

Press Release
Paul Martini Award 2003
Wiesbaden, 28.04.03

Award-winning: Thalidomide provides hope in cases of multiple myeloma

Paul Martini Prize 2003 awarded for clinical and therapeutic pharmaceutical research

Wiesbaden, April 28, 2003. – For multiple myeloma, thalidomide raises hopes for remission and a longer life. The fact that this substance can increasingly be used in a more effective manner is due to studies and pharmacogenetic tests by Dr. med. Hartmut Goldschmidt of the Heidelberg University Clinic. Today, he received the Paul Martini Prize 2003 in Wiesbaden for these efforts. The award in the amount of EUR 25,000.00 is handed out every year by the Berlin-based Paul Martini Foundation during the annual conference of the German Society for Internal Medicine (DGIM) for excellent achievements in clinical and therapeutic pharmaceutical research.

The bone marrow tumor “multiple myeloma” continues to have a bad prognosis. However, since thalidomide was introduced into relapse therapy a few years ago, partial remission was frequently achieved even for tumors that were resistant to conventional chemotherapy. Goldschmidt and others were able to show that this was due to thalidomide’s anti-angiogenic action as well as other effects.

Goldschmidt’s clinical studies at the medical clinic and polyclinic V of the Heidelberg University Clinic made a special contribution toward clarifying the appropriate dosage of thalidomide, identifying prognostic factors for the therapeutic response and introducing the drug into combined chemotherapy.

One pharmacogenetic prognosis factor is particularly remarkable: Goldschmidt and his team were able to show that a polymorphism in the promotor of the gene for the tumor necrosis factor TNF, which is associated with increased concentrations of said factor, is accompanied by higher rates of progression-free and overall survival following thalidomide therapy. As a result, Goldschmidt has pointed out a new direction in therapeutic research for multiple myeloma: the testing of additional TNF inhibitors.

In his tribute, Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Peter C. Scriba, of the University of Munich’s Downtown Clinic, stressed the positive development that patients suffering from multiple myeloma can now benefit from the potential of thalidomide, which has not been a subject of research for a very long time due to the thalidomide (sold under the name Contergan in Germany) tragedy.

Based on the decision of the European Union at the end of 2001 to grant orphan drug status to thalidomide for the therapy of multiple myeloma, it can be expected that this substance, which is currently undergoing clinical testing, will soon be approved by the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products, EMEA, for this therapeutic indication.

The Paul Martini Foundation

As a non-profit organization, the Berlin-based Paul Martini Foundation, supports both pharmaceutical research and research in the field of pharmaceutical therapy and works to intensify the scientific dialog on issues of pharmaceutical research and development between medical researchers at universities and hospitals, in the research-based pharmaceutical industry and in other research and government institutions.

The Paul Martini Prize is awarded every year for outstanding achievements in the development of scientific methods for the assessment of clinical-pharmacological and therapeutic measures and the support of international collaborative efforts in this area. In 1966, the foundation was established by seven German pharmaceutical companies that were organized in the German Society for Medical and Pharmaceutical Studies (Medizinisch-Pharmazeutische Studiengesellschaft). In 1994, the Berlin-based German Association of Research-based Pharmaceutical Companies (VFA) with its currently 44 member companies took over sponsorship of the organization.

The foundation and the prize it awards annually are named after Paul Martini, the outstanding scientist and physician from Bonn, in recognition of his special achievements regarding the advancement and development of clinical and therapeutic research, which he significantly impacted for decades with his 1932 publication entitled "Methods of Therapeutic Examination."

The press release, curriculum vitae and a photo of the award winner are available for downloading at www.paul-martini-stiftung.de.

Award winner

Dr. Hartmut Goldschmidt

Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
Medizinische Universitätsklinik und Poliklinik V
Hospitalstraße 3
69115 Heidelberg
Telephone +49. 62 21. 56 80 08
Fax +49. 62 21. 56 58 13
E-mail hartmut_goldschmidt@med.uni-heidelberg.de

Press contact

Dr. Rolf Hoemke

Paul Martini Foundation

Hausvogteiplatz 13

10117 Berlin

Telephone +49. 30. 2 06 042 04

Fax +49. 30. 2 06 045 98

E-Mail: info@paul-martini-stiftung.de

<http://www.paul-martini-stiftung.de>