

## PRESS RELEASE

### **“Research is a shared journey” – Jung Foundation honours scientific excellence and fosters personal exchange**

**Prof. Elena Conti, PhD (Munich), Prof. Dr Jörn Piel (Zurich), Dr med. Benjamin Ruf, MD (Tübingen) and Prof. Wolf-Herman Fridman, MD, PhD (Paris) recognised for groundbreaking medical research in Hamburg**



Caption: (from left to right). Jochen Spethmann, Chairman Jung Foundation; Prof. Dr Jörn Piel (Zurich) and Prof. Elena Conti, PhD (Munich) - they jointly receive the Jung Prize for Medicine 2025; Prof. Wolf-Herman Fridman, MD, PhD, (Paris) honoured with the Jung Gold Medal for Medicine 2025 by the Jung Foundation, Dr med. Benjamin Ruf, MD (Tübingen) awarded the Jung Career Advancement Award 2025, Prof. Dr. Blanche Schwappach-Pignataro, Member of the Board of Trustees and the Scientific Advisory Board of the Jung Foundation

*Hamburg, May 16, 2025. Major breakthroughs in science are rarely made alone. This spirit shaped the Jung Foundation’s award ceremony, held last night in the elegant Hanse Lounge in Hamburg. Amid heartfelt speeches and thoughtful tributes, the independent Hamburg-based foundation celebrated four researchers whose work has either already transformed*

*medical practice or holds the promise to do so: Prof. Elena Conti, PhD, Prof. Jörn Piel, Dr med. Benjamin Ruf, MD, and Prof. Wolf-Herman Fridman, MD, PhD. The evening was marked by warm, cross-generational conversations that transcended disciplinary boundaries.*

**Prof Elena Conti, PhD (58)**, received the **Jung Prize for Medicine 2025** for her seminal contributions to RNA metabolism. As Director at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry in **Martinsried near Munich**, she investigates how cells detect and degrade faulty messenger RNAs – a fundamental process that, when disrupted, is linked to diseases such as ALS or spinal muscular atrophy. The prize, worth €300,000, will support the continuation of her vital research. Conti shares the award with Prof Jörn Piel.

**Prof. Dr Jörn Piel (58)**, co-recipient of the **Jung Prize for Medicine 2025**, explores the untapped potential of nature. A microbiologist at ETH **Zurich**, Piel focuses on bacterial species previously considered uncultivable, searching for bioactive compounds with the potential to fight cancer and drug-resistant infections. His work merges scientific curiosity with high-tech biotechnology – and the prize money allows him to keep exploring this uncharted territory.

**Dr med. Benjamin Ruf (34)** was awarded the **Jung Career Advancement Award 2025** for his vision of a more precise, immune-driven cancer therapy. A physician-scientist at the M3 Research Center and the Department of Internal Medicine I in **Tübingen**, Ruf investigates how tumours evade immune responses – and how these defences can be strategically dismantled. As a member of Germany's only oncology Cluster of Excellence, iFIT (Image Guided & Functionally Instructed Tumor Therapies), Ruf advocates for bridging basic science and clinical care. In his moving acceptance speech, he called for more dialogue between

research and the realities of patient treatment. He receives €210,000 in unrestricted funding for his research.

**Prof. Wolf-Herman Fridman, MD, PhD (79)**, received the **Jung Gold Medal for Medicine 2025** in recognition of his lifetime achievements. The Professor Emeritus of Immunology at Université **Paris** Cité is a trailblazer in immuno-oncology, whose studies on the tumour microenvironment have transformed the understanding and treatment of cancer. In his reflective address, Fridman looked back on the evolution of his field and emphasised the importance of international collaboration and mentoring the next generation of scientists. The gold medal comes with a €30,000 scholarship, which he may award to a young researcher of his choosing.

In between the official programme, guests experienced what truly sets the Jung Foundation apart: personal connection. Awardees, board members, scholarship recipients and guests engaged in open, inspiring conversations – about science, values, and the passion that drives researchers across generations.

A downloadable group photo of the awardees and further impressions from the evening are available here: <https://jung-stiftung.de/en/press/>.

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### **About the Jung Foundation for Science and Research**

The Jung Foundation for Science and Research, based in Hamburg, Germany, is an independent organization that annually provides up to three awards in recognition of fundamental and advanced research projects of significant clinical relevance. Since 1967, the foundation has invested more than 15 million euros in supporting researchers whose projects build a bridge between research and the bedside. Under the motto of 'Excellence in human medicine', the foundation makes a significant contribution to the development of new treatment methods. The Jung Prize for Medicine, the Jung Gold Medal for Medicine and the Jung Career Advancement Award for Medical Research are among the most highly endowed medical prizes in Europe. With the additional awarding of fellowships and German scholarships, the foundation provides a total funding of up to 650,000 euros annually.

Further information at [www.jung-stiftung.de/](http://www.jung-stiftung.de/)

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