

## Pressemitteilung

### Helmholtz Zentrum München - Deutsches Forschungszentrum für Gesundheit und Umwelt Sonja Opitz, Abteilung

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**HelmholtzZentrum münchen**  
Deutsches Forschungszentrum für Gesundheit und Umwelt

## Launch of the Helmholtz Center Munich Stem Cell Center

**The Helmholtz Center Munich opened its Stem Cell Center with a prominent scientific symposium on 14th-15th December 2017. The two-day event saw researchers of the Stem Cell Center and international speakers present alongside each other and gave a strong impression of the diversity of approaches and applications the stem cell research is set to achieve.**

The symposium was opened by Prof. Dr. Günther Wess, Scientific Director of the Helmholtz Center Munich, who thanked the researchers involved for their hard work and effort in making the Stem Cell Center a reality. Stem cell research at the Helmholtz Center Munich has developed to an international top level and, with the new recruiting in the field of epigenetics, represents a unique combination of research on cell plasticity, disease models and cell therapy. Indeed a large number of the centers teams work in these fields enabling cross-talk and interactions within and between research groups.

The symposium programme reflected this diversity. The Founding Institutes of the Stem Cell Center are headed by Directors Prof. Dr. Magdalena Götz (Institute of Stem Cell Research), Prof. Dr. Maria Elena Torres-Padilla (Institute of Epigenetics and Stem Cells) and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wurst (Institute of Developmental Genetics) and they all presented their work at the meeting.

Understanding why some cells are able to transform themselves into any other cell type, this is the work of Maria-Elena Torres Padilla and Wolfgang Wurst. How one might then use these properties in the future to replace lost body cells was, among other things, the topic of Magdalena Götz and Prof. Dr. Heiko Lickert (Director of the Institute for Diabetes and Regeneration Research) both working on ways to regenerate dead nerves or islet cells. Prof. Dr. Robert Schneider (Director of the Institute of Functional Epigenetics) also explained the central importance of epigenetics for stem cell properties. In addition, numerous department and group leaders presented their current work, as well as students and postdocs in the poster sessions.

### Combining expertise for a medical key technology

A number of high profile international experts also presented including Olivier Pourquié from Harvard Stem Cell Center and Irving Weissmann from Stanford University. Irving Weissmann received the Helmholtz International Fellow Award prior to delivering his keynote lecture and highlighting the importance of basic research as the firm foundation required for translational advancements. Various guests and old acquaintances completed the event such as Prof. Dr. Timm Schröder from Basel, who recently received the Erwin Schrödinger Prize together with researchers from Helmholtz Center Munich.

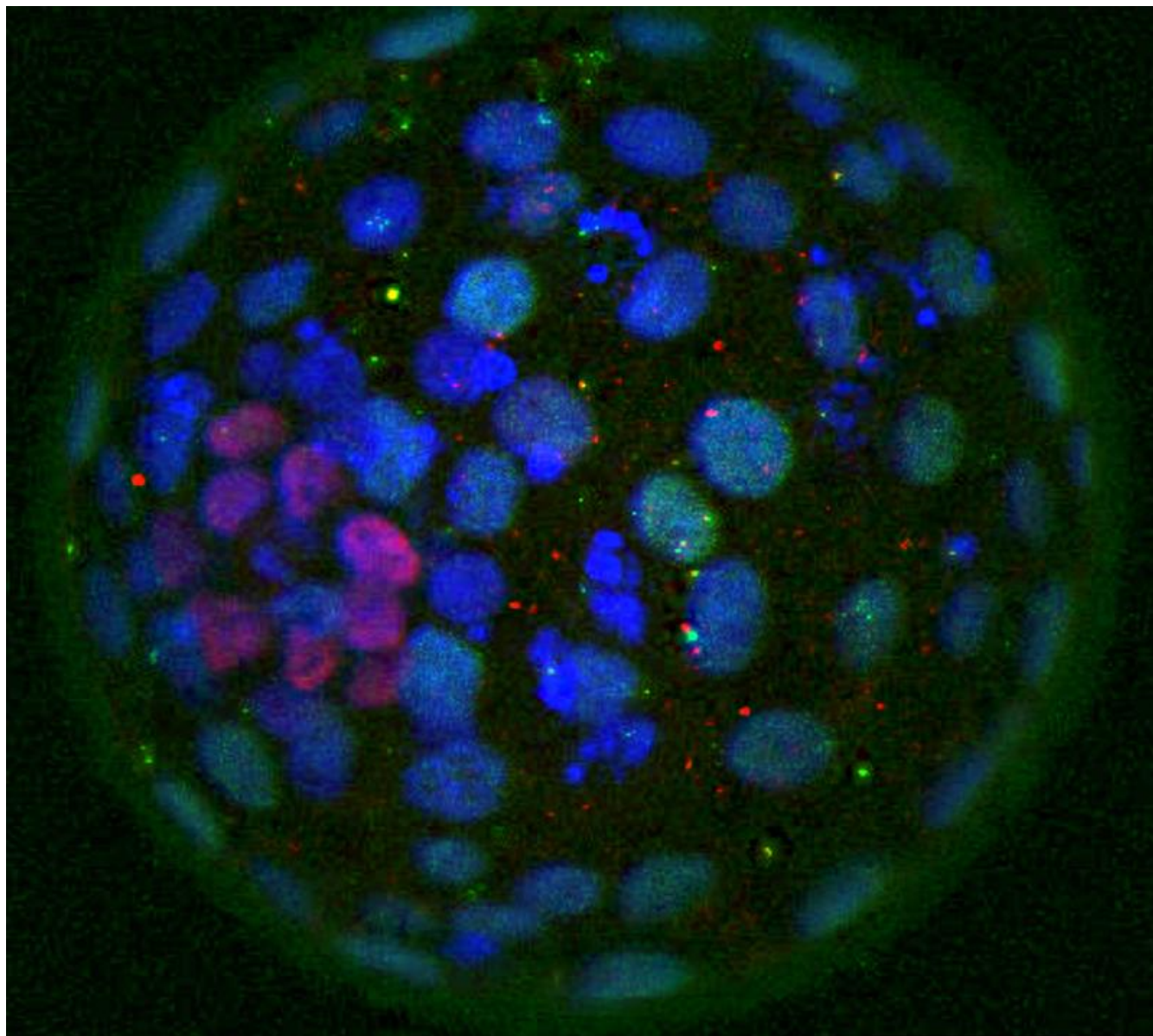
"The new Stem Cell Center combines our expertise in the field of stem cell research and thus links various aspects of this medical key technology", comments Magdalena Götz.

#### Further Information

The Helmholtz Zentrum München, the German Research Center for Environmental Health, pursues the goal of developing personalized medical approaches for the prevention and therapy of major common diseases such as diabetes and lung diseases. To achieve this, it investigates the interaction of genetics, environmental factors and lifestyle. The Helmholtz Zentrum München is headquartered in Neuherberg in the north of Munich and has about 2,300 staff members. It is a member of the Helmholtz Association, a community of 18 scientific-technical and medical-biological research centers with a total of about 37,000 staff members. [www.helmholtz-muenchen.de/en/index.html](http://www.helmholtz-muenchen.de/en/index.html)

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Stem cell research at the Helmholtz Center Munich has developed to an international top level.  
Source: Helmholtz Zentrum München