



HOROS

host response in opportunistic infections

Innsbruck Medical University (IMU) & University of Innsbruck (LFU)

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Abstract

Scientists and physicians of the Innsbruck campus, working in the related fields of *Infection, Immunity, Transplantation and/or Biogerontology*, have decided to join forces and to apply for a structured and multidisciplinary research and training programme of excellence (DK). Their intention is to cooperatively and synergistically investigate genetic and environmental parameters, which destroy the immune homeostasis during host-pathogen interaction, thus leading to opportunistic infections, seldom developing in healthy, but quite often in immunocompromised subjects. Seven of the 8 members of the consortium work at Innsbruck Medical University (IMU), one is heading the Institute of Biomedical Aging Research (IBA), now part of University of Innsbruck / Leopold Franzens University (LFU). It is envisaged to strengthen the cooperation between both local universities in the coming periods. Five members of the consortium are medical doctors, 2 of these work at bedside and 3 mainly preclinically, three are scientists. All 8 contribute to various aspects of host-pathogen interaction, comprising inherited and acquired immunity. On the infection side fungal, bacteriological or virological models are in use.

All applicants already collaborate scientifically and have highly complementary portfolios of technical skills and practical experiences, prominent international partners and will provide important core facilities to the members of the consortium. The decision to go ahead with the comprehensive endeavour DK-HOROS was strongly influenced by the fact that they already teach postgraduate students. In preparation for application the consortium has improved academic environment and infrastructure by establishing an introducing obligatory Ring lecture for all their students. Furthermore, the *Comprehensive Center of Infection, Immunity and Transplantation* (CIIT), established 2010, has been shown to promote and optimize interdisciplinary collaboration in science and clinical practice.

Both rectors significantly support this DK, as it would be the only DK in Innsbruck carried out by scientists and physicians working in clinical departments or “pre-clinical” research institutes of both universities, thus providing an important translational link between basic research and clinical application. IMU is very interested to have a broad and excellent DK on “Infection, Immunity & Transplantation”, one of its major officially stated research topics. A strong liaison with industrial partners has been established for supplementary funding. HOROS will foster even closer collaborations between research groups and the strategic added values lie in an attractive educational curriculum, more coherent and practical than previously. HOROS will provide perfect means to finance research stays of PhD students in collaborators’ laboratories, a “HOROS annual retreat“, and the possibility to offer a professorship to a distinguished researcher from abroad. Thus, HOROS will strengthen the scientific environment of the research campus Innsbruck that will attract not only the best students, but also distinguished scientists to the campus.