

## News Release

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## **Future Insight Prize 2024 Awarded to Johns Hopkins University's Lauren Gardner**

- **Award is a research grant of € 500,000 for AI-based solutions to prevent future pandemics**
- **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany CEO Garijo handed over prestigious prize**

Darmstadt, Germany, July 10, 2024 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, awarded Professor Lauren [Gardner](#), representing Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA, with the Future Insight Prize 2024 worth € 500,000 for her contributions to develop advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems to help quickly discover and control future pandemics.

"The exemplary work of Lauren Gardner and her team from Johns Hopkins University made a significant public health contribution during the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, with her receipt of Future Insight Prize, we hope she can accelerate ongoing efforts to create a world that is better prepared to predict and prevent future pandemics," said Belén Garijo, Chair of the Executive Board and CEO of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, when handing over the award in Mainz, Germany, today.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the interactive dashboard of Gardner and her team became the most authoritative and centralized data collection and sharing system for the reporting and tracking of Covid-19 health outcomes worldwide. The Future Insight Prize will enable her to further develop sophisticated public health models



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and data systems that can enhance international pandemic preparedness and response capabilities.

At the award ceremony held at the [Curious2024](#) – Future Insight Conference in Mainz, Germany, Gardner shared her vision for the impact that the award will have upon her work: “Receiving the Future Insight Prize will further support our mission at Johns Hopkins University to refine predictive modelling and enhance decision-making tools that are crucial for managing public health emergencies effectively. This recognition fuels our commitment to developing new AI-enabled solutions to anticipate and mitigate future threats from any known virus or other biological source.”

[Gardner](#)’s current projects include enhancing epidemiological tools for early outbreak detection, creating a centralized open data repository, and advancing public health policy integration through training and capacity-building efforts. Her work aims to set new standards in using AI for public health and foster robust global responses to emerging infectious diseases.

The Future Insight Prize was established by Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, in 2018 to support groundbreaking research that offers solutions to major global challenges. The prize recognizes not only past scientific achievements but is also meant to enable future breakthroughs. The Future Insight Prize 2025 will be allocated in the field of regenerative medicine. Proposals for potential candidates can be brought to the attention of the [Future Insight Prize Jury](#).

### Previous Future Insight Prize winners

Name	Topic	Year	Institute
Prof. Khalid <a href="#">Salita</a>	Pandemic protection	2023	Emory University, Atlanta, USA
Prof. Tobias <a href="#">Erb</a>	CO <sub>2</sub> conversion	2022	Max Planck Institute for Terrestrial Microbiology in Marburg, Germany
Prof. Ting <a href="#">Lu</a>	Food generation	2021	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA
Prof. Stephen <a href="#">Techtmann</a>	Food generation	2021	Michigan Technological University, USA
Prof. Stefan <a href="#">Sieber</a>	Multi-drug resistance	2020	Technical University of Munich, Germany
Prof. James <a href="#">Crowe</a>	Pandemic protection	2019	Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, Tennessee, USA
Prof. Pardis <a href="#">Sabeti</a>	Pandemic protection	2019	Harvard University and the Broad Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA Yale University, New Haven, USA

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### **About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany**

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operates across life science, healthcare and electronics. Around 63,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From providing products and services that accelerate drug development and manufacturing as well as discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2023, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 21 billion in 65 countries. The company holds the global rights to the name and trademark "Merck" internationally. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, operate as MilliporeSigma in life science, EMD Serono in healthcare and EMD Electronics in electronics. Since its founding in 1668, scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to the company's technological and scientific advances. To this day, the founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company.

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