DKMS: Research grants for the fight against blood cancer

The DKMS Stiftung Leben Spenden (Foundation for Giving Life) invites young scientists worldwide to apply for the John Hansen Research Grant. The application deadline is December 3, 2021. The research grant is endowed with 240,000 euros each, paid over a period of three years. With this sum, the foundation annually supports up to four international young scientists with promising research projects in the field of blood stem cell transplantation and cell therapy.

Requirements for participation include a doctorate or comparable qualification dating back no more than eight years. All information on the application modalities as well as further details on the John Hansen Research Grant are available on the DKMS Professionals’ Platform - professional.dkms.org/research-grant. If you have any questions, you are also welcome to contact DKMS by e-mail: grant@dkms.org.

DKMS is known as an international non-profit organization in the fight against blood cancer. More than 10.9 million potential blood stem cell donors are registered there. In its 30-year history, DKMS has already given more than 94,000 blood cancer patients a second chance at life. In addition, the world’s leading blood stem cell donor center is also working intensively in the medical and scientific field to further improve the survival and healing chances of blood cancer patients.

“As long as there are still patients who suffer relapses or die from life-threatening complications such as graft-versus-host disease, we are far from reaching our goal,” says Marcel van den Brink, Chairman of DKMS Foundation for Giving Life. “It is important to us to drive scientific progress in this niche medical field. In this way, we contribute to the further development of existing treatment options and the discovery of new ones.” Since 2015, an important pillar has been the funding of outstanding young scientists with the John Hansen Research Grant (until 2019: Mechtild Harf Research Grant).

One of them is Dr. Katarina Riesner, postdoctoral researcher at Charité Berlin and winner of the John Hansen Research Grant 2019. With the support of the grant, she is looking for answers to the question of how the life-threatening graft-versus-host disease can be prevented or successfully treated in the future. To this end, she investigates certain genes of human metabolism in endothelial cells - the cells that line all blood vessels. In the future, these genes could be regulated by drugs to prevent the blood stem cell transplant from attacking the patient’s own cells. Unfortunately, about 30 to 60 percent of all transplanted patients still suffer this dangerous complication.

John A. Hansen, after whom the scholarship is named, was an outstanding oncologist and distinguished immunogeneticist at the renowned Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. With his excellent achievements in the field of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, this dedicated and compassionate physician made a significant contribution to increasing the efficacy and safety of blood stem cell and bone marrow transplants - and thus gave numerous patients a new chance at life. As a long-standing member of the board of the DKMS Foundation for Giving Life and a member of the DKMS Medical Advisory Board, he was deeply connected to the DKMS family.
DKMS Professionals` Platform

Since the end of April, visitors of the DKMS Professionals` Platform professional.dkms.org are able to find further information there on scholarships and on the medical and scientific work of the international DKMS Group. For example, users can find out exciting news from the DKMS Life Science Lab and the Clinical Trials Unit in Dresden, DKMS' own research unit. One scientific focus is the further optimization of donor selection for the perfect match: In order for the blood stem cells of a foreign donor to settle in the patient's body, the tissue characteristics and several other parameters must match as closely as possible. The Clinical Trials Unit systematically searches for additional immunogenetic factors that positively influence the success of blood stem cell transplantation.

URL zur Pressemitteilung: http://professional.dkms.org/research-publications/research-grant
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