

WELCOME ADDRESS

Dear colleagues, members of the German Transplantation Society (DTG) and guests of our annual meeting,

It is our greatest pleasure to welcome you to the 29th annual meeting of the DTG in Cologne.

In the current year, the world is facing an unforeseen challenge due to a new form of a coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. This virus was spread incredibly fast to all parts of our precious planet and largely affects our daily life, including a global lockdown in many countries, accounting for lost jobs and an increased death toll, especially among our aged population. Not only the elderly but also patients with chronic disease are particularly vulnerable to the development of severe symptoms of coronavirus disease, COVID-19. Everyday life is subject to restrictions in order to minimize virus transmission. How can the 29th annual meeting of the DTG in Cologne be organized in such a context?

This year's location of the DTG, Cologne trade fair, offers wide space in order to comply with hygiene and distance rules. Safety of attendants comes first. The board of the DTG, the organizing committee as well as the organizing institution present a hygiene concept that allows a safe attendance to this year's meeting. This hygiene concept is closely agreed on with local health authorities. It is especially important that all attendants stand to hygiene rules. A novum will be the hybrid organization of presentations enabling virtual presence at the meeting if personal attendance is not possible. Digital presentations will be held whenever the speaker is not in Cologne. Cologne trade fair has a long tradition. Since its foundation in 1924 by Konrad Adenauer, at this time mayor of Cologne, numerous events lead to increasing influence rendering Cologne trade fair the fifth biggest trade fair by area in the world.

Transplantation has a long history at the University of Cologne. The first kidney transplantation was performed on February 1968 by F.W. Eigler, and the kidney kept its function until July 1984. 776 further kidney transplantations were done until the end of 1989. In 1989, the transplant centre was divided into two clinical programmes working in separate locations in the city of Cologne at the University of Cologne hospital and at the city hospital Merheim. During the last fourteen years, the two programmes intensified their cooperation again, concerning a common HLA-laboratory, common pathology and specific initiatives for clinical and research protocols. A renewed agreement was signed by the

two programmes as Transplant Center Cologne in 2020. A total of 4241 paediatric and adult kidney transplantations had been done at that point of time besides pancreas, liver and intestine transplants.

Living donation is a major focus in clinical transplantation at the University of Cologne, serving adults and a growing number of children. The centre engaged in safe minimal invasive techniques of donation, psychosomatic support and follow-up care. The living donation programme has given input to translational research with topics of preconditioning for ischaemia/reperfusion injury.

The translational aspect of research is a strength of the University of Cologne. The CECAD, Cellular Stress Responses in Aging-Associated Diseases, the CMMC, Center of Molecular Medicine Cologne and two Max Planck institutes share the same campus with the University hospital and foster interdisciplinary research.

We explicitly thank all speakers and chair persons, who accepted our invitation for the current meeting and for providing their expertise. Please look forward to a highly interesting programme! Our plenary sessions will cover challenges of living donation, triggers of transplant rejection and the intersection of COVID-19 and transplantation. Sessions on machine perfusion, tissue engineering, infections and immunosuppression flank the plenaries. Please also pay special attention to our focus on minimal invasive techniques and biological mechanisms of ageing and their impact on transplant medicine. We are sure that you share our opinion on the importance of considering special cohorts like children and patients' relatives. Sessions on paediatric transplantation direct special attention to these important topics.

Due to the current pandemic, sociable get-together events and personal contacts for networking have to be kept to a minimal level. Nevertheless, we are grateful to have the opportunity to be able to meet in Cologne this year.

Keeping all precautions in mind, we are looking forward to welcoming you, hopefully in person, to the 29th annual meeting of the DTG.

In the name of the organization committee and the board of the DTG.

Prof. Dr. Christine Kurschat, Prof. Dr. Dirk Stippel and
Prof. Dr. Lutz T. Weber