

Press Release

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THE POPULATION'S HEALTH TAKES CENTRE STAGE

PHD PROGRAMME "EPIDEMIOLOGY" STARTS IN OCTOBER 2013 IN BRAUNSCHWEIG-HANNOVER

For the first time, students have the opportunity to earn a doctorate in the field of Epidemiology at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI). Practical epidemiological field research accompanied by theoretical training – this is the offer awaiting future postgraduates. The PhD programme is offered jointly by the HZI in Braunschweig, Germany, and the Hannover Biomedical Research School (HBRS) of the Hannover Medical School (MHH).



The new PhD program "Epidemiology" is starting at the HZI. © HZI/Manno

The research areas of epidemiology are diverse: Epidemiologists analyse the causes, spread and consequences of diseases in the national and international context. Whether it involves the investigation of epidemics or the analysis of medical-social correlations – epidemiologists are able to deduce valuable findings by statistical analysis of various study types and results from clinical examinations. These provide the scientific principles for preventive concepts, diagnosis and the therapy of diseases and frequently contribute to evidence-based decision-making in health policy.

"The focus of epidemiologists is on population's health or the health of certain subsets," says Prof. Gérard Krause, head of the Department Epidemiology at the HZI and professor for infection epidemiology at MHH. He is the founder and head of the new PhD programme "Epidemiology", which is offered at the HZI in cooperation with the HBRS. "The interplay between infectious pathogens and chronic diseases is a particularly dynamic area of research", explains Krause. "Exciting results of globally significant relevance for health research can be expected here in the future." For example, we know today that chronic infection with certain hepatitis viruses contributes to the development of liver cirrhosis and liver cancer. It has also been established that the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* is involved in the appearance of stomach ulcers and stomach cancer. Further questions in epidemiological research concern the relationship between infections on one side and cardiovascular as well as neurodegenerative diseases on the other side.

In addition to practical research and field work, the structured doctorate training comprises lectures, seminars and advanced training. The courses supporting the doctoral thesis are offered partially in cooperation with the graduate schools of the HZI and the MHH. Depending on previous experience and personal career planning of the PhD students, theoretical and practical training is individually structured. "This concept systematically provides the PhD candidates with necessary competencies to facilitate the assignment of key positions in research and in the public health sector after completing their PhD," says Prof. Reinhold E. Schmidt, dean of the HBRS.

"We are pleased that, together with our partners, we are able to enrich the promotion of young scientists in epidemiological research," emphasizes Prof. Dirk Heinz, scientific director of the HZI.

The programme, which is taught in English, begins in October 2013 and is targeted at interested parties who have completed a course of study in a subject related to (bio-) medicine or health sciences and who have previous knowledge in epidemiology. The degree to be obtained is a PhD or, if applicable, a doctorate in natural sciences. Further information regarding this programme and the application can be found at the website: http://www.helmholtz-hzi.de/en/career/phd_programme_epidemiology/objectives/. Specific questions should be sent to: phd-epidemiology@helmholtz-hzi.de

The Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI)

Scientists at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research in Braunschweig, Germany, are engaged in the study of different mechanisms of infection and of the body's response to infection. Helping to improve the scientific community's understanding of a given bacterium's or virus' pathogenicity is key to developing effective new treatments and vaccines.
www.helmholtz-hzi.de

The Hannover Medical School

The Hannover Medical School is an internationally renowned clinic offering supramaximal patient care. It also is the largest German transplantation centre. Patients directly profit from the medical progress developed at MHH. The MHH is the German medical school most active in research with excellence clusters in the fields of regenerative medicine and auditory research. Programs for the promotion of young scientists are combined in the Hannover Biomedical Research School.
www.mh-hannover.de