

3rd International Symposium on Tumour-Host Interaction in Head and Neck Cancer 11th Symposium of the Working Group Oncology

January 28-29, 2022 - Teaching and Learning Centre - Deichmann Auditorium Essen, Germany

Press release

Does the immune response play a role in the prognosis of cancer? **Intensive research is being conducted not only in the field of head and neck tumours /** **International symposium in Essen presents results in this field**

We would all like to hear news about promising treatment options for cancer more often. 70 percent of Germans* are most afraid of this disease in terms of their health. However, Prof. Dr. med. Stephan Lang is encouraging when he says that the treatment of head and neck tumours with so-called checkpoint inhibitors means a "ray of light on the horizon", as progress is being made with this in the treatment of what is after all the sixth most common type of cancer worldwide. According to Lang, the best precaution to avoid this cancer is a healthy lifestyle. The main causes are smoking and excessive alcohol consumption over many years. In recent years, however, human papilloma viruses (HPV) have become increasingly important as a cause. However, the prognosis of the cancer caused by these viruses is often better than that of smoking- or alcohol-associated tumours. The exact reasons for this are currently being researched and can be assumed to be related to the immune system, in which the above-mentioned checkpoint inhibitors also play an essential role.

For several years, there has been the possibility of vaccination against the main HPV risk subtypes. In addition to these preventive measures, the possibility of therapeutic vaccination for already existing tumours, for example with mRNA vaccines, is the subject of intensive research efforts. In general, understanding tumor host interaction is crucial for effectively targeting cancer and about which leading scientists from all over the world, among others, will exchange views at the international symposium. The need for progress is great. The improvement in survival rates for head and neck tumours has been only marginal in recent decades. Since immunotherapy has been used for treatment, doctors like Professor Lang are cautiously optimistic that this could change. Immunotherapy can ensure that the degenerate cancer cells are recognised by the body as foreign or non-functioning and eliminated. The therapy is already routinely used for advanced head and neck tumours. It should be noted that not all patients and not all forms of cancer respond to this treatment.

Stephan Lang is Director of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology at the University Hospital Essen and initiator of a scientific conference dealing with the interaction of the immune system with cancer cells. This conference will take place on 28 and 29 January for the third time and with global participation. "An international, personal exchange is extremely important here to bring each other up to date on the latest research and to initiate new innovative projects together," says Lang. For this reason, the conference will also be held hybrid, taking into account all the necessary Corona measures.

Media representatives are invited to find out about and report on the topics of the congress. We appreciate your interest and will be happy to assist you, for example in finding interview partners. Please get in touch with the press contact with all your questions!

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**Source: DAK Health survey "Fear of illness", October 2021 <https://www.dak.de/dak/bundesthemen/nur-noch-jeder-fuenfte-deutsche-hat-angst-vor-covid-19-2510224.html#/>*