

Penzberg, April 1, 2008

## German research activities awarded

**Gerhard Schratt, PhD and Professor Albert Sickmann receive the Analytica Research Prize**

"There's nothing like starting young" – so goes the old German proverb. The truth of this saying is demonstrated by the two up-and-coming German scientists Dr. Gerhard Schratt (35) and Prof. Albert Sickmann (34). They will receive the 50,000 euro Analytica Research Prize for 2008. The two researchers will share the award. They are being honored for their analytical studies in the field of neurobiology and functional protein research.

Today, for the first time, the Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Roche will award the Analytica Research Prize. In Munich at analytica, the world trade fair for analytics, laboratory technology, and biotechnology, the president of the Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Prof. Alfred Wittinghofer, will present the prize endowed by Roche.

"The newly created prize is a sign of the value we place on German research and its outstanding work. It is awarded exclusively to scientists who do research here in this country. The industry needs these innovative impulses to survive in global competition via their product developments," emphasizes Dr. Gerd Maass, Head of Research and Development of Roche Applied Science.

Dr. Gerhard Schratt graduated summa cum laude from the University of Tuebingen and currently conducts basic research at the Interdisciplinary Center for Neurosciences of the University of Heidelberg. There, the biochemist investigates the molecular mechanisms that are important for plasticity of synapses and thus for learning and memory processes. He concentrates on a certain group of miRNAs (micro-ribonucleic acids) that ultimately influence the structure and function of synapses. This information, in turn, can be used to

derive novel therapeutic approaches for diseases of the nervous system.

When he was only 17 years old, Prof. Albert Sickmann very successfully participated in a state-wide natural sciences research competition in North Rhine-Westphalia. This probably laid the groundwork for his research career, because only ten years later, he graduated with distinction from the Ruhr University of Bochum as a biochemist. Appointed professor in 2002, he is now Director of the Protein Mass Spectrometry department at the Rudolf-Virchow Center for Experimental Biochemistry of the University of Wuerzburg. The network of protein molecules is his specialty, because his research results serve as a basis for generating models to better understand various cellular processes. In particular, platelets have occupied his undivided attention. If there are disorders in their network components, heart attack or heavy blood losses can occur. His vision is the modeling of an "e-Platelet", i.e., a virtual platelet, which would contribute toward a better understanding of these cells that are responsible for blood coagulation.

#### **About Roche**

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is one of the world's leading research-focused healthcare groups in the fields of pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. As the world's biggest biotech company and an innovator of products and services for the early detection, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, the Group contributes on a broad range of fronts to improving people's health and quality of life. Roche is the world leader in in-vitro diagnostics and drugs for cancer and transplantation, and is a market leader in virology. It is also active in other major therapeutic areas such as autoimmune diseases, inflammatory and metabolic disorders and diseases of the central nervous system. In 2007 sales by the Pharmaceuticals Division totalled 36.8 billion Swiss francs, and the Diagnostics Division posted sales of 9.3 billion francs. Roche has R&D agreements and strategic alliances with numerous partners, including majority ownership interests in Genentech and Chugai, and invested over 8 billion Swiss francs in R&D in 2007. Worldwide, the Group employs about 79,000 people. Additional information is available on the Internet at [www.roche.com](http://www.roche.com).

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