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Press Release

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CECAD Communications

High honors for Cologne Specialist in Infectious Diseases: Prof. Dr Oliver Cornely of the Excellence Cluster CECAD and University Hospital of Cologne, Director of the Clinical Trials Center in Cologne has been elected President of the ECMM – European Confederation of Medical Mycology.

Fungal infections increase with age. Thus, in an aging society, research into mycological infections is of high relevance.

The immune system weakens on aging and fungal infections, especially those carrying a bad prognosis, become more common. The internationally renowned ECMM European Confederation of Medical Mycology gives strong impetus to scientific progress in this field through its active support of research programs, coordination of scientific and clinical activities and organization of specialist congresses and training.

Prof. Cornely's election to the Presidency of the ECMM on 2nd October during the 5th Congress "Trends in Medical Mycology" in Valencia, Spain, is a great accolade and worthy recognition of his research into infectious diseases. During his three-year term as President, Cornely aims to weld his own team's research and that of other groups from 41 different countries participating in ECMM projects into one synergistic force. Cornely's plan is to integrate the high-end technology databank of his own group with sets of data collected from diverse epidemiological studies into a range of invasive fungal diseases by establishing a standardized data format. A fungal sample will be obtained from each patient and added to jointly accessible strain banks, available to all interested researchers. Up to now clinical data on diseases has usually been collated separately from microbiological data and isolates. This integration of the two

approaches promises to yield a wealth of findings likely to further our understanding of the origin and treatment of fungal infections.

As the umbrella organization of the European institutions, another goal of the ECMM is to intensify exchange and interdisciplinary collaboration between all researchers studying mycological disorders in either humans or animals. International congresses such as the ECCMID in London in 2012, the ISHAM in Berlin and TIMM in Copenhagen in 2013 will provide platforms for the discussion of the results of numerous intensive collaboration projects.

Ready access to sample material from rare infections in Germany will also open up new research perspectives at the Excellence Cluster CECAD, and facilitate international cooperation over diagnostic methods and effective treatment. As Prof. Cornely says, "We expect the merging of information from clinical practice and laboratory research to give a decisive boost to the translational development of diagnostic strategies".

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