

Der Rat für die Verleihung des Otto Naegeli-Preises
hat am 16. November 2011 beschlossen,
den Otto Naegeli-Preis
zur Förderung der medizinischen Forschung 2012

PROF. DR. MED.
Markus H. Heim

zu verleihen.

Dieser Beschluss wurde aufgrund folgender
Laudatio gefasst:

PROF. DR. MED. MARKUS H. HEIM

has made outstanding contributions to the understanding of the interferon system in the liver and host-virus interactions in hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections. Chronic hepatitis C is a major cause of liver disease worldwide. The virus has developed mechanisms to evade the immune system in more than 70% of patients. A major target of viral escape mechanisms is the interferon system, an antiviral response that controls most virus infections. Over the past 15 years, Heim and his group analyzed molecular mechanisms of viral interference with interferon signaling in the liver. His internationally recognized research is the result of a unique integration of cutting-edge basic research methods with innovative and research-oriented patient care in the clinic.

Heim's scientific career began at the Biozentrum of the University of Basel in the group of Urs A. Meyer, where he studied genetic polymorphisms of drug metabolism. He then joined the laboratory of James E. Darnell, Jr., at Rockefeller University in New York. Heim investigated basic aspects of interferon signaling and elucidated molecular mechanisms of signal transduction in the Jak-STAT signaling pathway. After his return to Switzerland he applied his knowledge of Jak-STAT signaling to study interferon signaling in the liver, and to answer fundamental questions in liver regeneration. Motivated by the increasing number of interferon resistant HCV patients, he identified molecular mechanisms of viral interference with the interferon system.

Concurrently, Heim pursued full clinical training in internal medicine and after training in Hepatology with Hubert Blum in Freiburg, Germany, he was appointed head of Hepatology at the University Hospital Basel. He transformed the service into a clinical referral center for the entire region, and a center for research and teaching. As president of the Swiss Association for the Study of the Liver, Heim contributed to a structured curriculum for clinical Hepatology, now recognized as "Schwerpunkt-Titel Hepatologie". Markus Heim was recently promoted to chief of the clinic for Gastroenterology and Hepatology.