

REPORTS

r1 **RESPImmun PhD Program Congress 2022**



Intrinsic Activity is an online, open-access publication medium published by the Austrian Pharmacological Society (APHAR). The Journal welcomes contributions in the fields of Pharmacology, Pharmacotherapy and other fields in biomedicine.

Contributions may be of type meeting abstracts, research articles, position papers, commentaries or similar. For submission instructions and all other information regarding publication in the journal visit: www.IntrinsicActivity.org

Correspondence

Intrinsic Activity

c/o Otto Loewi Research Centre (Chair of Pharmacology)
Medical University of Graz
Universitätsplatz 4
8010 Graz, Austria
E-mail: info@intrinsicactivity.org
Website: www.IntrinsicActivity.org
ISSN: 2309-8503

Austrian Pharmacological Society

c/o Institute of Pharmacology
Centre for Physiology and Pharmacology
Medical University of Vienna
Währinger Straße 13a
1090 Wien, Austria
E-mail: office@aphar.at

Copyright, open access and permission to use

Articles are published under a Creative Commons license (Creative Commons, attribution, non-commercial), that allows reuse subject only to the use being non-commercial and the article being fully attributed.

The Publisher and Austrian Pharmacological Society retain the license that allows publishing of the articles in *Intrinsic Activity*, any derivative product or any other *Intrinsic Activity* product (present or future) and allows sub-licensing such rights and exploit all subsidiary rights.

Authors retain the license to use their articles for their own non-commercial purposes, specifically:

- Posting a pdf of their own article on their own personal or institutional website for which no charge for access is made.
- Making a reasonable number of copies for personal or non-commercial professional use. This includes the contributors' own teaching activities.
- Republishing part or all of the article in a book or publication edited by the author (except for multiple publications in the same book or publication).
- Using individual figures or tables in other publications published by a third party. Extracts of text other than individual phrases or sentences may also be used provided that these are identified as quotations along with giving the appropriate reference to the original publication.
- Using the article in a course pack or compilation (whether paper or electronic) in the author's institution. This does not apply if a commercial charge is made for the compilation or course.

Third parties (other than the Publisher, Austrian Pharmacological Society, or authors) may download, print or store articles published in the journal for their private or professional, non-commercial use. The use of articles published in the journal, or any artwork contained therein, for educational, non-commercial purposes is granted provided that the appropriate reference to the journal and original article is given.

Any commercial use of articles published in *Intrinsic Activity* requires the permission of the Publisher.

Disclaimer

The Publisher, the Austrian Pharmacological Society and Editor(s) cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this journal. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Publisher, Austrian Pharmacological Society or Editor(s). Neither does the publication of advertisements constitute any endorsement by the Publisher, Austrian Pharmacological Society or Editor(s) of the products advertised.

Intrinsic Activity, 2022; **10**(1)

CONGRESS REPORTS

r1 **RESPImmun PhD Program Congress 2022**

20 September 2022, Graz

published online: 30 September 2022

doi:[10.25006/IA.10.1-r1](https://doi.org/10.25006/IA.10.1-r1)



CONGRESS REPORT



RESPIimmun PhD Program Congress 2022

20 September 2022, Graz

Geraldine ZENZ*

Section of Physiology and Pathophysiology, Otto Loewi Research Centre, Medical University of Graz, Austria

On the 20th of September 2022, one year of the *RESPIimmun* PhD program [1] was celebrated as part of the first program retreat, which took place at the MedCampus Aula of the Medical University Graz.

The two program speakers, Grażyna Kwapiszewska and Ákos Heinemann, reviewed the initial year of the program and dived into first scientific achievements by our 16 PhD candidates. They furthermore looked into the future and welcomed three additional students who will join the program in October.

It was a great pleasure to have Elke Heinrichs, who welcomed all participants as a representative of the City of Graz and started the first session (Fig. 1).

The sessions

During the sessions, all young researchers had the chance to talk about their PhD project work (Fig. 2). The PhD candidates' research of the past year was shown and vividly discussed with all faculty members and participants right after each presentation. The topics covered a wide spectrum of lung research, from how the molecular circadian clock might influence asthma to various aspects of COPD, fibrosis and lung cancer. Furthermore, the analysis of the microbiome in respiratory disorders and many elements of inflammation in pulmonary diseases as well as gluconeogenesis in tumor-promoting macrophages, potential anti-inflammatory properties of novel apolipoprotein mimetics and pulmonary hypertension in chronic lung diseases were discussed.

In the course of the event, all *RESPIimmun* faculty members and PhD students voted for the best presenter of the congress. One award was

Figure 1: Elke Heinrichs welcomes all participants as representative of the City of Graz.



Figure 2: Thi Huyen Phan presenting her work.



given by the faculty and one prize was awarded by the students at the end of the day. At this point it should be noted that the large amount of high-quality data presented after just one year of research was impressive and it will be very interesting to hear about the progression and further development of the projects soon.

Panel discussions with patients

After the first session and a short coffee break to connect, one of our event's highlights followed: a panel discussion with lung patients.

For this part of our event we welcomed three lung patients from Austria, and it was more than interesting to hear about their view on basic research in the field of lung diseases. They shared how their respective diagnosis (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, idiopathic fibrosis and sarcoidosis) changed how they perceived research as they got more and more in touch with scientists to ask detailed questions.

It was absolutely motivating for all researchers who were present to hear about the impact their work can have and the difference their effort can make for patients. For instance, the patients emphasized how important it was for them to learn about what is happening in research in order to find hope and look optimistically into their future. They do not feel left alone when hearing what researchers are working on constantly to improve their situation. Thus, communicating lung research seems to be crucial for the patients' well-being and even their willingness to adhere to particular treatments. Our guests underlined how important it is to understand underlying mechanisms in order to keep taking medications even at times when they might have unpleasant side effects.

*E-mail for correspondence: geraldine.zenz@medunigraz.at

Figure 3: Three lung patients sharing their thoughts about basic research in Austria.



During the panel discussion, the patients directed an enquiry to all researchers: they do not only wish for a cure for their diseases, but also for better tools for early diagnosis and biomarker research. Furthermore, they challenged Austrian politics, as there is not enough money spent on science and research. Both researchers and patients agreed to fight for a better distribution of financial aid and promote the support of basic research in Austria.

Eventually, all three patients emphasized how valuable it was for them to hear about the research by the *RESPIimmun* program and that they even would enjoy to help in the laboratory whenever needed (Fig. 3).

Keynote lecture

Following the scientific advisory board and the faculty meeting, another highlight of the meeting was the keynote lecture by Bethany Moore from the University of Michigan Medical School.

Bethany Moore drew an exciting picture of her research, which focuses on the regulation of innate and adaptive immunity, such as alterations in dendritic cell function and T cells in pneumonitis and pulmonary fibrosis. One special interest of her research is to evaluate how the development of fibrosis might alter lung microbiota, how viral infections could exacerbate fibrosis and what role the innate immune system might play in that question.

Best presentation awards

We would like to congratulate Oleh Myronenko, who was voted the best presenter by the faculty, and Julia Teppan as well as Alankrita Rani, who both were equally voted for by their fellow students (Fig. 4).

Oleh Myronenko presented his project about “Characterization of the vascular phenotype in COPD”, Julia Teppan shared insights about her work on “The role of the molecular circadian clock in asthma” and Alankrita Rani described her project “Investigating anti-inflammatory properties of novel apolipoprotein mimetics in lung diseases”.

Acknowledgements

Finally, we would like to thank all sponsors of this event: Merck Sharp & Dohme, AstraZeneca, Stadt Graz and Land Steiermark.

Photo credits: Geraldine Zenz and Domenic Hofmann.

Figure 4: The three awardees Oleh Myronenko, Julia Teppan and Alankrita Rani during their presentations.



Reference

1. The Doctoral Programme “Immune Modulation in Respiratory Diseases” (*RESPIimmun*). <https://www.respimmun.at/> (last cessed: 28/09/2022)

Author Index

Zenz, Geraldine ... r1



INTRINSIC / ACTIVITY

WWW.INTRINSICACTIVITY.ORG

*AN ONLINE
OPEN-ACCESS
PUBLICATION
OF
THE AUSTRIAN
PHARMACOLOGICAL
SOCIETY (APHAR)*



