

## PRESS RELEASE

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PM 2021-08-01**NEW JOHANNA QUANDT PROFESSORSHIPS ESTABLISHED IN LIFE SCIENCES**

*Stiftung Charité and Berlin Institute of Health at Charité continue successful format for recruiting outstanding female scientists // New Johanna Quandt Professors from the USA, Canada, and Germany join the Berlin scientific community*

Stiftung Charité and the Berlin Institute of Health at Charité (BIH) are establishing a number of new BIH Johanna Quandt Professorships in Berlin for the second time. The professorships were advertised worldwide and proved to be extremely well demanded. Not only was this international call for applications explicitly designed to promote women in science, but it also was open to all topics. Prospective candidates were invited to apply for their own professorship in Berlin creating an innovative concept. "The open topic approach by the Johanna Quandt Professorships dispenses with being restricted to specific subjects and, by doing so, promotes genuine competition for the best ideas and most promising research approaches," states Dr. Jörg Appelhans, Chair of the Executive Board of Stiftung Charité, summing up the selection process. Through the collaboration between the private Stiftung Charité and the publicly funded Berlin Institute of Health, up to three million Euros will be made available for each of the new professorships over the first five years. "The joint initiative with Stiftung Charité allows us to endow the professorships, which have also attracted candidates from leading universities, such as from the USA and Canada," states Professor Dr. Christopher Baum, Chair of the BIH Board of Directors and Chief Translational Research Officer of Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin.

With all female professors having been made a binding offer of tenure, the sustainability of the professorships is guaranteed. In order to bring about the corresponding long-term perspectives, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin and the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association (MDC) are working closely together on the appointments.

The new BIH Johanna Quandt Professors are:

- Prof. Dr. **Sarah Hedtrich** from the University of Vancouver in Canada: she is appointed **Johanna Quandt Professor for Translational Human Organ Models** at Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin and its Department of Infectious Diseases and Respiratory Medicine. Her research will mainly focus on complex organ models of human skin and lung, while also establishing alternatives to conventional animal models for the development of new drugs and therapies.
- Dr. **Kirsten Kübler** from the Massachusetts General Hospital of Harvard Medical School and the American Broad Institute, a joint institution of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University: her **Johanna Quandt Professorship for Early Cancer Development and Prevention** is endowed at Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin and its Department of Hematology, Oncology and Cancer Immunology. In her research, the clinician will focus primarily on the molecular changes during cancer development, aiming at improving early detection of cancer.

- Dr. **Kathrin de la Rosa**: the group leader at the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association (MDC) is appointed **Johanna Quandt Professor for Immune Mechanisms in Translation**. As part of her professorship, the immunologist, who was recently awarded a Starting Grant by the European Research Council, will deepen the research into the production of B cells to defend against viruses, such as SARS-CoV-2 or HIV. The scientist will continue to head her research group at the MDC and will also be based there.

All three BIH Johanna Quandt Professors will start their new appointments in the next few weeks. A fourth Johanna Quandt Professorship is expected to be filled in the near future. Together with the three Johanna Quandt Professors already selected in 2017, they form a new promising generation of highly interdisciplinary life scientists.

Stiftung Charité receives its funding for the professorships from the Johanna Quandt Private Excellence Initiative. The initiative is one of the largest single private funds for promoting science in Germany. As part of the Private Excellence Initiative, Stiftung Charité now supports nigh on 500 people at all scientific and clinical career stages, ranging from students to Nobel Prize winners.

Further information on the Johanna Quandt Professors can be found under [www.stiftung-charite.de/en](http://www.stiftung-charite.de/en) and [www.bihealth.org/en](http://www.bihealth.org/en).

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**About Stiftung Charité**

Stiftung Charité is an independent charitable foundation. It was endowed in 2005 by entrepreneur Johanna Quandt, who entrusted it with the mission of supporting the innovative potential and excellence of Berlin's university medicine, which can look back on a rich tradition in medical research and patient care. Since then, Stiftung Charité has been a key promoter and creative driving force for the life and medical sciences in Berlin. It supports projects across the broad spectrum of research, teaching, health care in addition to transfers of knowledge and technology. Funding from Stiftung Charité helps to support talented individuals and scholars. Since 2014, Stiftung Charité has also supported the life sciences in Berlin with the Johanna Quandt Private Excellence Initiative to provide funding to top-level scientists at all career stages, from students to professors. More information: [www.stiftung-charite.de/en](http://www.stiftung-charite.de/en)