

PRESS RELEASE

IMPROVED SURVIVAL RATES AFTER STEM CELL TRANSPLANTATIONS

DKMS MECHTILD HARF SCIENCE AWARD 2019 GOES TO US PHYSICIAN DR. STEPHEN J. FORMAN FOR IMPROVING BLOOD CANCER THERAPY

Tübingen / Frankfurt a.M., 26 March 2019 – The eminent US physician and scientist Dr. Stephen J. Forman, M.D., from California, has improved survival rates for stem cell transplant patients and made many of their blood cancers curable. Forman has actively enhanced the transplantation process, making it safer and more effective, and reducing unwanted side effects. His outstanding achievements and advances in cancer immunology, hematology and stem cell transplantation are now being honored with the DKMS Mechtild Harf Science Award 2019. Presented since 2001 by the DKMS Foundation for Giving Life, the accolade comes with prize money of €10,000 and recognizes the work and research of internationally renowned medical experts in the field of stem cell transplantation.

The award ceremony, with medical experts and guests from across the globe, was held in Frankfurt am Main on the fringes of this year's EBMT Congress (European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation), one of the most important events of its kind worldwide.

Stephen J. Forman is considered one of the US's most eminent cancer specialists. An international expert for leukemias, lymphomas and stem cell transplantations, he is the director of the Hematologic Malignancies and Stem Cell Transplantation Institute at the City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Centre in Duarte, California. Over the last 32 years, the Institute has grown under his direction to become one of the most successful in the world, carrying out more than 15,000 stem cell transplantations to date on patients with blood cancers and other hematopoietic disorders.

Highly respected, Forman has focused on topics such as translational and clinical research to support the development of new, more effective cancer therapies. His current projects center on immunotherapy and include one that is exploring the use of the body's own immune system to fight cancer.

Dr. Forman's research studies are especially noteworthy and focus in particular on gaining a deeper understanding of how the cytomegalovirus (CMV) develops in transplant patients. CMV often flares up in these patients because their immune systems are already weakened. Infections can be serious infections and even include a form of pneumonia. Dr. Forman has helped to extend the potential benefits of bone marrow transplantation to broader populations, including patients with nonrelated and partially related donors, as well as older people and HIV patients.

“Stephen J. Forman’s research has actively contributed to a reduction in CMV complications and cancer recurrences in transplant patients. The DKMS Foundation for Giving Life is honored to present him with the DKMS Mechtild Harf Science Award 2019 in recognition of his outstanding work,” said **Dr. Alexander Schmidt**, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at the DKMS gemeinnützige GmbH.

“As a leading organization in the fight against blood cancer, we carry out our own research and support innovative research work by others to improve treatments and actively increase patient survival rates. We want to support medical advances to find the best possible treatment for blood cancer patients and make stem cell transplantations safer. Cutting-edge scientific research is crucial in the fight against blood cancer, which we can beat only with new, better therapies,” said Schmidt.

Find out more at: www.dkms.de

About DKMS

DKMS is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to the fight against blood cancer. Our mission is to give as many patients as possible a second chance at life. We are a world leader in the provision of stem cells for life-saving transplantations. DKMS is active not only in Germany but also in the US, Poland, UK and Chile, with a combined total of more than 8.7 million donors in our registry. We also carry out scientific research, setting standards in the typing of new stem cell donors in our DKMS Life Science Lab.

About the DKMS Foundation for Giving Life

The DKMS Foundation for Giving Life is the parent organization of DKMS and focuses, among other things, on advancing research projects in the field of stem cell removal and transplantation. The DKMS Mechtild Harf Science Award has been presented since 2001 and honors the best scientific advances in this field.

Regional statistics, images and other stories are available to journalists from our DKMS Media Centre at: mediacenter.dkms.de

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