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International Symposium "Frontiers in Skin Immunity" brings leading immunologists to Heidelberg

From May 15–16, 2026, the 3rd International Symposium "Frontiers in Skin Immunity" will bring leading experts in dermatology and immunology to Heidelberg. Organized by the SFB Transregio 156 "The Skin as Sensor and Initiator of Local and Systemic Immunity" and the Heidelberg Medical Faculty of Heidelberg University the meeting highlights advances in understanding skin immune responses and marks the conclusion of the consortium's third funding period. A special highlight is a lecture by 2025 Nobel Prize laureate Professor Shimon Sakaguchi. The symposium will be held in English. Interested scientists and physicians can still register. Journalists are warmly invited.

The international symposium "Frontiers in Skin Immunity", taking place at the DKFZ Communication Center, Heidelberg, Germany, will bring together leading scientists and clinicians to discuss recent advances in skin immunology, inflammatory skin diseases, and immune regulation.

A central focus of the symposium is the work of the Collaborative Research Centre Transregio 156 (SFB-TRR 156), "The Skin as Sensor and Initiator of Local and Systemic Immunity", coordinated from Heidelberg Medical Faculty of Heidelberg University. For more than eleven years, this interdisciplinary consortium has investigated the skin as a key immune organ that not only provides a first line of defense against pathogens but also shapes systemic immune responses.

Lecture by Nobel Prize laureate Professor Shimon Sakaguchi on May 16

A special highlight of the symposium is a lecture by Professor Shimon Sakaguchi, recipient of the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discoveries on peripheral immune tolerance (together with Mary E. Brunkow and Fred Ramsdell). Professor Sakaguchi's work on regulatory T cells has fundamentally shaped modern immunology and has profound relevance for understanding immune balance in the skin. His lecture, entitled "Treatment of immunological diseases, including pemphigus vulgaris, by converting disease-mediating T cells into Tregs", will address innovative therapeutic strategies based on immune tolerance.

The SFB-TRR 156 is chaired by Professor Dr. Alexander Enk, Heidelberg Medical Faculty of Heidelberg University and Managing Director of the Department of Dermatology at Heidelberg University Hospital, and includes project partners from the universities of Heidelberg, Tübingen, and Mainz. Currently funded with approximately €14 million for its third funding period, the consortium brings together dermatologists, immunologists, microbiologists, and bioinformaticians to pursue a holistic understanding of skin immunity and its interaction with systemic immune responses. A major goal of the current funding phase is the translation of basic research findings into clinical application, including clinical studies on chronic inflammatory and autoimmune diseases such as psoriasis. The symposium will provide a state-of-the-art overview of recent developments in skin immunity and will mark the conclusion of the third funding period of SFB-TRR 156.

The symposium program will reflect these research priorities through scientific lectures and discussion sessions covering innate and adaptive immunity of the skin, host–microbe interactions, barrier function, and immune mediated skin diseases, with a strong emphasis on translational research.

Press release

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Further information

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