



Press Release

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Yasmine Belkaid wins Emil von Behring-Prize 2017

American Immunologist honored for Microbiota-Research.

Dr. Yasmine Belkaid, Immunologist at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), was honored with the Emil-von Behring Prize of Philipps-University Marburg. The ceremony was held on March 31st 2017, the 100 year anniversary of Emil von Behring's death, in the Old Auditorium of Philipps-University. With its monetary reward of 20,000 Euros, donated by the pharmaceutical company GSK Vaccines, the Behring-Prize is one of the highest endowed German awards in medical science. This year, for the first time in its 36-year tradition, the prize will be awarded to a woman, Yasmine Belkaid.

In her opening address, University President Professor Dr. Katharina Krause focused on the importance of combining basic and applied research. "Yet another reason I am tremendously pleased we are able to bestow this honor upon Yasmine Belkaid for her exceptional and future-oriented work in the area of mucosal immunology".

Furthermore, the President expressed her delight about GSK Vaccines continuous monetary support of the Emil von Behring-Preis 2017. Jochen Reutter, Marburg Site Manager and Director of GSK Vaccines GmbH stated, „At GSK, supporting science is a high priority, as only the latest scientific findings ensure progress as well as the approval and production of innovative vaccines”.

Yasmine Belkaid was born in Algiers in 1968. In 2005, she started working for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a department of the National Institute of Health (USA). In 2014, she became the director of the NIAID-Microbiota-Program. She has received numerous awards, i.e. the Gold Medal of International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (2013), and the Sanofi-Institute Pasteur Award (2016).

„Yasmine is an extraordinarily talented and dedicated scientist. With her courage, ambition and perseverance, she uncovered groundbreaking findings about our body's most complicated immune system, the mucus membranes." Ulrich Steinhoff from the Institute for medical Microbiology of Philipps-University praised the recipient. „The fact that the intestines do not only produce the immune defense against pathogens but also the immune tolerance for nutrition and our microbiota has enormous implications.”

In her acceptance speech, Yasmine Belkaid expressed her gratitude for receiving the Emil von Behring-Prize. „This is a tremendous honor and a wonderful recognition for the work we did over the past few years”. She thanked her “wonderful trainees and colleagues” for their work and stated that “this prize is also recognition of each of them“.

The award ceremony was accompanied by a symposium titled „Infection Research 2017 – 100 Years after Emil von Behring“, which was led by two renowned scientists: The Immunologist Prof. Dr. Klaus Rajewsky (Berlin) and Nobel-Prize winner and Virologist Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Harald zur Hausen (Heidelberg).

Emil von Behring-Prize

Philipps-University presents the Emil von Behring-Prize biannually to commemorate Emil von Behring, who discovered the Diphtheria-Antitoxin and implemented Serum-Therapy. He won the first ever Nobel Prize for medicine and was a Professor of Hygiene in Marburg from 1895 until his passing in 1917. The Behring-Prize is awarded to scientists for their extraordinary contributions to the fields of Immunology, Microbiology or Virology. The Behring Prize is one of the highest funded prizes for Medicine in Germany, the winner receives 20.000€, funded by GSK Vaccines. In addition to the monetary prize the award includes an official medal with an engraved portrait of Emil von Behring.

Past recipients of the Emil von Behring-Prize include Klaus Rajewsky (Harvard), Ruslan Medhazitov (Yale), Ralph M. Steinmann (New York University) and Robert Huber (Munich).

Picture:

The American Immunologist Dr. Yasmine Belkaid received the Emil von Behring-Prize of Philipps-University Marburg on March 31, 2017 (Photo: Philipps-University Marburg / Markus Farnung).

Picture may only be used for reports on the Emil von Behring-Prize Ceremony 2017

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