

Presse-Information

Stephan Harbarth receives Robert Koch Prize for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention 2022

- From the jury decision: "A remarkable scientist in hospital epidemiology and infection control in Europe".
- Prize worth 50,000 Euro to be awarded in Berlin on 6 September

Berlin, August 11, 2022 – Stephan Harbarth will receive the Robert Koch Prize for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention 2022. The 50,000 Euro prize will be awarded on 6 September in Berlin - one year late due to the pandemic. The jury describes the Swiss scientist as "remarkable" and his work as extensive and instrumental in the development of hospital hygiene.

Prof. Dr Stephan Harbarth is a professor at the University of Geneva and responsible for all aspects of hospital epidemiology and infection control in the Department of Internal Medicine at Geneva University Hospitals. He will receive the Robert Koch Prize for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention 2022, awarded every two years and endowed with 50,000 Euro, for "extensive and continuous work in the field of hospital epidemiology and infection control in Europe to improve the scientific basis of infection control measures". Stephan Harbarth has significantly influenced developments in this field over the past 20 years. The award is a great tribute to the research work of this remarkable scientist.

His main interest is the epidemiology, transmission and prevention of infections caused by multidrug-resistant microorganisms, pathogens that are immune to multiple antibiotics and therefore represent a major problem in hospitals. His first study in this field was published in 1999. Since then, he has investigated the effectiveness and combination of infection control measures, measures for the detection, typing and elimination of such pathogens, especially methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus bacteria (MRSA), vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE). Stephan Harbarth always kept in mind the threat to public health posed by pathogens that are resistant to several antibiotics at the same time (MDRO: multi-drug resistant organisms) and the health economic aspects and incentives to develop new antibiotics.

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In addition to his scientific excellence, Stephan Harbarth is also an outstanding author, a valued speaker at international conferences, known for his clear and substantive evidence-based statements on infection control measures.

He is on the editorial board of high-ranking journals and organises the global congress ICPIG in Geneva (International Congress of Prevention and Infection Control) with 1,000 participants representing not only hospitals from privileged countries but also those from low-income countries.

As a member of "SWISSnoso", he works as part of the team to develop recommendations for infection prevention in Switzerland and has served as a scientific advisor to the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and JPIAMR (Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance).

Award is both an honour and a motivation: preventing hospital-acquired infections saves thousands of lives every year

With the Prize for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention, the Robert Koch Foundation honours published work of the past years, but also wants to contribute to the initiation of new projects.

"This prize is both an honour and a motivation," says Chairman of the Board Prof. Dr Wolfgang Plischke. "In Germany, about half a million patients fall ill with hospital-acquired infections every year - more than 10,000 of them with a fatal outcome." These are dramatic figures.

"An improvement of hospital hygiene measures and new strategies for the therapy and prevention of infections acquired in connection with a medical procedure are urgently needed. "

The Robert Koch Prize for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention is financially supported by B. Braun SE and BARMER, which provide the prize money of 50,000 Euro.

About the Robert Koch Foundation

The Robert Koch Foundation e.V. is a non-profit foundation for the promotion of medical progress, founded in 1907 and based in Berlin. It promotes basic scientific research in the field of infectious diseases as well as exemplary projects to solve medical and hygiene problems. Every year, the foundation awards several high-ranking scientific prizes: the Robert Koch Prize, which is one of the most important scientific awards in Germany, the Robert Koch Gold Medal, three awards for young scientists and, since 2013, the Prize for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention.

Robert Koch (1843 - 1910), after whom the prize is named, founded modern bacteriology. For this he received the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology in 1905. Koch headed the Institute for Infectious Diseases in Berlin from 1891 until his retirement in 1904.



Robert-Koch-Stiftung

Information for editors and the public:

Save the date: The award ceremony of the Robert Koch Prize for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention 2022 will take place on 6 September at 4 pm at the St. Elisabeth Kirche (Invalidenstr. 3, 10115 Berlin).

The event will be streamed via LinkedIn, the profiles are:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/robert-koch-stiftung/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RKStiftung>

All posts around the event will be hashtagged #RobertKochAward.

Contact:

Sabine Timmermann, Tel: +49 (0)214 30-70285, E-Mail: info@robert-koch-stiftung.de