



CECAD Excellence Cluster, University of Cologne

PRESS RELEASE

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ERC Consolidator Grant awarded to Cologne: New insights into aging-associated diseases

Cologne, 16/12/2013. A great honour for the CECAD Excellence Cluster in Cologne: Prof. Dr. Thorsten Hoppe received one of the highly prestigious and competitive ERC Consolidator Grants worth up to 2.75 million euros for his exceptional research on cellular quality control. The European Research Council's (ERC) programme supports scientists in the EU by funding risky research concepts. The ERC's objective is to support scientific excellence through competitive funding strategies: only the best 10% of all proposed projects were selected.

The grant is a big success and great support for the CECAD Excellence Cluster at the University of Cologne. Prof. Dr. Thorsten Hoppe: "The 2 million euros in funding provided by the ERC Consolidator Grant will allow me and my team to address challenging questions and achieve new objectives in our research. We study mechanisms that govern quality control of proteins, the molecular motors inside every cell. During aging, the number of defective proteins increases dramatically. Misfolded proteins are able to form aggregates that cause neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Besides aging-related diseases, cellular quality control also influences the life expectancy of different organisms." Investigating the underlying control mechanisms may provide new insights into both dementia and the aging process. The main objective is to understand the interplay between protein synthesis and degradation. Of particular interest are cellular waste disposal systems that help to eliminate defective proteins .

The European Research Council supports scientists all over Europe through competitive funding programmes. The long-term goal is to encourage excellence in research and so strengthen and shape the European research system. The target group for ERC Consolidator Grants comprises scientists already doing the highest quality research in a competitive field and who have published successfully internationally.

Winning the ERC Consolidator Grant is a great triumph for CECAD and affirmation of the mission behind the creating of the CECAD Excellence Cluster.

The CECAD's aging research is funded by the Excellence Initiative set up by the German Federal and State Governments. Over 400 international scientists work together to research the basics of the aging process and aging-associated diseases. The goal is to use these findings to develop new therapies.

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