

News Release

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Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Biopharma Innovation Cup 2017

- **Winning team receives €20,000 for innovative project proposal on the role of Natural Killer cells in cancer immunology**
- **Overall, more than 1,400 applications from 60 countries**
- **Next year's 350th anniversary edition will also cover topics from Life Science and Performance materials**

Darmstadt, Germany, July 06, 2017 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, today announced the winners of its seventh Biopharma Innovation Cup. The winning team received €20,000 for its innovative idea around the role of Natural Killer (NK) cells in cancer immunology.

The Biopharma Innovation Cup is designed to support the professional development of post-graduate students and to foster innovation from a promising new generation of academic talent. It showcases Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany's deep commitment to leverage innovation, curiosity and collaboration. With more than 1,400 applications from 60 countries, this year's Biopharma Innovation Cup achieved a new record of popularity. Thirty-three participants worked hand in hand with experienced Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, researchers and managers in the biopharma field on developing business plans. For 6 days, bright minds came together at the Innovation Camp near Frankfurt, Germany, and jointly developed novel ideas into innovative project plans for drug discovery.

The winning team "Immuno-Oncology" inspired the audience with their outstanding project proposal on how to translate NK cell biology into a drug discovery project.



The team consisted of:

- Alex Kertser (Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel)
- Franklin Zhong (A*STAR, Singapore)
- Kelly Moynihan (MIT, USA)
- Patrik Andersson (Karolinska Institute, Sweden)
- Simone Mori (Scripps Research Institute, USA)
- Arne Sutter (team coach)

As runner-up receiving €5,000, the team “Medicinal Chemistry” was chosen with an innovative proposal on DNA-encoded libraries.

The team consisted of:

- Adam McCallum (Georgia Institute of Technology, USA)
- Anna Rydzik (LMU Munich, Germany)
- Josua Jordi (Harvard, USA)
- Rüdiger Borrmann (ETH Zürich, Switzerland)
- Wilian Cortopassi (UCSF, USA)
- Henning Böttcher (team coach)

The initiative has won several innovation awards over the years, including the Edison Award 2017, Stevie Gold Award 2017, German Industry Innovation Award 2015 and the German Idea Award 2014. More detailed information on the Biopharma Innovation Cup can be found at [Biopharma Open Innovation Portal](#).

“The Biopharma Innovation Cup is getting increasingly popular at innovation hotspots all over the world from year to year. We are happy to offer young talents this development opportunity,” said Dr Ulrich Betz, Vice President of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Incubator at the Healthcare business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and initiator and manager of the Innovation Cup.

On the occasion of their 350th anniversary in 2018, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, will conduct a special anniversary edition of the Innovation Cup, covering topics in Life Science and Performance Materials in addition to Healthcare. Applications to participate in the 2018 edition of the cup can be submitted starting October 01, 2017.

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About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is a leading science and technology company in healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 50,000 employees work to further develop technologies that improve and enhance life – from biopharmaceutical therapies to treat cancer or multiple sclerosis, cutting-edge systems for scientific research and production, to liquid crystals for smartphones and LCD televisions. In 2016, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 15.0 billion in 66 countries. Founded in 1668, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed corporate group. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, holds the global rights to the „Merck“ name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the company operates as EMD Serono, MilliporeSigma and EMD Performance Materials.