

**Press release****Universität Heidelberg****Marietta Fuhrmann-Koch**

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<http://idw-online.de/en/news850093>Contests / awards  
Medicine  
transregional, national**UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG**  
ZUKUNFT  
SEIT 1386**Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize for Neurologist at Universität Heidelberg**

Combating brain tumors with immune cells – that is the goal of physician PD Dr Dr Lukas Bunse, who has been selected for a Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize awarded by the German Research Foundation this year. He is to be honored for his research on the development and clinical application of immune therapeutic strategies for patients with high-grade gliomas, as these cell growths are called. Lukas Bunse does his research as an associate professor at the Medical Faculty Mannheim of Heidelberg University and at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ). In addition, he is a physician in the Neurological Department of the University Hospital Mannheim.

Press Release  
Heidelberg, 2 April 2025Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize for Neurologist at Universität Heidelberg  
Germany's most important award for early-career researchers goes to PD Dr Dr Lukas Bunse

Combating brain tumors with immune cells – that is the goal of physician PD Dr Dr Lukas Bunse, who has been selected for a Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize awarded by the German Research Foundation this year. He is to be honored for his research on the development and clinical application of immune therapeutic strategies for patients with high-grade gliomas, as these cell growths are called. The prize, endowed with 200,000 euros for each recipient, is Germany's most important award for early-career researchers. The prize money can be used for their further scientific studies over a period of up to three years. Lukas Bunse does his research as an associate professor at the Medical Faculty Mannheim of Heidelberg University and at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ). In addition, he is a physician in the Neurological Department of the University Hospital Mannheim.

Lukas Bunse's research focuses on high-grade gliomas, which arise through mutations of brain or spinal marrow cells and are extremely difficult to treat. With his studies the scientist wants to contribute to a better understanding of brain tumors and use these findings to develop effective immunotherapies. Such therapies function by genetically engineering the body's immune cells in such a way that they target tumor cells. Lukas Bunse's research findings have "the potential to supplement, or even replace, the current therapies in future by a gentler form of treatment. In addition, it is likely that the approaches will also be transferrable to other brain tumors or other types of cancer," the German Research Foundation states in its tribute.

Lukas Bunse studied Medicine at Heidelberg University and University College London (United Kingdom). His medical doctoral thesis dealt with certain spontaneous immune responses in glioma patients. In 2020 he completed a second doctoral thesis in biology. He is a clinical scientist at the Medical Faculty Mannheim of Heidelberg University and underwent his specialist training to become a neurologist in the Neurological Department of the University Hospital Mannheim from 2019 to 2024. Lucas Bunse has been a senior physician in Neurology since 2024. In addition, he pursues research as an independent team-leader in the Clinical Cooperation Unit Neuroimmunology and Brain Tumor Immunology at the German Cancer Research Center in Heidelberg. After receiving Heidelberg University's

Ruprecht-Karls Prize in 2018 and, in 2019, the Hella Bühler Prize, worth 100,000 euros, he was awarded the Novartis Prize in 2023 for therapy-relevant immunological research by the German Society for Immunology.

The Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize has been awarded annually since 1977 to outstanding researchers in an early phase of their academic career. The prize pays tribute to an autonomous profile and research results that enrich the specialist community, so that the researchers are also expected to achieve a top performance in future, too. The total of ten awards in 2025 go to four women and six men. The Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prizes will be awarded at a ceremony in Berlin on 3 June.

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URL for press release: <http://www.dkfz.de/en/cell-therapy> – Lukas Bunse’s website

URL for press release: <http://www.dfg.de/de/service/presse/pressemitteilungen/2025/pressemitteilung-nr-05> – German Research Foundation’s press release (GER)