obtained his Ph.D. in immunology from the Pasteur Institute in France, where he worked on cancer immunotherapy models under Philippe Bousso. He performed his postdoctoral training in the field of inflammation with Gregory Barton at University of California, Berkeley. Before joining the Broad, he was the editor of Trends in Immunology and an associate scientific editor at Cell.

Nataliya Di Donato | Department of Human Genetics, Hannover Medical School, Germany

Nataliya Di Donato has been Director of the Department of Human Genetics at MHH since May 2023. She previously held leadership roles at the Institute for Clinical Genetics, TU Dresden. She studied medicine in Kharkiv, earned her MD-PhD at the University of Zurich, received board certification in Human Genetics, and habilitated at TU Dresden in 2018. She was a DFG Clinician Scientist Fellow at Seattle Children's Research Institute. Her research focuses on genetic mechanisms causing susceptibility to infections, using interdisciplinary, international collaborations and advanced genomic technologies to improve diagnosis and enable personalized treatments.

Lars Dölken | Institute for Virology, Hannover Medical School, Germany

Lars Dölken is director of the Institute for Virology at Hannover Medical School since 2024 and co-speaker of the Cluster of Excellence RESIST. He studied medicine in Greifswald and Dunedin (New Zealand) and received his MD in 2005. After postdoctoral training at the Max von Pettenkofer Institute in Munich, he qualified as a board-certified specialist and completed his habilitation in 2011. He held a Medical Research Council Clinical Scientist Fellowship in Cambridge from 2011 - 2015 before becoming director of the Institute of Virology and Immunobiology at the University of Würzburg in 2015. His research focuses on systems virology, host–pathogen interactions, and single-cell genomics, with particular emphasis on herpesvirus–host interactions and the RNA biology of infection.

Britta Eiz-Vesper | Institute for Transfusion Medicine and Transplant Engineering (ITT), Hannover Medical School, Germany

Britta Eiz-Vesper, Associate Professor at MHH, heads Research & Development and the alloCELL Registry & Lab at the Institute of Transfusion Medicine and Transplant Engineering (ITT). She co-founded the world's first T-cell donor registry (alloCELL.org) and pioneered immune monitoring and quality standards for antiviral T-cell therapies. To date, >800 preparations of mono- and multivirus-specific T-cell products were produced for patients at MHH, in Germany, and across Europe. In the PEI-approved "CurePML" trial (NCT06990087) trial she is responsible for IMP production. Her research advances allogeneic antiviral T-cell therapy and next-generation CAR/TCR engineering for viral infections, virus-induced malignancies, solid tumors, and transplant rejection. She holds key roles in DZIF, National Strategy GCT, EBMT, DGI and DG-GT boards, AWMF guidelines committee and as a spokesperson of the "GlycoCART" consortium.

Luis Graca | Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM), Faculty of Medicine, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Luis Graca, MD, DPhil, is Professor of Immunology and Vice-Dean at the University of Lisbon School of Medicine. The main focus of Graca's research has been directed at understanding the regulation of immune pathology. Graca made significant contributions to the regulation of humoral responses and the pathogenesis of human autoimmunity, leveraging emerging tools, namely single-cell and spatial transcriptomics, that enable greater precision in studying human biology. Graca has been exploring the concept that, just as specialised inflammatory responses are necessary for optimal immunity, specialised regulatory mechanisms ought to be present also. While probing this concept, Graca discovered Foxp3+ iNKT cells and, more recently, T follicular regulatory (Tfr) cells, specialised in regulating humoral responses. Graca chairs the National Advisory Group for Seasonal Vaccination.

Sabra L. Klein | Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA

She is an expert on women's health and sex differences in immune responses to microbes and vaccines, with interrogation of sex-specific effects of aging and pregnancy in humans and animal models. She has over 225 peer-reviewed publications. She has authored several book chapters, edited three books on the broad topics of sex differences in response to infection and treatments for infectious diseases, and is listed in the top 1% of researchers worldwide for publications. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 2023, she received the Vivian Pinn Award for Outstanding Research in Women's Health. In 2024 she became the Mercator Fellow of the University of Hamburg Research Unit on Sex Differences in Immunity and in 2025 she was the inaugural recipient of the Phyllis Greenberger Award from Healthy Women in the U.S., for visionaries in women's health.

Yang Li | Department Computational Biology for Individualised Medicine, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research & Hannover Medical School, Germany

Yang Li, a computational biologist specializing in systems immunology and genetics, is a Professor of Computational biology at Hannover Medical School and directs the Center of Individualized Infection Medicine at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research. Her research integrates multi-omics and single cell omics data to investigate how genetic background and environment jointly shape immune responses and contribute to infectious diseases. She described how genetic factors and molecular pathways influence human immune functions, a crucial aspect for the development of personalized treatments for infectious disease. She has pioneered the single cell multi-omics research on immune dysfunction in COVID-19/long COVID and revealed epigenetic and genetic regulators of immune response in health and patients. Li has published over 190 articles in leading scientific journals, including Cell, Science, Nature Medicine, Nature Immunology, Cell Genomics, Nature Aging. She was awarded NWO Veni (2013), ZonMW Off-Road (2016), Hypatia (2018), NWO Aspatia (2019), ERC Starting Grant (2020).

Kerstin Ludwig | Instiute of Human Genetics, University Hospital Bonn, Germany

After completing undergraduate studies in molecular biotechnology (Dresden, Strasbourg, Toronto), Kerstin Ludwig obtained her PhD on the genetics of dyslexia from the University of Bonn. During her postdoctoral studies, she established molecular and computational approaches to elucidate the genetic causes of complex diseases, especially orofacial clefts, and headed the NGS facility at the University Hospital Bonn. As an Emmy Noether group leader, Kerstin Ludwig expanded her field of work towards host genetics of infectious and immune diseases (e.g. COVID-19, Long COVID, EBV). During the pandemic, she also developed an NGS-based high-throughput method for SARS-CoV-2 detection and co-founded a startup company. In 2024, Kerstin Ludwig was appointed as professor for 'Immune and Infection Genetics' at the University of Bonn and became PI in the local cluster of excellence 'Immunosensation3'.

Mala Maini | University College London, UK

Mala Maini is a Professor of Viral Immunology in the Institute of Infection, Immunity and Transplantation at UCL, London and an Honorary Consultant Physician in the viral hepatitis clinic. The Maini lab studies adaptive immunity to hepatitis B, liver cancer and SARS-CoV-2 to inform the development of immunotherapies and vaccines for these major causes of morbidity and mortality. Through access to well-characterised patient cohorts, human tissue samples and models, their studies provide insights into beneficial and dysfunctional T and B cell responses. The lab is particularly interested in dissecting and harnessing tissue-resident immunity for frontline sentinel surveillance of viruses and cancer. Mala enjoys mentoring and supporting her lab members to obtain fellowships and develop their careers. Work in the Maini lab is funded by Wellcome, UKRI, Cancer Research UK, ERC Horizon 2020 and the Royal Free Charity.

Nisar Malek | University Hospital Tübingen, Germany

Prof. Malek studied medicine at Hannover Medical University completing his doctorate in molecular biology. He is a board certified Internist with specialisation in gastroenterology and hepatology. He conducted his postdoctoral research at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle, USA, where he studied the molecular control of cell division with respect to tumor formation. After returning to Hanover Medical University, he worked as a clinician scientist in internal medicine/gastroenterology and as a group leader at the Institute for Molecular Biology working in basic and translational cancer research. He obtained a professorship in cell division control. Prof. Malek has been the Medical Director of the Department of Internal Medicine (Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Infectious Diseases) at the Tübingen University Clinical Centre since 2011. In 2015 Prof. Malek initiated the creation of a new research institute at Tübingen hospital (The M3 Institute) which will study the interplay of microbiota, metabolism and malignancy. With the establishment of the Center for Personalised Medicine Tübingen in 2014, directed by Prof. Malek, he started to implement a precision medicine program within the university hospital and the health care system in the state of Baden Württemberg focusing on cancer but also inflammatory diseases. With implementing the nation-wide consortium "German network for personalized medicine – DNPM" in 2021 with twenty-one participating university hospitals, Prof. Malek fostered the next step towards realization of personalized medicine for real-world patient care.

Mihai Netea | Radboud University Medical Center, Netherlands

Mihai Netea was born and studied medicine in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. He completed his PhD at the Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands, on studies investigating the cytokine network in sepsis. He currently heads the division of Experimental Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Nijmegen University Nijmegen Medical Center. He is mainly interested in understanding the memory traits of innate immunity (trained immunity), the factors influencing variability of human immune responses, and immunotherapy in human infections and immune-mediated diseases. He is member of the Netherlands Royal Academy of Sciences, and he is a receiver of Spinoza Prize (2016), Reinier de Graaf Medal (2025), and Emil von Behring Prize (2025).

Ulrike Protzer | Institute of Virology, Technical University of Munich / Helmholtz Munich, Germany

Ulrike Protzer is an expert virologist with a strong background in infectious diseases, hepatology, and medical virology, acquired during her clinical training. Since 2008, she has served as director of the Institutes of Virology at Helmholtz Munich and the Technical University of Munich (TUM) and holds the Chair of Virology. Ulrike was a member of the founding executive board of the German Center for Infection Research and leads several national and international research consortia. Her scientific efforts focus on understanding the interactions between viruses and their human hosts and translating this knowledge into novel (immune) therapeutic approaches. For many years, she has focused on the hepatitis B virus (HBV) that kills more than 1 million people yearly. Her group exploits vaccines and T-cell therapies to reconstitute HBV-specific immunity, which are currently in early clinical trials with the goal of curing HBV.

Bali Pulendran | Stanford University School of Medicine, USA

Bali Pulendran is the Violetta L. Horton Professor at Stanford University School of Medicine and Director of the Institute for Immunology, Transplantation, and Infection. He received his undergraduate degree from Cambridge University and his PhD from the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne. His work has transformed human immunology and vaccinology through pioneering systems approaches to vaccination and infection, and through landmark discoveries on dendritic cell diversity and function that helped define key paradigms in innate immunity. His research is published in leading journals including Nature, Science, and Cell. He is a Fellow of the AAAS, a Distinguished Fellow of the AAI, and is listed on Thomson Reuters' Highly Cited Researchers list, recognizing the world's most influential researchers whose publications rank in the top 1% by citations.

Leif Erik Sander | Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany

Leif Erik Sander is a physician-scientist specializing in internal medicine, pulmonary medicine, and infectious diseases. He received additional training in immunology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. In 2012, he established his independent research group at Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, supported by an Emmy-Noether Fellowship. Since 2022, he serves as the Chair of the Department of Infectious Diseases and Critical Care Medicine at Charité and leads the "Personalized Medicine in Infectious Diseases" program at the Berlin Institute of Health. His work focuses on the interface of clinical infectious diseases, immunology, and translational research, with a particular emphasis on individualized approaches to infection prevention and treatment. A central theme of his research is vaccination and prevention. His group investigates the clinical safety and effectiveness of vaccines and develops next-generation vaccine strategies, including novel approaches targeting bacterial pathogens.

Till Strowig | Helmholtz Center for Infection Research & Center for Individualised Infection Medicine, Germany

Prof. Dr. Till Strowig leads the „Microbial Immune Regulation" research group at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) in Braunschweig and holds a W3 professorship at Hannover Medical School (MHH). He joined HZI in June 2013, initially as the head of a Young Investigator group, and has served as a department head since 2019. He studied Medical Biotechnology at TU Berlin, attained his PhD from The Rockefeller University, and completed postdoctoral training in Richard Flavell's laboratory at Yale University. His research concentrates on the influence of the microbiome on mucosal immunity and colonization resistance, utilizing sequencing, microbiological, and immunological techniques in gnotobiotic models and patient studies to develop microbiome-based therapeutic strategies.

Annapurna Vyakarnam | King's College London, UK & St John's Research Institute, Bangalore, India

Prof. Annapurna Vyakarnam holds a dual academic affiliation: Professor of Microbial Immunology at King's College London and Adjunct Professor at St. John's Research Institute, India, where she heads the Human Immunology Laboratory within the Division of Infectious Diseases. Her laboratory's focus is to study the immunology of acute and persistent respiratory infections that pose global health challenges in adults, infants and the vulnerable (the elderly, subjects with Type 2 Diabetes and with defined cardiovascular risk). Her laboratory uses cellular, molecular, immunological, and functional genomic approaches to conduct an in-depth functional analysis of adaptive T cell and innate responses in primary clinical samples. In the past eight years she has set up an active laboratory research programme at St John's Research Institute, Bangalore, India focussed on longitudinal human immune profiling studies to understand heterogeneity, persistence and diversity of host antigen-specific T cell responses to SARS CoV-2, Influenza, and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb)* during the symptomatic infection phase, recovery phase and contextualised with immune responses induced by current and emerging vaccines to the same pathogens in healthy subjects, the elderly, subjects with Type 2 Diabetes and with defined cardiovascular risk. An important focus of her laboratory is to understand mechanisms by which BCG vaccination may be used as a tool to diversify innate immunity and boost Mtb-specific and heterologous adaptive responses to Influenza and SARS CoV-2 vaccines. Prof. Vyakarnam has over 70 peer reviewed publications. Central to her academic career is emphasis on scientific mentoring and integrity.

Heiner Wedemeyer | Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Infectious Diseases and Endocrinology, Medical School Hannover, Germany

Heiner Wedemeyer studied medicine and musicology at the University of Göttingen. He completed his specialist training in gastroenterology at Hannover Medical School under the mentorship of Prof. Michael Manns, where he later served as a senior physician. In 2018, he accepted a W3 professorship in Internal Medicine, focusing on gastroenterology and hepatology, at the University Hospital Essen. He returned to Hannover Medical School to succeed Prof. Manns as W3 Professor and Director of the Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Endocrinology in April 2020. Prof. Wedemeyer's expertise covers the full spectrum of gastroenterology and hepatology, as well as infectious diseases and transplant medicine. His scientific work focuses on inflammatory and viral diseases of the liver and gastrointestinal tract. He currently serves as a principal investigator in the German Center for Infection Research (DZIF), several BMBF-funded consortia, and as coordinator of the EU research network "D-SOLVE," which investigates novel strategies for personalized therapy of hepatitis D.

Ramnik Xavier | Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, USA

Ramnik Xavier is a core institute member of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. He is also director of the Broad's Immunology Program and co-director of the Broad's Infectious Disease and Microbiome Program. He is the Kurt J. Isselbacher Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School; director of the Center for Computational and Integrative Biology and Professor in the Department of Molecular Biology at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH); and co-director of the Center for Microbiome Informatics and Therapeutics at MIT. His laboratory focuses on systematic characterization of genetic variants to understand the regulation of barrier defense, innate and adaptive immunity; chemical biology to control cellular disease phenotypes suggested by human genetics; molecular mechanisms to determine roles of the microbiome in health and disease; and development of computational approaches to uncover patterns of human and microbial pathway regulation during disease and treatment.

CHAIR DETAILS

Marylyn M. Addo | Institute for Infection Research and Vaccine Development (IIRVD), University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE), Germany

Marylyn M. Addo is Professor of Internal Medicine and Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases at UKE. She is the Founding Director of the Institute for Infection Research and Vaccine Development (IIRVD) at UKE, where she leads research projects on the pathogenesis and treatment of emerging viral infections. She is the spokesperson for the DFG-funded Collaborative Research Center 1648 "Emerging Viruses: Pathogenesis, Structure, Immunity". After completing her medical studies, Prof. Addo specialized in infectious diseases and tropical medicine in Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, and the USA. Her team's work contributed to the development of vaccine candidates against Ebola and MERS, as well as to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prof. Addo enjoys international recognition for her contributions to vaccine and therapy strategies against emerging infectious diseases.

Georg Behrens | Department of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology, Hannover Medical School, Germany

Georg Behrens is Professor for T Cell Immunology in the Department for Rheumatology and Immunology at Hannover Medical School, Germany. He is specialist in internal medicine, immunology and infectious disease and trained from 2001 t0 2003 at the Immunology Division at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research, Melbourne, Australia. He is principal investigator of various national and international studies in HIV medicine and infectious diseases and was president of the German AIDS Society from 2011-2019. For many years, we was governing board member of the European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) and from 2019 to 2022 chair of the EACS Treatment Guidelines. He is on the executive board of NEAT-ID, was co-chair of the TTU-HIV within the German Center for Infection Research (DZIF), and is chair of the MD/PhD Program Molecular Medicine.

Dunja Bruder | Immune Regulation Group, Helmholtz Center for Infection Research, Germany

Dunja Bruder studied biotechnology at the Technical University of Braunschweig. After her doctoral thesis (1996-1999) at the Helmholtz Center for Infection Research, she did her postdoc in the junior research group “Mucosal Immunity” at the HZI on chronic inflammatory lung diseases and in particular on the interaction of T cells with the alveolar epithelium. During short-term stays abroad at Harvard Medical School in Boston and Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, she expanded her range of immunological methods and, among other things, learned to do influenza A virus infections in mice. Since 2006 she is head of the “Immune Regulation” group at the HZI. In 2009, she habilitated in immunology at Hannover Medical School. In 2011, she was appointed as university professor for Infection Immunology at the Medical Faculty of OVGU Magdeburg, where she heads another research group.

Luka Čičin-Šain | Department of Viral Immunology, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Germany

Luka Čičin-Šain, studied medicine at the University of Rijeka in Croatia and attained a PhD in Biomedicine under the supervision of Stipan Jonjic. Upon training in the Koszinowski lab at the Max von Pettenkofer Institute in Munich, and in the Nikolich-Zugich lab at the Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) in Portland, OR, USA, he became a research assistant professor at OHSU in 2007. He started his own lab at the Helmholtz Institute for Infection Research (HZI) in Braunschweig, Germany in 2010, funded by starting grants from the Helmholtz Association and from the European Research Council (ERC). From 2011 he was an adjunct junior professor at the Institute for Virology of the Medical School in Hannover (MHH) and since 2016 a tenured faculty member of HZI. He became an associate professor in Individualized Infection Medicine at MHH in 2019, a visiting professor at the University of Rijeka in 2020, and since 2021 he leads the Department of Viral Immunology at HZI. Since 2025 he is full professor at the MHH.

Kathrin de la Rosa | Department of Personalised Immunotherapy, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Germany

Kathrin de la Rosa is a group leader and professor at the Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine (CiiM) in Hannover, a joint initiative of Hannover Medical School (MHH) and the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI), which she joined in May 2024. Her research focuses on translational immunology at the interface of infection biology and precision medicine, with an emphasis on how human B cells generate diversity and how these mechanisms can be harnessed for personalized immunotherapies and innovative vaccine strategies. She earned her PhD at the University Medical Center Freiburg, where she studied B cell disorders, and subsequently conducted postdoctoral research on monoclonal antibodies in infectious diseases in the laboratory of Antonio Lanzavecchia at the Institute for Research in Biomedicine in Bellinzona, Switzerland. She established her independent research group at the Max Delbrück Center in Berlin as a DFG Emmy Noether Fellow in 2018, received an ERC Starting Grant in 2020, and was appointed Professor at Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin in 2021, in a joint appointment with the Berlin Institute of Health.

Christine Falk | Institute of Transplant Immunology, Hannover Medical School, Germany

Christine Falk is full professor for Transplant Immunology at MHH with a long-term research interest in transplant and tumor immunology and the interface to infectious diseases in solid organ transplantation. Major aspects of her research are tissue-resident lymphocytes, donor-specific antibodies, identification of "common denominators" of tumor vs. organ rejection and protection from infection as well as infections like COVID-19 and vaccine responses. She has published > 260 articles in international peer-reviewed journals and served as president of the German Society of Immunology DGfI 2021/2022 and board member of Deutsche Krebshilfe 2014-2024. At present, she is member of scientific advisory boards at the German Council for Science and Humanities, Kuratorium of Volkswagen Foundation, DFG Fachkollegium 2.21, DPZ, LUH, COFONI, as well as reviewer for several scientific journals, DFG, DKH and BMFTR.

Ulrich Kalinke | TWINCORE, Germany

Ulrich Kalinke is Executive Director of TWINCORE, Centre for Experimental and Clinical Infection Research GmbH in Hannover, where he also directs the Institute for Experimental Infection Research. He is Professor at the Hannover Medical School. He studied biology at the Technical University Hannover and conducted doctoral research at the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg, receiving his PhD from the University of Heidelberg in 1990. He then completed postdoctoral training at the University Hospital Zürich under Hans Hengartner and Nobel laureate Rolf M. Zinkernagel. In 1998, he became Staff Scientist and Head of the "Anti-Viral Defense Group" at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Monterotondo (Rom), Italy. In 2002, he was appointed Professor and Director of the Division of Immunology at the Paul-Ehrlich-Institut in Langen. He has held his current position since 2008. His research focuses on anti-viral immune responses and their impact on disease outcomes. He investigates cellular mechanisms of virus sensing and interferon-mediated control of viral spread. His work also addressed viral encephalitis and immune-neural interactions. His group studies herpesviruses, vesicular stomatitis virus and more recently SARS-CoV-2, including memory B cells and therapeutic monoclonal antibodies.

Percy Knolle | Institute of Molecular Immunology and Center for Infection Prevention, School of Medicine and Health & School of Life Science, Technical University Munich, Germany

Prof. Knolle is director of the Institute of Molecular Immunology at the School of Medicine and Health and is member of the board of directors of the Center for Infection Prevention at the School of Life Science at the Technical University of Munich (TUM). He studied Medicine in Germany, France and England and completed the training as a specialist in Internal Medicine at the university hospital in Mainz. From 1997 to 2002, he served as research group leader at the Center of Molecular Biology in Heidelberg. In 2002, he was appointed full professor at the University of Bonn, where he founded the Institute of Molecular Medicine and Experimental Immunology. In 2013, Prof. Knolle accepted a full professorship at the School of Medicine and the School of Life Sciences at TUM, and founded the Institute of Molecular Immunology. His research interests are the determinants and dynamics of local regulation of immune responses in organs against viral infection and cancer, and how local inflammation within organs translates into tissue damage.

Anke Kraft | Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Infectious Diseases and Endocrinology, Medical School Hannover & Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Germany

Anke Kraft studied biology in Braunschweig and Göttingen and received her Dr. rer. nat. in virological-immunological research in Würzburg in 2003. After research stays in Essen and Worcester, MA (USA), she investigated heterologous immune responses in sequential viral infections at Essen University Hospital. In 2013, she moved to Hannover and began working in the Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Infectious Diseases and Endocrinology at Hannover Medical School (MHH). She is affiliated with the Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine (CiiM). Her current research focuses on investigating and overcoming exhausted immune responses with a focus on T cells in chronic hepatitis virus infections and in the LCMV animal model. In addition, she is interested in understanding the mechanisms underlying immune deficiency in patients with liver cirrhosis and in exploring immunomodulation strategies to improve the survival rate of these vulnerable patients.

Michael Meyer-Hermann | Department of Systems Immunology and Braunschweig Integrated Centre of System Biology; Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research; Institute for Biochemistry, Biotechnology and Bioinformatics, Technische Universität Braunschweig; Lower Saxony Center for Artificial Intelligence and Causal Methods in Medicine (CAIMed), Germany

Educated as Theoretical Physicist in Frankfurt/Main and Paris, I developed mathematical models for the dynamics of complex biological systems in Dresden (Germany) and Oxford (UK). As the head of the Department of Systems Immunology at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research in Germany, we employed ordinary and partial differential equations, molecular dynamics, agent-based models, control engineering, neuronal networks, and AI, to better understand the pathogenesis and the treatment of common diseases like chronic inflammation, diabetes, and cancer. I focused on the spatial organization of molecules and cells in the germinal center (GC) reaction, fascinated by the evolutionary process of B cell mutation and selection happening in those sites and giving rise to high affinity and diverse antibodies. The simulation software has become state-of-the-art in the field and is being used by leading groups world-wide.

Thomas Pietschmann | Department of Experimental Virology, TWINCORE, Germany

Thomas Pietschmann, born in Würzburg, studied biology at the Justus Maximilian University of Würzburg and Duke University, Durham USA. In 2000, he received his doctorate at the Institute of Virology at the University of Würzburg on mechanisms of virus morphogenesis in retroviruses and joined Professor Ralf Bartenschlager's group at the Institute of Virology in Mainz as a postdoc. In 2002 he moved to the Department of Molecular Virology at Heidelberg University together with Bartenschlager. In 2006 Thomas Pietschmann founded an Emmy Noether junior research group that focused on the morphogenesis and entry mechanism of the hepatitis C virus. In spring 2007 he and his working group were appointed to TWINCORE. Since 2012 he is head of the Department of Experimental Virology at TWINCORE and has been spokesman for the Helmholtz program “Infection Research” since 2021. In 2023 he joined the HZI management team as scientific co-director and was elected to the executive board of the German Center for Infection Research (DZIF).

Hortense Slevogt | Department of Respiratory Medicine and Infectious Diseases, Hannover Medical School, Germany

Hortense Slevogt is Professor of Respiratory Infections at Hannover Medical School (MHH) and senior consultant for Clinical Infectious Diseases in the department of pulmonology and infectious diseases . She is a board-certified specialist in Internal Medicine, Pneumology and Infectious Diseases. She leads the research group Respiratory Infection Dynamics at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) in Braunschweig. Her research focuses on host–pathogen interactions in the lung, innate immune responses and microbiome–host interactions in respiratory infections. Prof. Slevogt serves on national scientific committees and guideline-related boards in infectious diseases and respiratory medicine.

Natalia Torow | Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Germany

Dr. Natalia Torow is Junior Group Leader of the “Early Life Immunity” group at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) in Braunschweig, Germany. After a PhD at Hannover Medical School and postdoctoral work at RWTH Aachen University Hospital, she established an independent program on neonatal intestinal immune development. Her research dissects how and why neonatal immunity differs from adult immunity, with a focus on how luminal antigen and the microbiota are sensed to initiate intestinal CD4 T cell responses. She studies mechanisms of antigen translocation across the epithelial barrier and how dendritic-cell diversity shapes the quality of T cell priming. Using in vivo models and organoids, her lab translates developmental principles into improved mucosal vaccine strategies for infants.

Cheng-Jian Xu | Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine, Germany

Dr. Cheng-Jian Xu is a professor of Clinical Bioinformatics at Hannover Medical School and a group leader at the Center for Individualized Infection Medicine (CiiM). His research focuses on the analysis of complex biological, chemical, and clinical datasets. His work has contributed to the development of innovative analytical methods to investigate genetic variation and its role in disease susceptibility, leading to the identification of novel biomarkers for early disease prediction. His research integrates bioinformatics, statistics, and clinical data analysis, supporting advances in precision medicine and translational research.

ABSTRACTS & POSTERS

All accepted abstracts are compiled in a separate **abstract book**, which is available online.

Posters will be presented during four structured Poster Walk on Friday afternoon. The overview below provides the allocation of abstracts to the respective walk. Poster numbers can also be found in the table for orientation.

POSTER WALK 1

Chair: ***Hortense Slevogt****, Hannover Medical School*

No.	Abstract title	Authors
1	Epigenetic regulation of cytokine responses in aging populations	Mohamad Ballan, RESIST SI Cohort Investigators, Human Functional Genomics Consortium, Yang Li, Thomas Werfel, Mihai G. Netea, Cheng-Jian Xu
2	Non-linear immune aging of human γδ T cells and age-specific responses in acute CMV infection	Tao Yang, Ximena León-Lara, Berislav Cuvalo, Luz Belinda Ortiz-Alegría, José Antonio Vargas-Villavicencio, Vicente Almeida, Ziqing Wang, Nancy Evelyn Aguilar Gómez, Yusuf E. Abu, Anika Janssen, Charlotte Kleine-Wechelmann, Ahmed Hassan, Zheng Song, Moana Marilyn Dempsey, Likai Tan, Martin Boehne, Constantin von Kaisenberg, Anke RM Kraft, Heiner Wedemeyer, Immo Prinz Berislav Bošnjak, Manuela F. Richter, Reinhold Förster, Markus Cornberg, Sarina Ravens
3	Differentiation-induced reduction in functional diversity restricts the ability of cytomegalovirus-specific CD8 T cells to eliminate virus-infected cells	Lea Fritz, Ahmed Hassan, Lennart Riemann, Berislav Čuvalo, Bibiana Costa, Britta Wieland4, Britta Eiz-Vesper, Christine Falk, Lennart M. Roesner, Thomas Werfel, Ulrich Kalinke, Hristo Georgiev, Reinhold Förster, Berislav Bošnjak
4	Host control of persistent Epstein-Barr virus infection	Axel Schmidt, T. Madhusankha Alawathurage, Friederike S. David, Yosuke Ogawa, Leonard Frach, Sylvia Richter, Merle Schaefer, Carina M. Mathey, Sabrina K. Henne, Japan COVID-19 Task Force, Andreas J. Forstner, Alexander T. Dilthey, Anne-Katrin Pröbstel, Kaan Boztug, Markus M. Nöthen, Ho Namkoong, Yukinori Okada, Eva C. Beins, Kerstin U. Ludwig
5	IFNAR1 deficiency impedes the regulation of immediate early viral genes and impairs viral immunity in human macrophage models	Eirini Nikolouli, Andreas Pavlou, Bibiana Costa, Ulfert Rand, Maike Willers, Mareike von Windheim, Anna-Lena Neehus, Robert Maineke, Julia Dahlmann, Debora Queiros, Guus Rimmelzwaan, Dorothee Viemann, Jacinta Bustamante, Shen Ying Zhang, Luka Cicin-Sain, Jean-Laurent Casanova, Ulrich Kalinke, Nico Lachmann
6	Systems Immunology Reveals Distinct Immune Signatures of Inhaled and Intramuscular SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination in Humans	Lennart Riemann, Swantje Hammer-schmidt, Rodrigo Gutierrez Jauregui, Ivan Odak, Joana Barros Martins, Ahmed Hassan, Leonie Marie Weskamm, Leonie Mayer, Verena Krähling, Rebekka Kraemer, Michaela Friedrichsen, Inga Ravens, Jasmin Ristenpart, Anja Schimrock, Gesine Hansen, Christine Falk, Stephan Becker, Asisa Volz, Gerd Sutter, Jens Hohlfeld, Marylyn M. Addo, Reinhold Förster

No.	Abstract title	Authors
7	A distinct monocyte transcriptional state links systemic immune dysregulation to pulmonary impairment in long COVID	Saumya Kumar, Chaofan, Liang Zhou, Qiuyao Zhan, Ahmed Alaswad, Sonja Volland, Bibiana Costa, Simon Alexander Krooss, Isabel Klefenz, Hagen Schmaus, Antonia Zeuzem, Dorothee von Witzendorff, Helena Lickei Lea Pueschel, Anke R.M. Kraft, Markus Cornberg, Andreas Rembert Koczulla, Isabell Pink, Marius M Hoeper, Cheng-Jian Xu, Susanne Häussler, Miriam Wiestler, Mihai G. Netea, Thomas Illig, Jie Sun , and Yang Li
8	Long COVID Imprints a Persistent IL-6–Driven Trained Immunity Program That Bridges Infection to Autoimmunity	Qiuyao Zhan, Arka Sen Chaudhuri, Liang Zhou, Ahmed Alaswad, Saumya Kumar, Wenchao Li1, Sonja Volland, Dorothee von Witzendorff, Anke R.M. Kraft, Markus Cornberg, Susanne Haussler, Thomas Illig, Mihai G. Netea, Cheng-Jian Xu, Jie Sun Yang Li
9	Decade-long persistence of adaptive γδ T effectors in recurrent malaria	Zheng Song, Carolin Maack, Helen George, Aissata Ongoiba, Safiatou Doumbo, Didier Doumtabe, Shanping Li, Kassoum Kayentao, Peter D. Crompton, Maria Mackroth, Christine Hopp, Immo Prinz
10	HLA-independent Chimeric Ligand Receptor (CLR)-T cells recognizing the HCMV immune evasion protein UL18 for universal HCMV immunotherapy	Sultan Ahmed, Berislav Cuvalo, Martin Messerle, Lars D Iken, Fabio Ius, Vanda Juranic Lisnic, Reinhold Förster, Rainer Blasczyk, Britta Eiz-Vesper, Agnes Bonifacius
11	Targeted degradation of viral RNA by Cas13d enables strong antiviral activity against both positive- and negative-sense RNA viruses.	Pimpan Sujariyakul, Maureen Obara, Lucia Amurri, Sebastian Hook, Anna C. Henkel, Andreas Pavlou, Vanessa Hamann, Matthias Bruhn, Marie Ruhe, Martin Kohn, Mathieu Iampietro, Branka Horvat, Heiner Wedemeyer, Ulrich Kalinke, Michael Ott Jens Bohne, Simon Alexander Krooss

POSTER WALK 2

Chair: ***Cheng-Jian Xu****, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine*

No.	Abstract title	Authors
12	Genetic determinants of immune responses across diverse populations link variation in immunity to disease	Javier Botey-Bataller, Nienke van Unen, Peter Aaby, Collins Boahen, Christine Stabell Benn, Benjamin Cossins, Tania O. Crişan, Anna-Maria Dittrich, Ruth Grychtol, Gesine Hansen, ALLIANCE consortium, Joppe W. Hovius , Thomas Illig, Leo A.B. Joosten, Maartje Jacobs-Cleophas, Martin Jaeger, Vinod Kumar, Kerstin Ludwig, Vasiliki Matzaraki, Quirijn de Mast, Simone J.C.F.M. Moorlag, Niels P. Riksen, Isis Ricaño-Ponce, Anca-Lelia Riza, Lennart M. Rösner, Reinout van Crevel, Rinke Stienstra, Todia P. Setiabudiawan, Ioana Streață, Godfrey Temba, Cees Tack, Cees C. van den Wijngaard, André J.A.M. van der Ven, Sonja Volland, Thomas Werfel, Thomas F. Schulz, Cheng-Jian Xu, Mihai G. Netea, Yang Li
13	MoReHealth Niedersachsen: A Best Practice for Standardized Multi-omics Health Research in Personalized Medicine in Lower Saxony	Sara Haag, Sven Bichtemann, Thekla Cordes, Laurenz Engel, Karsten Hiller, Jochen Huehn, Markus Kersting, Gavin O Connor, Martina Palatella, Sarina Ravens, Lennart M. Rösner, Julia Schmidt, Thomas Werfel, Bernd Wollnik, Helena U. Zacharias, Reinhold Förster, Thomas Illig
14	Integrative Multi-omics Predicts Immune Aging Across Health and Disease	Yihan Zhang, Human Functional Genomics Consortium, Yang Li, Mihai G. Netea, Cheng-Jian Xu
15	GENSEC: Your Unified Hub for Advanced Multi-Omics Research	Ahmed Hassan, Oliver Dittrich-Breiholz, Ilona Rosenboom, Gunnar Schmidt, Lutz Wiehlmann, Anna-Lena Hagemann, Marie Dorda
16	Latent cytomegalovirus infection accelerates immune aging across the human lifespan	Yuesi Xi, Xun Jiang, Yihan Zhang, Jierong Han, Ali Ehsani, Ahmed Alaswad, Liang Zhou, Anaisa Valido Ferreira, Elisabeth Dulfer, Jalil Nourisa, Andre J. A.M. van der Ven, Cheng-Jian Xu, Mihai G. Netea, Yang Li
17	Ageing reshapes genetic regulation of cytokine responses	Nienke van Unen, Javier Botey-Bataller, Lennart Roesner, Mohamad Ballan, Thomas Werfel, Jochen Huehn, Thomas F. Schulz, Cheng-Jian Xu, Stephan Traidl, Reinhold Forster, RESIST SI Consortium, Yang Li
18	The human gut microbiome as a transmissible component within families	Kun D. Huang, Cornelia Gottschick, Pavaret Sivapornnukul, Zanaib Noor, Agata Anna Bielecka, Bianca Klee, Till-Robin Lesker, Rafael Mikolajczyk, Till Strowig
19	Multi-seasonal Systems Analysis of Influenza Vaccination Reveals Molecular Signatures Associated with Seroprotection.	Nhan Nguyen, Saumya Kumar, Nienke van Unen, Martijn Zoodsma, Pedro Ribeiro, Rodrigo Pedroso, Filipa Ribeiro, Stephanie Trittel, Peggy Riese, Javier Botey-Bataller, Valerie Ohlendorf, Janyn Heisig, Liang Zhou, Ahmed Alaswad, Heiner Wedemeyer, Markus Cornberg, Cheng-Jian Xu, Frank Pessler, Benjamin Maasoumy, Luis Graca, Carlos A. Guzmán, Yang Li

No.	Abstract title	Authors
20	Generation of Human Alveolar Macrophages to Model Lung Innate Immunity and RSV Infection	Theresa Nägler, Zahra Moazezi Tehrankhah, Ayse Agac, Marie-Christin Knittler, Ariane Nguyen, Maximilian Schinke, Mark-Christian Klassen, Hassan Toufaili, Martin Ludlow, Albert D.M.E. Osterhaus, Guus F. Rimmelzwaan, Gesine Hansen, Susanne Herold, Robert Meineke, Ully Matt, Nico Lachmann
21	Immune response activation and dynamic profiling of human iPSC-derived macrophages in tuberculosis infection models	D Paasch, H Schevel, A Riehle, B Costa, H Toufaili, T Gehnen, J Dahlmann, A Pavlou, AL Neehus, AHH Nguyen, E Schiering, T Buchegger, J Busta-mante, G Hansen, U Kalinke, E Gulbins, H Grassmé, N Lachmann

POSTER WALK 3

Chair: ***Luka Cicin-Sain***, *Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research*

No.	Abstract title	Authors
22	Detecting the individual transcriptional viral load and diversity in human cell lines	Claudia Pommerenke, Anika Freise-Rode, Ulfert Rand
23	Identifying antiviral activity of human PBMCs in an autologous co-culture model post lung transplantation	Luka Cicin-Sain
24	Characterizing anti-HCMV immunity in an infection model of explanted human lungs	Berislav Čuvalo, Laura Ospina-Quintero, Lea Fritz, Berislav Bošnjak, Martin Messerle, Reinhold Förster
25	Modulation of cytotoxicity and inflammatory response by co-infection of S. aureus with S. mitis on human bronchial epithelial cells	Malena Bos
26	Metabolic control of RSV-induced syncytia formation through STAT1-dependent cholesterol regulation	Ayse Agac, Martin Ludlow, Marie-Christin Knittler, Albert D.M.E. Osterhaus, Guus F. Rimmelzwaan, and Robert Meineke
27	Metabolites in cerebrospinal fluid as biomarkers for improved diagnosis and understanding of pathogenesis of central nervous system infections	Kurt-Wolfram Sühs, Thomas Skripuletz, Dominica Hudasch, Heike Bähre, Sven Schuchardt, Frieder Neu, Fakhar Waqas, Frank Pessler
28	Epigenetic clocks indicate accelerated aging in individuals with hyperuricemia and patients with gout	Medeea Badii, Zhaoli Liu, Mohamad Ballan, Orsolya Gaal, Georgiana Cabău, Valentin Nica, Ancuța R. Straton, Ioana Hotea, HINT Consortium, Cristina Pamfil, Simona Rednic, Radu A Popp, Cheng-Jian Xu, Tania O Crişan, Leo A B Joosten
29	Cell type heterogeneity in the autophagy of Salmonella	Kunjan Harit, Isita Sagar, Merle Gatz, Sarah Beyer, Stephen Halle, Guntram Grassl, Gopala Nishanth, Dirk Schlüter
30	$CD16^{+}$ γδ T Cells Mediate Antibody-Dependent Cellular Cytotoxicity and Associate with Viral Control in Chronic Hepatitis B Virus Infection	Paulina E Schröter, Katja S Steppich, Zheng Song, Sebastian Klein, Roni Souleiman, Melanie Urbanek-Quaing, Ayesha D Lietzau, Ansgar Schnieders, Erich Freyer, Birgit Bremer, Ximena León-Lara, Vicente Almeida, Rodrigo Gutierrez Jauregui, Constantin von Kaisenberg, Heiner Wedemeyer, Immo Prinz, Sarina Ravens, Yannic Bartsch, Anke RM Kraft, Markus Cornberg
31	HDV-specific CD8+ T cells are imprinted into a dysfunctional effector phenotype in chronic HDV infection	Ali Ehsani, Carina Jacobsen, Katja Steppich, Mara Lissek, Anke Kraft, Heiner Wedemeyer, Cheng-Jian Xu, Helenie Kefalakes

POSTER WALK 4

Chair: ***Anke Kraft****, Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine*

No.	Abstract title	Authors
32	Non-selective beta blockers reduce bystander CD8+ T cell activation in decompensated liver cirrhosis	Ayesha Lietzau, Ines Tapken, So-Young Kim, Roni Souleiman, Erich Freyer, Anke RM Kraft, Sarah Schütte, Tammo L Tergast, Benjamin Maasoumy, Heiner Wedemeyer, Gabriele Zurek, Eui-Cheol Shin, Markus Cornberg, Christian Niehaus
33	Role of UL36 in protective T-cell responses in HCMV-infected individuals	Johanna Busmann, Sabine Tischer-Zimmermann, Sultan Ahmed, Maria Michela Santamorena, Ulrich Kalinke, Luka Cicin-Sain, Martin Messerle, Rainer Blasczyk, Britta Maecker-Kolhoff, Sabrina Kraus, Agnes Bonifacius, Britta Eiz-Vesper
34	Single cell RNAseq-guided identification of a BKV protein VP1- and HLA-B*07:02-restricted TCR for personalized gene-engineered T cell therapy	Friederike Floegel, Amelie Besler, Hannes Roggenkamp, Rainer Blasczyk, Nicole Fischer, Britta Maecker-Kolhoff, Christian Hinze, Agnes Bonifacius, Britta Eiz-Vesper
35	Reshaping Adoptive T-cell Therapies with T Memory Cell–Based Strategies, Control of Graft-Versus-Host Disease (GVHD), and Modulation of the Tumor Microenvironment (TME)	Thomas Böldicke, Martin Gasser, Ana Maria Waaga-Gasser
36	Essential roles of IgM+IgD+ regulatory B cells, non-switched memory B cells and plasmablasts in the progression of MASLD and HCC	Nataliia Petriv, Huizhen Suo, Inga Hochnadel, Kai Timrott, Nina Bondarenko, Lavinia Neubert, Elena Reinhard, Nils Jedicke, Patrick Kaufhold, Carlos Alberto Guzmán, Ralf Lichtinghagen, Michael P. Manns, Heike Bantel, Tetyana Yevsa
37	Aid-based engineering of B cells through the integration of HIV-receptor exons	Ata ul Wakeel Ahmad, Christoph Ratswohl, Lisa Ispatt, Emre Mert Ipekoglu, Cathrin Gerhard, Clara Vázquez García, Mikhail Lebedin, Dennis Jeroen Doorduijn, Kathrin de la Rosa
38	Towards B cell engineering in vivo - a lentiviral vector that can specifically target human and mouse B cells	Dennis Doorduijn, Ata ul Wakeel Ahmad, Kathrin de la Rosa
39	Lipid nanoparticle-encapsulated mRNA programs human myeloid cells to produce tick-borne encephalitis virus-neutralizing antibodies	Aparna Shandheep, Andreas Pavlou, Christine Ehlers, Maureen Obara, Katharina Rahmel-Stein, Bibiana Costa, Matthias Bruhn, Olivia Luise Gern, Sebastian Hook, Lena Mareike Busker, Annett Ziegler, Martin Kohn, Michaela Beránková, Berenike Lange, Jennifer Skerra, Michael Ott, Thomas Pietschmann, Theresa Graalmann, Daniel Růžek, Ulrich Kalinke
40	Dual, antimicrobial and anticancer activity of Streptomyces ambofaciens (Myt 8) and S. globisporus ONU 1019 (Myt 11) secondary metabolites isolated from the Odesa Bay, the Black Sea: an in vitro study	Kateryna Potapenko, Gennadii Lisiutin, Nataliia Vasylieva, Iryna Strashnova, Raimo Franke, Nataliia Petriv, Oladimeji Paul Duduyemi, Kyrylo Baklan, Nadiia Korotaieva, Tetyana Gudzenko, Michael P. Manns, Mark Broenstrup, Henrike Lenzen, Marius Vital, Volodymyr Ivanytsia, Tetyana Yevsa

No.	Abstract title	Authors
41	Course and clinical outcomes of chronic hepatitis delta: A longitudinal analysis of 565 patients from the D-SOLVE and HDV-1000 Consortia	Habiba Kamal, Elisabetta Degasperi, Monica Radu, Dana Sambarino, Anika Wranke, Ivana Carey, Miroslava Subic-Levrero, Karin Lindahl, Lisa Sandmann, Petra Dörge, Julia Kahlhöfer, Fabien Zoulim, Kosh Agarwal, Soo Aleman, Florin Alexandru Caruntu, Pietro Lampertico, Heiner Wedemeyer
42	Impact of specific bile acids on NK cell function in HDV patients	Po-Chun Chen, Christopher Dietz-Fricke, Tushar More, Karsten Hiller, Norman Woller, Heiner Wedemeyer
43	The impact of rivers Nyamwamba, Mubuku and Nyamugasani flooding on infectious diseases in Uganda	Jamilah Amurikiire

PARTICIPANTS

First Name	Last Name	Institution	E-Mail
Marylyn	Addo	University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf	sekretariataddo@uke.de
Ayse	Agac	University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover	ayse.agac@tiho-hannover.de
Ata ul Wakeel	Ahmad	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine | Max Delbrück Center	ataulwakeel.ahmad@helmholtz-hzi.de
Alina	Ahmed	University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences	ahmedalina932@gmail.com
Arsa	Akbarysedigh	Hannover Medical School	akbarysedigh.arsa@mh-hannover.de
Vicente	Almeida	Hannover Medical School	almeida.vicente@mh-hannover.de
Julia	Alpers	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	alpers.julia@mh-hannover.de
Suha	Al-Zurqa	UNICEF	sal-zurqa@unicef.org
Jamilah	Amurikiire	Organization for Development of Integrated Rural-Urban Community Entities	jamurikiire@outlook.com
Medeea	Badii	University of Medicine and Pharmacy „Iuliu Haţieganu”	medeea.badii@gmail.com
Kyrylo	Baklan	Hannover Medical School	Baklan.Kyrylo@mh-hannover.de
Maike	Bälkner	Otto-von Guericke University Magdeburg	maike.baelkner@helmholtz-hzi.de
Mohamad	Ballan	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	mohamad.ballan@helmholtz-hzi.de
Yannic	Bartsch	TWINCORE	yannic.bartsch@twincore.de
Viktoria	Baszczok	Hannover Medical School	viktoria.baszczok@stud.mh-hannover.de
Facundo	Batista	Ragon Institute of Mass General, MIT and Harvard	BatistaAdmin@mgh.harvard.edu
Georg	Behrens	Hannover Medical School	ignacio.melanie@mh-hannover.de
Denise	Bellmann	Hannover Medical School	Bellmann.denise@mh-hannover.de
Christine Stabell	Benn	University of Southern Denmark	cbenn@health.sdu.dk
Christine	Bentz	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	christine.bentz@helmholtz-hzi.de
Benjamin	Blank	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	Benjamin.blank@helmholtz-hzi.de
Julia	Boehme	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	julia.boehme@helmholtz-hzi.de
Thomas	Böldicke	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	thomas.boeldicke@helmholtz-hzi.de
Agnes	Bonifacius	Hannover Medical School	bonifacius.agnes@mh-hannover.de
Malena	Bos	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	malena.bos@helmholtz-hzi.de
Berislav	Bosnjak	Hannover Medical School	bosnjak.berislav@mh-hannover.de
Javier	Botey Bataller	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	javier.botey@helmholtz-hzi.de
Tobias	Böttler	Uniklinik Freiburg	Tobias.Boettler@uniklinik-freiburg.de
Dunja	Bruder	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	dunja.bruder@helmholtz-hzi.de
Nadin	Bruhn	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	Bruhn.Nadin@mh-hannover.de
Dirk	Busch	Technical University of Munich	birgit.ofiera@tum.de
Lena	Busker	TWINCORE	lena.busker@twincore.de
Johanna	Busmann	Hannover Medical School	Busmann.Johanna@mh-hannover.de
Belinda	Camp	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	belinda.camp@helmholtz-hzi.de
Triantafyllos	Chavakis	Uniklinikum Dresden	Triantafyllos.Chavakis@ukdd.de
Chutao	Chen	TWINCORE	chutao.chen@twincore.de
Po-Chun	Chen	Hannover Medical School	chen.po-chun@mh-hannover.de
Yin-Han	Chou	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	Chou.Yin-Han@mh-hannover.de
Luka	Cicin-Sain	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	luka.cicin-sain@helmholtz-hzi.de
Thekla	Cordes	TU Braunschweig | Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	thekla.cordes@tu-braunschweig.de
Markus	Cornberg	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	cornberg.markus@mh-hannover.de
Davide	Corti	Vir Biotechnology	cbrenna@vir.bio

First Name	Last Name	Institution	E-Mail
Berislav	Čuvalo	Hannover Medical School	cuvalo.berislav@mh-hannover.de
Kathrin	de la Rosa	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	kathrin.delarosa@helmholtz-hzi.de
Jennifer	Debarry	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	debarry.jennifer@mh-hannover.de
Jaques	Deguine	Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard	jdequine@broadinstitute.org
Ülkü	Demir	Staatliches Baumanagement Hannover	uelkue.demir@sb-han.niedersachsen.de
Nataliya	Di Donato	Hannover Medical School	didonato.office@mh-hannover.de
Alina	Diecke	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	Diecke.Alina@mh-hannover.de
Daniel	Dietz	University Medical Center Göttingen	daniel.vieiradietz@stud.uni-goettingen.de
Xuetong	Ding	TWINCORE	xuetong.ding@twincore.de
Lars	Dölken	Hannover Medical School	doelken.Lars@mh-hannover.de
Dennis	Doorduijn	Max Delbrück Center	dennisjeroen.doorduijn@mdc-berlin.de
Frauke	Drobek	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	frauke.drobek@helmholtz-hzi.de
Ali	Ehsani	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	ehsani.ali@mh-hannover.de
Merle	Eith	Hannover Medical School	merle.eith@gmx.de
Britta	Eiz-Vesper	Hannover Medical School	eiz-vesper.britta@mh-hannover.de
Christine	Falk	Hannover Medical School	falk.christine@mh-hannover.de
Laura	Fernandez Carrera	TWINCORE	laura.fernandez-carrera@twincore.de
Jan Henrik	Finke	TU Braunschweig	jan.finke@tu-braunschweig.de
Friederike	Floegel	Hannover Medical School	floegel.friederike@mh-hannover.de
Reinhold	Förster	Hannover Medical School	Foerster.Reinhold@mh-hannover.de
Sophia	Geißelbrecht	Hannover Medical School	Sophia.Geisselbrecht@stud.mh-hannover.de
Markus	Gerhard	Technical University of Munich	markus.gerhard@tum.de
Heike	Gielen-Haertwig	Institute for Biomedical Translation Lower Saxony	h.gielen-haertwig@nds.de
Natascha	Gödecke	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	natascha.goedecke@helmholtz-hzi.de
Vega	Gödecke	Hannover Medical School	goedecke.vega@mh-hannover.de
Nishanth	Gopala Krishna	Hannover Medical School	gopalakrishna.nishanth@mh-hannover.de
Sudharsan	Govindaraj	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	sudharsan.govindaraj@helmholtz-hzi.de
Luis	Graca	Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine	lgraca@medicina.ulisboa.pt
Lennart	Greiner	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	greiner.lennart@mh-hannover.de
Pia	Grimpe	Otto-von Guericke University Magedburg	pia.grimpe@helmholtz-hzi.de
Eugenia	Gripp	Hannover Medical School	gripp.eugenia@mh-hannover.de
Carlos Alberto	Guzmán	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	carlosalberto.guzman@helmholtz-hzi.de
Sara	Haag	Translational Alliance in Lower Saxony (TRAIN)	sara.haag@translationsallianz.de
Kareem	Haal	Hannover Medical School	haal.kareem@mh-hannover.de
Stephan	Halle	Hannover Medical School	halle.stephan@mh-hannover.de
Swantje	Hammerschmidt	Hannover Medical School	hammerschmidt.swantje@mh-hannover.de
Jierong	Han	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	hanjierong98@gmail.com
Kunjan	Harit	Hannover Medical School	Harit.Kunjan@mh-hannover.de
Jonas	Heinicke	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	jonas.heinicke@helmholtz-hzi.de
Dirk	Heinz	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	dirk.heinz@helmholtz-hzi.de
Willem	Heisler	Hannover Medical School	heisler.willem@mh-hannover.de
Kun	Huang	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	kun.huang@helmholtz-hzi.de
Jochen	Hühn	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	jochen.huehn@helmholtz-hzi.de
Nura	Idris		nunaedris025@gmail.com

First Name	Last Name	Institution	E-Mail
Trabelsi	Ismail	University Medical Centre of Nutrition and Food Technology Tunisia	ismailnut@gmail.com
Lothar	Jänsch	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	lothar.jaensch@helmholtz-hzi.de
Christine	Josenhans	LMU Munich	josenhans@mvp.uni-muenchen.de
Carola	Kaienburg	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	Kaienburg.Carola@mh-hannover.de
Ulrich	Kalinke	TWINCORE	ulrich.kalinke@twincore.de
Jan	Karpa	LMU München	karpa@mvp.lmu.de
Helenie	Kefalakes	Hannover Medical School	Kefalakes.Helenie@mh-hannover.de
Asif	Khan	Independent Lab	asif.ms67895@gmail.com
Zahra	Kiadaliri		z.kiadaliri@yahoo.com
Mark-Christian	Klassen	Hannover Medical School	klassen.mark-christian@mh-hannover.de
Sebastian	Klein	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	klein.sebastian@mh-hannover.de
Sabra L.	Klein	John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health	sklein2@jhu.edu
Ronja	Knöfel	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	Knoefel.Ronja@mh-hannover.de
Percy	Knolle	Technical University of Munich	percy.knolle@tum.de
Hannes	Kolde	Hannover Medical School	kolde.hannes@mh-hannover.de
Chandra	Kommana	TWINCORE	chandra.kommana@twincore.de
Adrian	Kordes	Novogene GmbH	adrian.kordes@novogene-europe.com
Anke	Kraft	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	kraft.anke@mh-hannover.de
Simon	Krooss	Hannover Medical School	krooss.simon@mh-hannover.de
Saumya	Kumar	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	saumya.dileepkumar@helmholtz-hzi.de
Kristina	Lachmann	Fraunhofer IST	kristina.lachmann@ist.fraunhofer.de
Henrik	Lange	GENEWIZ Germany GmbH, from Azenta Life Sciences	henrik.lange@azenta.com
Taosan	Li	TWINCORE	taosan.li@twincore.de
Yang	Li	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	katja.bayer@helmholtz-hzi.de
Helena	Lickei	Hannover Medical School	lickei.helena@mh-hannover.de
Luca	Lindenblatt	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	lindenblatt.luca@mh-hannover.de
Inês	Lorga	Hannover Medical School	sampaioelorga.ines@mh-hannover.de
Kerstin	Ludwig	University of Bonn	kerstin.ludwig@uni-bonn.de
Britta	Maecker-Kolhoff	Hannover Medical School	maecker.britta@mh-hannover.de
Mala	Maini	University College London	m.maini@ucl.ac.uk
Nisar	Malek	University Hospital Tübingen	Nisar.Malek@med.uni-tuebingen.de
Tobias	May	inscreenex GmbH	tobias.may@inscreenex.com
Andreas	May	Lower Saxony Ministry for Science and Culture	andreas.may@mwk.niedersachsen.de
Alice	McHardy	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	alice.mchardy@helmholtz-hzi.de
Steven	Medina	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	steven.medina@helmholtz-hzi.de
Tanaya	Mehetre	TU Braunschweig	letsmailtanaya@gmail.com
Robert	Meineke	University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover	robert.meineke@tiho-hannover.de
Michael	Meyer-Hermann	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	mmh@theoretical-biology.de
Theresa	Nägler	Hannover Medical School	naegler.theresa@mh-hannover.de
Akshayata	Naidu	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	akshyata.naidu@gmail.com
Niranjana	Nair	University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover	Niranjana.Nair@tiho-hannover.de
Noha	Nasr	Max Planck Göttingen	nohaahmedamin293@gmail.com
Mihai G.	Netea	Radboud University Medical Centre | LIMES-Institut	mihai.netea@radboudumc.nl
Valentin	Nica	UMF "Iuliu Hatieganu" Cluj-Napoca	nicavalentin93@gmail.com

First Name	Last Name	Institution	E-Mail
Christian	Niehaus	Hannover Medical School	niehaus.christian@mh-hannover.de
Eirini	Nikolouli	Hannover Medical School	nikolouli.eirini@mh-hannover.de
Daniela	Paasch	Hannover Medical School	paasch.daniela@mh-hannover.de
Christiane	Patzelt	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	patzelt.christiane@mh-hannover.de
Andreas	Pavlou	TWINCORE	andreas.pavlou@twincore.de
Josef	Penninger	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	josef.penninger@helmholtz-hzi.de
Frank	Pessler	TWINCORE	frank.pessler@twincore.de
Nataliia	Petriv	Hannover Medical School	Petriv.Nataliia@mh-hannover.de
Thomas	Pietschmann	TWINCORE	susanne.koester@twincore.de
Edith Katharina	Plucinski	Hannover Medical School	Schwarz.Edith@mh-hannover.de
Claudia	Pommerenke	Leibniz Institute DSMZ	claudia.pommerenke@dsmz.de
Elisabeth	Pößnecker	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	elisabeth.poessnecker@helmholtz-hzi.de
Ulrike	Protzer	Technical University of Munich | Helmholtz Munich	protzer@tum.de
Matthias	Prucha	Olink, part of Thermo Fisher Scientific	matthias.prucha@olink.com
Bali	Pulendran	Stanford University School of Medicine	ryogold@stanford.edu
Lluis	Quintana-Murci	Institut Pasteur	lluis.quintana-murci@pasteur.fr
Florian	Reinhart	Gilead Sciences GmbH	Florian.Reinhart@gilead.com
Yvonne	Reinke	Niedersachsen.next GmbH | BioRegioN	y.reinke@nds.de
Lennart	Riemann	Hannover Medical School	riemann.lennart@mh-hannover.de
Anca Lelia	Riza Costache	University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova	anca.costache@umfcv.ro
Ilona	Rosenboom	Hannover Medical School	rosenboom.ilona@mh-hannover.de
Lennart	Rösner	Hannover Medical School	roesner.lennart@mh-hannover.de
Julia	Rudert	University Hospital Magdeburg	julia.rudert@helmholtz-hzi.de
Mareike	Rüßmann	Volkswagen Foundation	ruessmann@volkswagenstiftung.de
Leif Erik	Sander	Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin	sekretariat-infektiologie@charite.de
Siwar	Saoudi	University Medical Centre of Nutrition and Food Technology Tunisia	siwarsaoudi17@gmail.com
Ludwig	Scheffler	Hannover Medical School	scheffler.ludwig@mh-hannover.de
Christian	Scherf	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	christian.scherf@helmholtz-hzi.de
Dirk	Schlüter	Hannover Medical School	schlueter.dirk@mh-hannover.de
Axel	Schmidt	University of Bonn	axel.schmidt@ukbonn.de
Paulina	Schröter	Hannover Medical School	Schroeter.Paulina@mh-hannover.de
Amy	Seidel	Hannover Medical School	seidel.amy@mh-hannover.de
Aparna	Shandheep	TWINCORE	aparna.shandheep@twincore.de
Niraj Kumari	Singh	Hannover Medical School	singh.niraj@mh-hannover.de
Hortense	Slevogt	Hannover Medical School	slevogt.hortense@mh-hannover.de
Thomas	Sommer	Institute for Biomedical Translation Lower Saxony	t.sommer@nds.de
Zheng	Song	University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf	z.song@uke.de
Roni	Souleiman	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	ronisouleiman@icloud.com
Doris	Steinemann	Hannover Medical School	steinemann.doris@mh-hannover.de
Ioana	Streata	University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova	ioana.streata@yahoo.com
Till	Strowig	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	till.strowig@helmholtz-hzi.de
Carina	Szirmay	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	carina.szirmay@helmholtz-hzi.de
Ines	Tapken	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	tapken.ines@mh-hannover.de
Sabine	Tischer-Zimmermann	Hannover Medical School	tischer-zimmermann.sabine@mh-hannover.de

First Name	Last Name	Institution	E-Mail
Natalia	Torow	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	natalia.torow@helmholtz-hzi.de
Iman	Touati	University Hospital Bonn	iman.touati@ukbonn.de
Stephan	Traidl	Hannover Medical School	traidl.stephan@mh-hannover.de
Stephanie	Trittel	Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	stephanie.trittel@helmholtz-hzi.de
Burkhard	Tümmler	Hannover Medical School	tuemmler.burkhard@mh-hannover.de
Nienke	van Unen	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	nienke.vanunen@helmholtz-hzi.de
Marius	Vital	Hannover Medical School	vital.marius@mh-hannover.de
Marina	Vnuchko	Hannover Medical School	vnuchko.marina@mh-hannover.de
Sandra	von Hardenberg	Hannover Medical School	vonhardenberg.sandra@mh-hannover.de
Annapurna	Vyakarnam	King's College London/St John's Research Institute	annapurna.2.vyakarnam@kcl.ac.uk
Ziqing	Wang	Hannover Medical School	wang.ziqing@mh-hannover.de
Heiner	Wedemeyer	Hannover Medical School	gastroenterologie.mhh@mh-hannover.de
Eva	Weissinger	Hannover Medical School	mischak-weissinger.eva@mh-hannover.de
Fine	Wiemann	Hannover Medical School	Fine.S.Wiemann@stud.mh-hannover.de
Ramnik	Xavier	Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard	xavier@molbio.mgh.harvard.edu
Yuesi	Xi	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	yuesi.xi@helmholtz-hzi.de
Chengjian	Xu	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	xu.chengjian@mh-hannover.de
Tao	Yang	Hannover Medical School	yang.tao@mh-hannover.de
Tetyana	Yevsa	Hannover Medical School	yevsa.tetyana@mh-hannover.de
Qiuyao	Zhan	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	qiuyao.zhan@helmholtz-hzi.de
Yihan	Zhang	Centre for Individualised Infection Medicine	yihan.zhang@helmholtz-hzi.de
Annett	Ziegler	TWINCORE	annett.ziegler@twincore.de
Artur	Zimmermann	Waters Biosciences (formerly BD Biosciences)	artur.zimmermann@bd.com
Jasmin	Zischke	Hannover Medical School	zischke.jasmin@mh-hannover.de
Maryna	Zubarovska	Hausarztpraxis am Wenden, Braunschweig	zubarovska.maryna@gmail.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

CONGRESS VENUE

Schloss Herrenhausen

Herrenhäuser Straße 6 – 30419 Hannover

How to reach Schloss Herrenhausen

The Symposium Venue can be reached by tram (Üstra):

- Line 4 – stop “Herrenhäuser Gärten”
- Line 5 – stop “Herrenhäuser Gärten”

Symposium website: **https://www.ciim-hannover.de/aktuelles/symposium-2026/**

INFORMATION FOR SPEAKERS

Please prepare your presentation as a *.ppt or *.pdf file in 16:9 format.

Kindly send your final presentation by email to **ciim-symposium-2026@mh-hannover.de** no later than **the day before your scheduled talk**. Alternatively, you may hand it in electronically (USB stick) at the venue at the latest before the session in which you are presenting.

Conference staff will be available on site to collect presentations and provide assistance if needed.

If you intend to use your own laptop for the presentation, please inform us in advance. While this is generally not preferred for logistical reasons, we will do our best to accommodate it if notified beforehand.

INFORMATION FOR POSTER PRESENTERS

Please create the poster in A0 format and bring it to the conference in printed form. The posters will be presented on poster walls one site. These will remain in place for the entire duration of the conference. Please affix your poster on 19 March and remove it on 21 March. The poster walk is scheduled for Friday, **20 March 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 4:40 p.m**. Please be at your poster at this time. The presentation time is a maximum of 3 minutes plus 2 minutes for discussion. The conference language is English (printed posters and oral poster presentations).

We are awarding a poster prize. This will be announced on Saturday, 21 March at 1:00 p.m.

ACCREDITATIONS

The conference is accredited by the Medical Association of Lower Saxony and the German Society for Infectious Diseases, see below the details. The respective registration forms will be available on site.

Accreditation of the German Society for Infectious Diseases (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Infektiologie)

20 iCME in the category C

Accreditation of the Medical Association of Lower Saxony (Ärztekammer Niedersachsen)

9 credits for 2.5 days

2nd International Conference on

INDIVIDUALIZED INFECTION MEDICINE

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