



## The Mildred Scheel Cancer Career Center (MSNZ) Hamburg 2021/22- Review and Outlook

Hamburg, January 17, 2022

Dear MSNZ Fellows, dear sponsors, colleagues, research partners, interested parties and friends of the MSNZ Hamburg HaTRiCS<sup>4</sup>,

We sincerely wish you a happy, healthy and successful New Year 2022!

With this annual review we would like to inform you about the activities of the MSNZ Hamburg in the past year and of course draw your attention to the upcoming events in the new year.

### The "faces" of the MSNZ and our funding lines

After a rather slow start in 2020 due to the Corona pandemic, our junior research center has grown significantly in 2021: from January to May, a total of **10 new long-term fellows** joined us, so that our "team" now comprises a **total of 18 fellows**. Two new fellows joined the existing partner laboratories of Dr. med. Christoph Oing (II.Med. Klinik/as of 1.1.2022 also NuACT Program of the University of Manchester, UK)/PD Dr. rer. nat. Wael Mansour (Radiation Biology) and PD Dr. med. Katharina Prieske (Gynecology/as of 1.7.2021 also Jerusalem KKH, Hamburg)/PD Dr. rer. nat. Simon Joosse (Tumor Biology): On 1.4.2021 we welcomed the team Dr. med. Martin Mynarek (Pediatric Hematology and Oncology/HIT-MED Study Center)/Dr. rer. nat. Nina Struve (Radiation Biology/Reference Center Radiation Therapy) and the team Dr. med. Franziska Brauneck (II.Med. Clinic)/Dr. rer. nat. Stephan Menzel (Immunology) to the MSNZ. The new partner laboratories are working, among other things, on the treatment of childhood brain tumors and the use of nanobodies as a new form of therapy in the treatment of acute myeloid leukemia and multiple myeloma.

We were also able to welcome Dr. med. Annika Wefers who moved from Heidelberg to the Neuropathology Department of the UKE, as a Clinician Scientist at the MSNZ. New to the team in 2021 were also the Clinician Scientists with external collaboration partners, Dr. med. Michael Bockmayr (Pediatric Hematology and Oncology (PHO), partner: Technical University of Hamburg Harburg (TUHH)), Dr. med. Christine Nitschke (General, Visceral and Thoracic Surgery, partner: 2cureX GmbH) and Dr. med. Fabian Knörr (PHO, partner: UCCSH Kiel site) as well as the Medical Scientists - also with an external partner - Dr. rer. nat. Katharina Jähn-Rickert (osteology) and Dr.

rer. nat. Marina Mutas (tumor biology/Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Polymer Research, Center for Applied Nanotechnology), who each bring new areas of expertise and competence to the MSNZ. Already funded since 2020 are Franziska Modemann, MD (II.Dep. of Med., CS), PD Dr. rer. nat. Thorsten Frenzel, MD (Outpatient Center of the UKE, CS), Dr. rer. nat. Judith Niesen (PHO/Research Institute Kinderkrebs-Zentrum Hamburg, MS with ext. partner) and Dr. rer. nat. Stefan Werner (Tumor Biology, MS with ext. partner).



You can read more about the projects of the grantees on our homepage [www.uke.de/msnz](http://www.uke.de/msnz), which was also redesigned and revised in 2021 and now also offers - based on our funding conditions revised at the end of 2021 - significantly more insight into the contents and goals of the MSNZ. Furthermore, the board of the MSNZ decided in 2021 not only to maintain the funding line "**Short Term Clinician Scientist Fellowships**", which was successfully advertised for the first time at the end of 2020, but to expand it so that these calls now take place **twice a year**, in summer and winter, and offer young clinician scientists in particular, but also experienced colleagues, the opportunity to start new projects, finalize publications or prepare clinical studies in short leaves of absence. The high number of interested inquiries and applications, especially from young physicians, confirms that this funding line is a great success for the MSNZ.

We would like to express our gratitude for the support of all participating institutions in the UCCH, which also support this funding line financially on a pro rata basis and thus enable a **50% release of the CS from clinical tasks**. An overview of all current and completed projects in this line can also be found on our homepage.

### Our course program takes off and grows- networking and training

In April 2021, after a delay due to Corona, our **leadership training** finally started with our coach, **Dr. Regina Pingel**, who herself has many years of experience as a manager at the Otto company and more than 20 years of experience in coaching and training persons in leading positions, also in the university environment. On a total of three workshop days on the topics of "**career plan**", "**communication**" and "**good leadership**", the long-term grantees came together to exchange experiences and successfully develop their leadership skills in theory and in practical exercises. A nice side effect of the face-to-face workshops was the growing together of the team, not least through - at least in summer and fall - now possible activities such as joint restaurant visits. Our additionally implemented **monthly regulars' table**, to which also the short-term fellows and recently also the **UCCH CS fellows** who are not directly funded by the MSNZ were and are always welcome, made a further contribution to the exchange and networking of the researchers and served as a platform for the discussion of various questions and for the adaptation of our further offers to the needs of our fellows.

Last year, our fellows took advantage of the **Hamburg Research Academy**, an umbrella organization of all Hamburg universities that offers **training and workshops** on a wide range of topics for young researchers on their

way to professorships. The offer was supplemented by MSNZ's own formats, such as the popular workshop **"Systematic Review and Metaanalysis"** offered for the second time by our UKE-internal speaker PD Dr. Levente Kriston. Various scientific **meetings and participation in conferences** complemented the exchange of information. A highlight was certainly the **network meeting of the five funded MSNZ** (Hamburg, Dresden, Cologne/Bonn, Würzburg and Frankfurt/M) in Frankfurt and online. Here it was possible to establish contacts with the fellows of the other centers and to form interest groups, which will certainly develop positively in the year 2022. The scientific exchange was supplemented by **conference presentations** of our grantees at **various international meetings and conferences**, some of which were invited and some of which were financially supported by the MSNZ. In particular, we would like to highlight the **NORD (Northern Oncology Research and Development) online seminar series** initiated in 2021 together with the University Cancer Center Schleswig-Holstein (UCCSH), which, in addition to further scientific and strategic exchange, strengthened the cooperation between the Hamburg, Kiel and Lübeck sites. Here, our fellows Annika Wefers and Thorsten Frenzel were able to present their projects and results. Mr. Frenzel was also able to present the new **small animal irradiation device (SmART Precision X-Ray)**, which was funded proportionally by the MSNZ and which he was able to put into operation at the beginning of 2021 under conditions that were made considerably more difficult by the pandemic, with outstanding results. The device is unique in Germany in this form and equipment and is now ready for internal and external colleagues who are interested in a collaboration.

### Our Young Oncology Professionals- the Cancer Careers Day in November 2021

For the first time in November, the MNSZ was also able to hold the **Cancer Careers Day** in cooperation with the UCCSH. The purpose of the event is to make young oncological researchers aware of the topic of **"career planning"** at an early stage and to offer guidance and inspiration on how to optimally position oneself for the path to working life already during the doctorate (but also afterwards). Furthermore, an overview of the various possibilities - depending on one's own preferences and strengths - to contribute to oncological research and science in general in different positions, be it at the university or in a company, in administration, in marketing, in communication, in other areas or quite classically in research and development, will be given.

By means of a **comprehensive overview lecture** on the topic of "Career entry into research-based pharmaceutical companies" and a **panel discussion** with young, but also established colleagues from a wide range of companies, during which there was always the opportunity to ask questions, we were able to encourage an enthusiastic and numerous audience in November to engage in an intensive exchange and ask courageous questions. In the subsequent evaluation, our young researchers confirmed that this valuable format should definitely be continued in 2022.

### Family and career at MSNZ Hamburg

The MSNZ was also able to provide support with regard to the issue of **"reconciling family and career"**. We welcomed four „little fellows“ into the world and now support the young families by providing hourly childcare through our **cooperation partner**, the **Notmütterdienst Hamburg**, as well as **additional personnel support during the fellows' parental leave or during their return to research after maternity leave**. We are also particularly grateful to our third-party funder, the German Cancer Aid, for its support in the purchase of **additional laptops and software** for our fellows to use in their home offices, a measure that benefited not only the parents among the fellows.

## Outlook for the coming year 2022

### Participation of the Fellows in the MSNZ Board

The new year also brings further developments and possible changes and adjustments for the MSNZ. Above all, the **participation of our fellows in the MSNZ** and their visibility will be increased, among other things through the **participation of fellows' representatives in the MSNZ Board**, which has already started in 2021, a **plenary meeting of all fellows** planned for the first half of the year for strategic exchange with the board and the increased involvement of fellows in leading positions in planned collaborative projects, such as the expansion of cooperation with the UCCSH. In the **middle of the year**, in addition to a **renewed call for short-term grants for CS**, there will also be **calls for long-term funding lines** for the first time since 2020, and current grantees can also apply for an **extension of their project funding**. In a **symposium in November**, we will decide together with our External Advisory Board on the future set-up of the MSNZ from 2023 onwards, where our fellows will also present the results of their research to a broad public.

Furthermore, the MSNZ will advertise a **W2 professorship in 2022**, which will be funded over a period of five years and then transferred to the faculty plan ("tenure track").

### Visibility and further development

The fellows will also be increasingly involved in the organization and implementation of events, for example in an **upcoming online symposium** at which fellows will present their **external cooperation partners (February 10, 2022)** and thus give other colleagues the opportunity to initiate new cooperations in the greater HH/SH area. It is also planned to identify and involve further possible cooperation partners in the future. Interested parties are cordially invited to attend the symposium, registration details will be sent out via the UCCH Science distribution list in due course.

Through further expansion and more regular **updates of the website**, we would also like to provide more information about the ongoing projects of our fellows, as well as more comprehensive information to support the researchers, starting with the promotion of a new offer of the coach **Dr. Dieta Kuchenbrandt**, who provides us with her sought-after and helpful **webcasts including working material** for self-study; here, the fellows can learn free of charge about topics such as **"Professor:in gesucht! Planning and Optimizing Your University Career"** or **"First Audition? Applying for professorships"**. These offers are also available to other interested colleagues on request for a small fee. We also offer our **Cancer Careers Day** again, in spring 2022 as a "double pack" on the topic of **"university careers" (in research and in other fields)**. The MSNZ continuing **education curriculum** is also currently under revision. It will be finalized and published in the first half of 2022 so that a clear insight into the various offerings can be offered on the website and it will be easier to book individual courses.

A **network meeting with the other MSNZ** is again planned for the fall, hopefully this year entirely in the presence of Würzburg, so that the supraregional networking of the Fellows can also be improved.

Furthermore, we are looking forward to the unfortunately postponed **German Cancer Congress 2022 in Berlin**, which will now take place in November. Here, the presence of the Hamburg MSNZ Fellows is also planned and a **presentation of our second partner laboratory (Dr. Joosse/Dr. Prieske)** has been requested by the German Cancer Aid.

## Sustainable funding model - a benefit for oncology researchers and patients

Based on the previous and expected outstanding publication achievements and third-party funding of our grantees and the great willingness of the participating institutions to participate in our innovative and sustainable **funding model via a pro-rata LOM levy to the MSNZ**, continued funding of the MSNZ **beyond the term of the DKH grant** is already foreseeable.

In addition, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the great support of **local funding organizations** (Hamburg Cancer Society, Hubertus Wald Foundation, Roggenbuck Foundation, Hamburg Foundation for the Promotion of Cancer Control, Fördergemeinschaft Kinderkrebs-Zentrum). Only in this way is it possible to continue this outstanding project in the long term and to support our young researchers in oncology in their career planning in the future. You will also help our patients, who will hopefully benefit from the results of this dedicated work as soon as possible in the form of new therapeutic and diagnostic approaches.

We thank you for your support, collaboration and interest in our activities and look forward to an exciting year 2022 with you!

With best regards

on behalf of the MSNZ team:

I. Melzer (Head Coordinator) , K. Rothkamm and C. Bokemeyer (Speaker MSNZ HH)