

Press Release

Presentation of the 2014 Eppendorf Award for Young European Investigator to Madeline Lancaster

- This year's research prize awarded by Eppendorf goes to Austria

Heidelberg/Hamburg, May 23, 2014 – The American scientist Madeline Lancaster, Ph. D. (Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Laboratory of Jürgen Knoblich at the Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, IMBA, Vienna, Austria) has won the 2014 Eppendorf Award for Young European Investigators.

Madeline Lancaster, born 1982, receives the Eppendorf Award for her work showing that complex neuronal tissues resembling early states of fetal human brain can be created in vitro from pluripotent stem cells. Her groundbreaking experiments allow for the first time to recapitulate the development of brain structures in a three-dimensional organoid. Madeline Lancaster also documented that diseases caused by aberrant development such as microcephaly can be reproduced in the organoid culture. These discoveries allow for novel approaches towards the understanding of neurological diseases.

With the 15,000 Euro Eppendorf Young Investigator Award which was established in 1995, Eppendorf AG honors outstanding work in biomedical research and supports young scientists in Europe up to the age of 35. The Eppendorf Award is presented in partnership with the scientific journal Nature. The Award winner is selected by an independent committee composed of Prof. Reinhard Jahn (Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry, Göttingen, Germany), Prof. Dieter Häussinger (Clinic for Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Infectiology, Düsseldorf, Germany), Prof. Maria Leptin (EMBO, Heidelberg, Germany) and Prof. Martin J. Lohse (Institute for Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of Würzburg, Germany).

The Award ceremony took place at the EMBL Advanced Training Centre in Heidelberg, Germany, on May 22, 2014. The laudatio honoring Madeline Lancaster's achievements was held by the jury chairman Prof. Reinhard Jahn.

Madeline Lancaster: "The human brain exhibits dramatic evolutionary and developmental expansion, a process that has been difficult to examine in traditional animal models. In order to gain insight into this uniquely human process, my work focuses on the use of a 3D in vitro model system of human brain development, termed cerebral organoids, to examine regulators of brain size in the context of human evolution and neurodevelopmental disease.

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This Award is a recognition of the potential of stem cell technologies to model human development and disease. It is a testament to the power of combining diverse fields to shed light on key questions, and it would not have been possible without the important contributions of our collaborators, and the supportive environment of the Knoblich group and IMBA.”

More information at www.eppendorf.com/award

About Eppendorf AG:

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