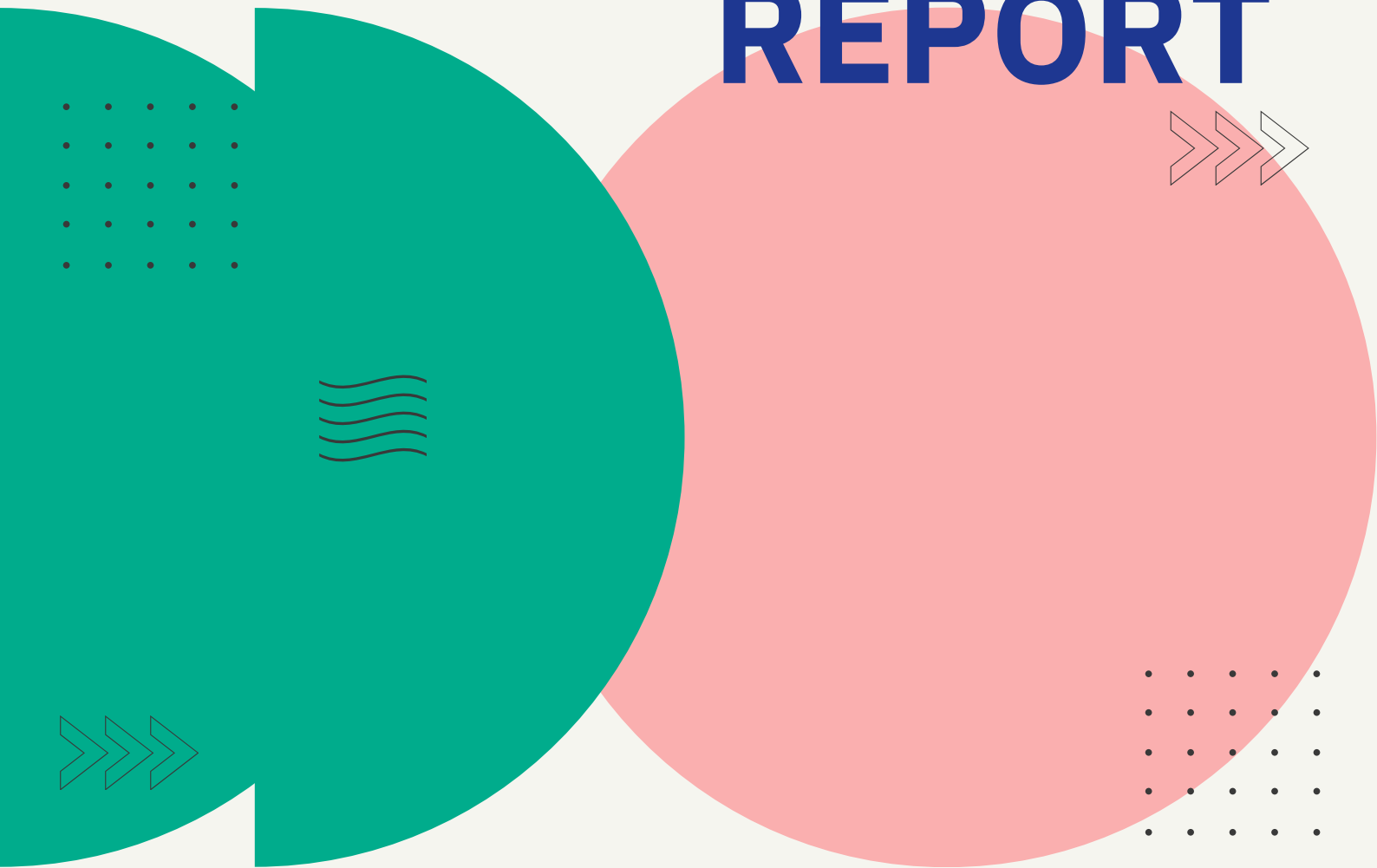




# 2024 POSTDOC ANNUAL REPORT



Max Delbrück Center's 2024 Postdoc Annual Report showcases commitment to innovation and collaboration for a better future, celebrating progress and engagement.



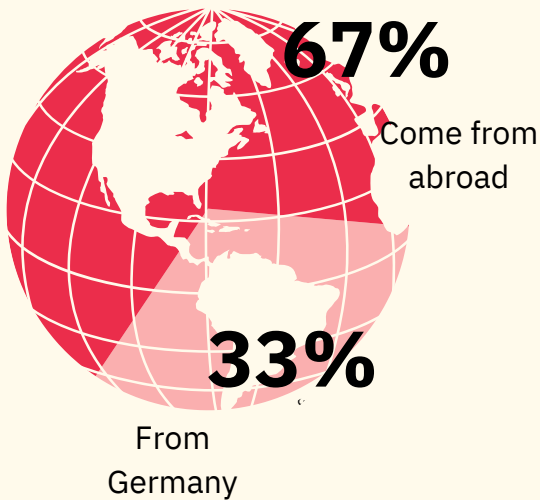
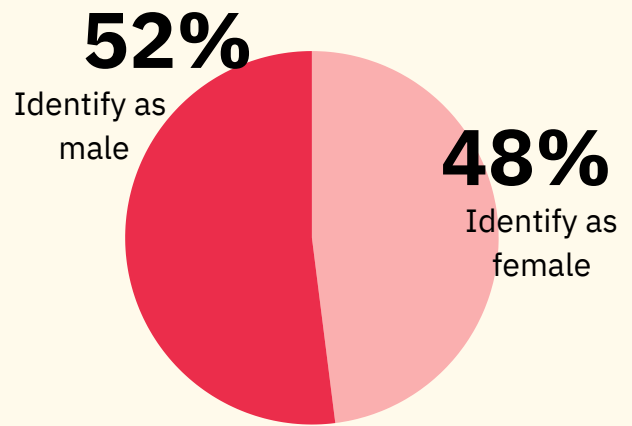
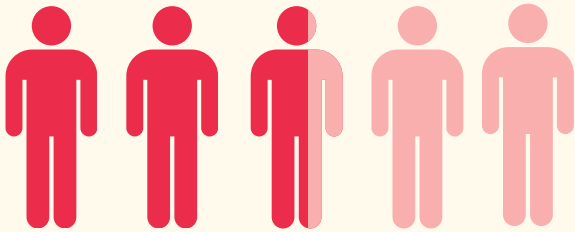
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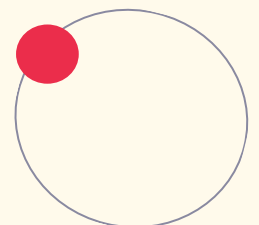
# Who We Are

## POSTDOC 2024

**242**  
**POSTDOCS**



**43**  
**NATIONS**



# 2024 Postdoc GRANTS



**Theda Bartolomaeus**



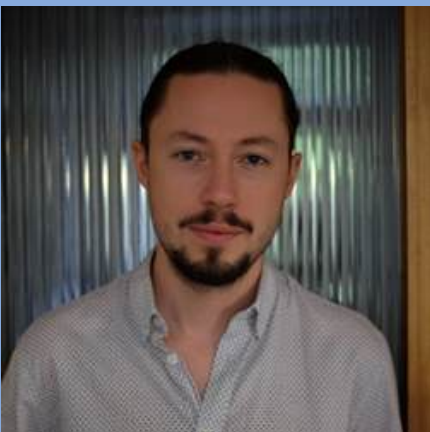
VasBio - Biomarkers for Vascular Phenotypes CALL - **71,100€**



**Mariantonia Costanza**



Boost kickoff - Overcoming treatment resistance and early relapse in CAR T cell therapy in B cell neoplasm – Dr. med Armin Rehm, Dr Agnese Fiori, Dr Mariantonia Costanza



**Sebastian Hofer**



Independent research grant  
“AutoKomm”: ‘Unconventional Research’ (UFO) by the Styrian Government (Austria) - **99,752.40€**



## Jeyan Jayarajan



Won the BOOST – MDC Idea  
Competition grant for the year 2024



## Olivia Nonn



1. 2024 Berlin Institute of Health – Digital Health Accelerator Stage 2; project lead) - **923.000€**
2. 2024 BIH Digital Health Accelerator Stage 1; project lead - **191.000€**



## Ashwin Natarajan



1. Humboldt postdoctoral fellowship from May 2024 to August 2025– awarded Jan 2024
2. Marie-Curie postdoctoral fellowship from September 2025 to August 2027– awarded Feb 2024



## Oscar Sánchez Carranza



Grant for research project to Early Career Investigators in the field of Translational AngioCardioScience, in collaboration with scientists from Mannheim. HI-TAC - **100,000€**

# POSTDOC PRIZES

Sponsored by



To Postdocs who do excellent work and are active in the MDC community, based on community engagement, grants, publications, teaching. In this spirit, we selected the 3 top postdocs of the year.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Prize Olivia Nonn

### Community Activities:

- Organized interdisciplinary events for the MDC student / postdoc Community (Beer Hour)
- Organized international symposium at BIMSB: Translational Approaches in Trophoblast Stem Cell Research and Pregnancy Health, July 15-16 2024. Invited speakers including Prof. Jose Polo and Prof. Stephen Tong

Over 1,1 Mio € in  
third-party funding

2 publications and  
4 manuscripts submitted



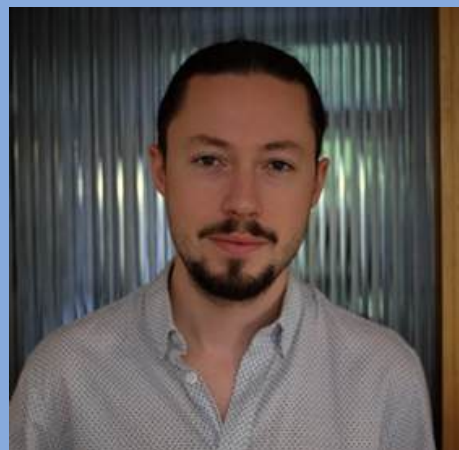
## 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize Theda Bartolomeous

### Community Activities:

- Organised activity on microbiome for LNDW
- Presentation on the microbiome at "Music meets Science" event
- Teaching at the Girl's day

Over 70k € in  
third-party funding

3 publications



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize Sebastian Hofer

### Community Activities:

- Organised Immunology and Inflammation (I&I) - Berlin-wide symposium,
- Organised Immunology and Inflammation (I&I) seminar series
- Contributor to "Unite Under One Mission" in MDC2030

Over 70k € in  
third-party funding

3 publications

# Highlights & EVENTS

## MDC Mentoring Program April 2024 - April 2025

The program is designed for all postdocs and staff in science management of the MDC. Participants in the program, received:

1. Initial strategic consultation to develop an action plan
2. One-to-one mentoring
3. Regular group meetings to reflect and accompany the mentoring process
4. Workshops on specific topics

The program is organized by the Postdoc Office in collaboration with the Women's Staff Representative and the MDC's Human Resources Development.



# 12

Participants 

# 1

Year 



# Postdoc-2-PhD Mentoring

May 2024 - December 2024

The 2024 mentoring program, organized by the MDC with the FMP and Freie Universität, supported professional development for Postdocs and PhD candidates. Launched on May 8, 2024, with a kick-off event, it paired Postdoc mentors with PhD mentees.

The six-month program included mentoring relationship training and regular monthly meetings, fostering career discussions, goal-setting, and personalized guidance. Mentees gained insights and support for their aspirations, while mentors shared expertise and refined their mentoring skills.

Photos are from scavenger hunt networking event for the P2P program.

Credits: Mariia Dorofeikova







## MDC Postdoc Association

The MDC PostDoc Association (PDA) is a volunteer organization dedicated to fostering networking, scientific exchange, and advocacy for MDC postdoctoral scientists. It supports postdocs by offering opportunities for involvement, and community engagement. In collaboration with the Postdoc Office and the Career & Training Committee, PDA members actively organize activities and provide feedback to address the needs of the MDC postdoc community.

The PDA organizes regular **Networking Lunch seminars and in 2024 a BBQ, the HAPN kick-off and Xmas events.**

The PDA receives 1.000€ yearly from the **MDC Freundeskreis** to organize activities on campus.

Sponsored by



## BBQ

October 26



## 2 Christmas Parties

December 03 and 04

PostDoc rep organized two Christmas parties with props for pictures, cards and games, Christmas-themed decorations, and lights. They served Christmas drinks (gluhwein, kinder punch, hot chocolate etc) and some pizza and Christmas desserts/sweets.





# Postdoc Day 2024

November 07 and 08

The event took place at the Humboldt Graduate School

The Berlin PostDoc Day 2024 (#PDD24) is an annual event organized by a team of Berlin-based PostDocs with heterogenous affiliations. The event is open to all PostDocs and last-year PhD students working on all disciplines in the Berlin area.



# 185+

Participants



# 6

Workshops





5

Berlin Institutes are part of the organising committee

195+  
Participants

20+  
different Berlin institutes





## Talk prize

- 1 Daniel Escalera
- 2 Erika Martinez Ruiz
- 3 Tejas Iyer

## Flash talk prize

- 1 Ran Zhao
- 2 Magdalena Schindler
- 3 Ursula Karoline

## Workshops taught

- **Grant Writing.** Coach: Annette Kolb.
- **Social Media – Science in a New Age.** Coach: Elodie Chabrol
- **Good Mentoring and Effective Feedback.** Coach: Carmen Kurbjuhn
- **Storytelling – Your Research as a Story.** Coach: Katharina Rosin)
- **Difficult Conversations in the Workplace.** Coach: Thomas Knappe.
- **Tech Transfer and Entrepreneurship: From Science to Business.** Coaches: Bettina Otto & Alexander Stumpf.



# MDC Alumni Day & Graduation Symposium 2024

July 05

## A Day of Celebration, Connection, and Reflection

On July 5, 2024, the Max Delbrück Center (MDC) hosted its Alumni Day at BIMSB in Berlin, reuniting alumni to celebrate the vibrant MDC community. The event featured a dynamic program, including a mentoring workshop, recognition of recent doctoral achievements, career-sharing sessions, and a lively evening celebration.

Attendees enjoyed a day of intellectual engagement, networking, and reconnecting with colleagues, culminating in an after-hour gathering with music and dancing.

## A glimpse of the day

- Mentoring workshop
- Networking
- Guided tour of the BIMSB building
- Career pathways session with alumni sharing their professional journeys
- Graduation ceremony celebrating MDC's latest doctoral achievements
- Alumni after-hour event featuring music, dancing, and fundraising initiatives







## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Max Delbrück Center is dedicated to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within its organizational culture. We celebrate the unique perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences of every individual, viewing diversity as a source of strength. Our commitment to equity ensures equal opportunities for participation, growth, and development for all employees. Through inclusion, we actively create a safe, respectful, and accessible environment where everyone feels valued and a true sense of belonging.



## DEI and Inclusion Officer: Welcome Dilek Güven

“ My name is Dr. Dilek Güven, I am a political scientist and historian. I worked before on topics like racism, discrimination and multiculturalism at universities in Berlin, Athens and Istanbul. My role is to ensure that we foster an inclusive, supportive, and diverse environment. I work to address barriers, promote equity, and celebrate the unique backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences that you all bring to our community. Whether you have questions, need support, or want to get involved in diversity initiatives, please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm excited to connect with all of you! ”



# ✓ Diversity Week

November 11- 15

**Empowering Community Through Inclusion and Dialogue**



# SPEAK UP!

November 11 - 15 | 2024

**MDC Diversity Week**  
Campus Buch & MDC-BIMSB



This year's program featured a diverse series of workshops, talks, and interactive sessions aimed at fostering resilience, inclusivity, and thoughtful engagement within the community. Highlights include:

- **Interactive Workshops:** Activities like Mensch Denk an Dich®, a game promoting resilience and creativity, and sessions addressing barriers faced by people with disabilities.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Dialogues:** Discussions exploring the connection between safe, inclusive environments and the promotion of innovation within research organizations, led by experts like Prof. Dr. Isabell Welpé, and an evening Kaminabend focusing on leadership and inclusive environments.
- **Active Bystander Training:** Equipping participants with skills to challenge inappropriate behavior and support a positive community culture.
- **Science and Skepticism:** A panel exploring respectful dialogue and the impact of skepticism in the post-COVID-19 era.
- **Cultural Reflection:** A screening of Audre Lorde: Power of Words – Berlin Years, emphasizing the power of language in activism.







## ↙ Newly created ESSGs

# 1

### MDCLIMBS



# 2

### IPSPRESSO

The iSPresso Meet-up is a monthly, employee-led support group dedicated to fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among staff working with or interested in stem cells. This informal gathering offers a relaxed environment for colleagues to connect, exchange insights, discuss challenges, and explore ideas related to iPSC research.

iSPresso Afternoons are co-led by Charlotte Dresen, Sarah Green and Souhaila Wüsthoff who facilitate each session, ensuring an inclusive and positive environment. Meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month, 4 p.m. at MDC Café, with reminders sent in advance via Mattermost.

# 3

### Neurodiversity ESSG

- Academic and organizational workshops
- Strategies to simplify your life
- Peer-to-peer task paralysis assistance
- Destressing sessions
- Establish partnerships with specialist psychiatrists and therapists
- Neurotransmitter-boosting free time activities: Therapy animal visits, group movement activities, games or art activities.

Contact for more info:  
jcoburn@mdc-berlin.de

[mattermost.mdc-berlin.de/neurodivergence-essg](https://mattermost.mdc-berlin.de/neurodivergence-essg)

# 4

### LGBTQ+ ESSG

The iSPresso Meet-up is a monthly, employee-led support group dedicated to fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among staff working with or interested in stem cells. This informal gathering offers a relaxed environment for colleagues to connect, exchange insights, discuss challenges, and explore ideas related to iPSC research.

<https://mattermost.mdc-berlin.de/mdc-open/channels/lgbtq>

Contact for more info:

<https://mattermost.mdc-berlin.de/mdc-open/channels/lgbtq>

## ↙ **Launch WeCare@MDC**

October 10

The WeCare@MDC program was launched to offer support and resources to everyone at MDC in a variety of situations, such as caring for relatives, childcare, joint celebrations, collaboration challenges, illness, mental health issues, and more. During its implementation, a strong emphasis was placed on prioritizing mental health—both individually and collectively—to foster a stronger and more supportive community

The **WeCare@MDC** program will continue over the next years, and we encourage postdocs to use the many available resources.

# 6

New workshops

# 30+

↙ Resources, strategies, materials, and dedicated individuals in their roles, all there to support and assist you ↘

# WeCare @MDC

✂ In 2024, postdocs came together to create several networks.

## ✂ The Helmholtz Association Postdoc Network (HAPN) has officially launched!

November 5 and 6



HAPN was founded to unite postdoctoral researchers across all Helmholtz Centers, enabling us to address key challenges in today's evolving scientific landscape, foster collaboration, and advance postdoc career development.

HAPN is built on a clear vision and purpose: to create amongst peers a collaborative, inclusive network that empowers postdocs and supports their contributions to the Helmholtz Association's strategic goals. Our mission is to provide a supportive environment for us postdocs to reach our full potential in our research and career, promote a transparent and positive work culture, and foster community-building across all Helmholtz Centers.

### HAPN Kick-Off Event

On November 5-6, 2024, **31** postdoctoral researchers from **17** Helmholtz Centers gathered in Berlin for the HAPN kick-off event. The Helmholtz Association's President, Prof. Dr. Otmar Wiestler, highlighted HAPN's importance within Helmholtz.

The meeting established HAPN's foundation and three key working groups:

- **Communications:** Promotes open communication within HAPN and the Helmholtz community, ensuring postdocs stay informed.
- **Networking:** Builds connections, organizes collaborative events, and engages with other networks, including Max Planck, Leibniz, and Helmholtz Juniors (HeJus).
- **Perspectives:** Enhances postdoc experiences by advocating for career development, clear pathways, and transparent standards across Helmholtz Centers.



To learn more about HAPN, please visit their [website](#) or reach out to Mariantonia Costanza or Filippos Charitidis who are your HAPN representatives at MDC.

To join, build a strong, connected, and supportive network for all Helmholtz postdocs.

Contact at [hpn\\_contact@listserv.dfn.de](mailto:hpn_contact@listserv.dfn.de)

## ↳ EU-Life Postdoc Network



EU-LIFE is an alliance of leading life science research institutes across Europe dedicated to promoting excellence in research, collaboration and career development. The EU-LIFE Postdoc Initiative aims to strengthen the postdoc community through dialogue, collaboration and professional development.

Regular bi-monthly meetings were established to advance two key initiatives for 2024: the development of a **Postdoc Exchange Programme** to facilitate cross-institutional learning and collaboration, and the drafting of a **Postdoc Policy Document** to promote best practices in postdoc support across the EU-LIFE network.

Through these activities, the network seeks to contribute to strengthening connections within the European postdoc community and fostering a more supportive and connected research environment.



Alessandro Santuz - Postdoc representative for the MDC

## ↳ German Postdoc Network (GPN)

The German Postdoc Network (GPN) aims to address key challenges faced by postdoctoral researchers in Germany, including unclear career prospects, lack of representation, and insufficient community support.

### Their Mission Is

- To improve the postdoctoral experience by fostering opportunities for connection, collaboration, and community-building.
- To gather and share essential information, ensuring postdocs are well-informed and supported.
- To empower postdocs by representing their interests and influencing policies that impact their professional and personal development.



Contact Information  
If you have any questions or want to become active within GPN write a message!

[contact@germanpostdoc.net](mailto:contact@germanpostdoc.net)

GPN Coordinators  
Judith Münch & Alexandra McCormack

# 2024 PUBLICATIONS

Several postdocs were successful in publishing this year and made contributions to the scientific academia. Many of them had more than one publication, only one publication is displayed here.



## **Theda Bartolomaeus**



3 publications

Microbiome Dynamics and Functional Composition in *Coelopa frigida* (Diptera, Coelopidae): Insights into Trophic Specialization of Kelp Flies. Bartolomaeus TUP \*, et al. *Microb Ecol.*



## **Filippos Theofilos Charitidis**



1 manuscript as co-author.

Reviewed 3 papers.



## **Mariantonia Costanza**



1 manuscript

CD74-targeting as effective treatment strategy for cutaneous T cell lymphomas (BJD) – submitted



## Sebastian Hofer



3 published, 3 co-authored research articles in peer review

A surge in endogenous spermidine is essential for rapamycin-induced autophagy and longevity. Hofer SJ, et al. Autophagy. Epub PubMed.



## Víctor Hugo Jarquín-Díaz



4 publications

Aberrant microbiomes are associated with increased antibiotic resistance gene load in hybrid mice. Jarquín-Díaz, et al. ISME communications.



## Jeyan Jayarajan



1 manuscript

Bispecific BAFF-R/BCMA CAR T cells control growth of heterogeneously matured plasma cells in multiple myeloma; (In preparation) – Co-author



## Christoph Karg



1 publication

Arctique: An artificial histopathological dataset unifying realism and controllability for uncertainty quantification. Karg, C., et al. Openreview.net

## Jason Millward



7 publications

MRI of kidney size matters. Millward JM, et al. MAGMA. Epub Pubmed.



## Olivia Nonn



2 publications and 4 manuscripts submitted

Senescent Syncytiotrophoblast Secretion During Early Onset Preeclampsia Hypertension. 2024 Oct 23. Nonn, et al. American Heart Association Journals.





## Franziska Rother

2 publications



Normal male fertility in a mouse model of KPNA2 deficiency. Rother F, et al. PLoS One.



## Oscar Sánchez Carranza

3 publications



Voltage block of the mechanosensitive ion channel Piezo2 regulates pain in mice. Sánchez-Carranza O, et al., Brain.



## Matthias Jürgen Schmitt

2 publications



Cogical design of synthetic cis-regulatory DNA for genetic tracing of cell identities and state changes. arlos Company, Matthias Jürgen Schmitt, Yuliia Dramaretska et al. L Nature Communications.

**27**  
publications

Over  
**\$1,558.000**  
In grants and fundings

# 2025 OUTLOOK



## Career Day

March 27 2025

Look forward to panel discussions, networking opportunities and get in touch with renowned international companies from sectors like KI development, energy supply, industrial R&D, consulting, chemical industry, science management, pharma industry and many more.

Additionally you can choose one out of different workshops to best prepare for your switch into industry!

Virtual Career Day 27 | 03 | 2025

### Transition Possible Career Perspectives for Postdocs Big Names & Hidden Champions

JÜLICH HZDR GEOMAR MAX DELBRÜCK CENTER DESY DZNE GA HELMHOLTZ MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR PLASMA PHYSICS



## ASPIRE 2025

January 2025

ASPIRE is a one-year-long program aiming at supporting postdocs in their next career steps.

in 2025, we launch a **new track on Data Science!**

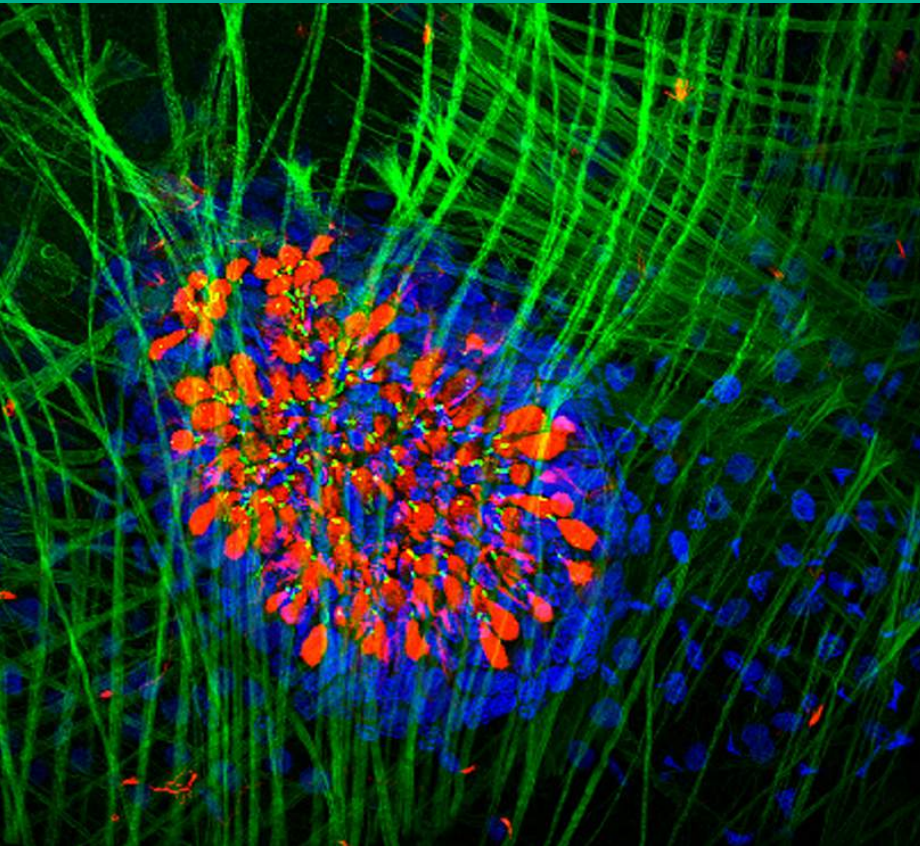
Mentoring  
Programs





# Alumni Day and Graduation 2025

July 4 2025



## ALUMNI DAY & GRADUATION SYMPOSIUM 2025

**Save the date!**

**JULY 4 2025**

09:00 - 18:00

MDC-BIMSB

MDC Graduates 2025:

Register for Graduation now!!

[graduation@mdc-berlin.de](mailto:graduation@mdc-berlin.de)



## Joint Postdoc Symposium on Gene Regulation

February 26-28 2025

Mentoring  
Program

We are excited to invite postdocs from life science institutes across Europe to the upcoming Joint Postdoc Symposium on Gene Regulation in Development, Aging, and Disease, organized by postdocs from the Babraham Institute (Cambridge) and the Centre for Genome Regulation (Barcelona). This event aims to create a dynamic and stimulating environment where postdoctoral scientists can share their research, broaden their networks, engage in discussions, and develop key skills for success in both research and beyond.

Key Details:

- Location: Centre for Genome Regulation (CRG), Barcelona, Spain
- Dates: February 26th-28th, 2025

As both Babraham Institute (BI) and CRG are members of EU-LIFE, we would like to extend this invitation to postdoc representatives from all EU-LIFE institutes. The goal is to strengthen the newly established postdoc working group and set an example for future collaborative symposiums.

Each EU-LIFE institute is encouraged to nominate and fund 1-3 postdocs to attend the 2.5-day conference. The estimated cost per postdoc is €250-400, depending on travel arrangements.

If your institute is interested in participating, please get in touch to discuss further details. We hope you will share this invitation with your respective postdoc committees.

For more information, please refer to the event page: [Symposium Details](#).



# MDC CONNECT



NETWORK. SHARE. ENGAGE.

MAX  
DELBRÜCK  
CENTER

ALUMNI

# POSTDOC REPRESENTATIVES

We are delighted to welcome Daniella Tamayo as the newest member of the **Postdoc Office** team!

The **MDC Postdoc Office** would like to thank all the **Postdoc Association** members and the organizers of the **Postdoc Day**.

MDC PDA: Mariantonia Constanza, Filipos Chariditis, Jeyan Jerajan, Somesh Sai



**PDD Organization Team:** Lisa Kahl, Sravanthi Nadiminti, Elmir Mahammadov, Colin Cess, Cristina Brischetto, Yudhajeet Basak

**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
DEVOTED WORK!**

The MDC PDA is looking for new members.  
Contact: [pda@mdc-berlin.de](mailto:pda@mdc-berlin.de)



**MAX  
DELBRÜCK  
CENTER**

**To everyone, best  
wishes for 2025!**

