



CECAD Excellence Cluster, University of Cologne

PRESS RELEASE

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Cologne Mycology Professor Oliver Cornely honoured with “Prof Pushpa Talwar Memorial Oration” for his research

Cologne mycology Prof Oliver A. Cornely, Director of the Clinical Trials Center and the Translational Research Platform at the CECAD Excellence Cluster at the University of Cologne, has been honoured with the Prof Pushpa Talwar Memorial Oration for the vital international significance of his outstanding research into fungal infection. The Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh (India) confers this prestigious award.

Cologne, 17 January 2014. Prof Cornely heads the Clinical Trials Center and the Translational Research Platform at the CECAD Excellence Cluster at the University of Cologne. In addition to his research activities, as a senior physician at the Clinic I of Internal Medicine of the Cologne University Hospital he is responsible for clinical therapies for mycological infections. Prof Cornely's research focuses on the prevention and treatment of fungal diseases. His clinical studies and research are highly relevant to both individuals and society as a whole, since invasive fungal infections have a mortality rate of up to 80 percent. This area of medical research has important implications for India.

Together with his Cologne working group, Prof Cornely developed the first prophylaxis against fungal infection and successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of high-dose therapies for patients already infected. His guidelines for treating mucormycoses, which are the first in the world, will serve as a foundation for additional standard treatments in India where infections caused by mucor fungi are common. Prof Cornely's findings are also internationally highly relevant for cancer therapies; Immune systems of cancer patients are often compromised by treatment which increases the risk of fungal infection. One of Cornely's current studies explores the fungal infection risk for leukaemia patients, for example.

Prof Cornely's mycology research is a very valued element of the aging research carried out at the CECAD Excellence Cluster as well. Our immune systems weaken as we age, which increases the risk of fungal infection.

The prize is bestowed by the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER). Founded as a centre for excellence in medical science in 1960, it is one of the two most important medical institutes in India.

Recipients are honoured for their exceptional excellence in medical mycology. The award was named after Prof Pushpa Talwar, an accomplished researcher in mycology over many years who founded an independent mycology department during her tenure at PGIMER that has since grown into a national reference laboratory. The first memorial oration was delivered in 2012 to Dr Jacques F. Meis from the Canisius Wilhelm Hospital in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

The prize promotes mycological research and was established in memory of Prof Pushpa Talwar, the former Director of the Medical Mycology Department at PGIMER and honorary member of the Society of Indian Human and Animal Mycologists.

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