

Human Vaccines: Profile

Association for Cancer Immunotherapy (CIMT)

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Dr Christoph Huber is the chairman of CIMT's executive board.

How and when did your organization start, and where are you located?

The Association for Cancer Immunotherapy (CIMT) was founded in the fall of 2002 as an information and education platform for the emerging field of immunological cancer therapy. CIMT started in Mainz, Germany at the Medical Center of the Johannes Gutenberg University by physicians and researchers from various fields in clinical and theoretical medicine, forming a visionary association that has since become the foremost European communications platform for all aspects of science and translation in the field of cancer immunotherapy.

CIMT is an independent non-profit organization and has its offices in Mainz, Germany.

What are the most critical problems in vaccine development in your field of interest?

Of all cancer patients only a fraction (35%) responds to currently approved therapies (immune- and non-immunotherapies). Some cancers respond well to approved therapies, but in total the effects of successful treatments are rather modest. The critical innovation will be to develop therapies that have stronger effects. A new generation of therapies could be either synergistic combinations or combinations of more individualized approaches. New technologies exist but still have to be applied in drug development. As major challenges we see the regulatory aspects of a new class of therapies, and the immense costs for clinical trials.

What is the mission of your organization?

The mission of CIMT is to foster research and development of cancer immunotherapies that will improve the treatment of patients suffering from cancer.

How does your organization facilitate vaccine development?

CIMT has established a platform to facilitate communication between researchers of all faculties with an interest in cancer immunotherapy. CIMT promotes the exchange of knowledge among industry-based and academic scientists, regulatory authorities and physicians through scientific meetings, educational symposia, working groups and publications.

CIMT cooperates with related consortia, regulatory agencies, journals, academic institutions and companies. CIMT initiates and coordinates working parties that actively accelerate development of the field. CIMT educates health professionals through annual meetings, advanced education seminars and the publication of guidelines and textbooks.

How does your organization engage national and international resources committed to vaccine research? What important partnerships does your organization have?

CIMT receives grants from the German Ministry of Education and Research as well as money from industry and academic sponsors. All of our funding is invested back into education and networking activities and the CIMT working groups. As one of our biggest resources we see the world's leading scientists. The CIMT Annual Meeting gives us the opportunity to invite leading researchers, learn from them and engage them in topics of high interest for the future of cancer immunotherapy.

What important partnerships does your organization have?

CIMT partners with the journal Cancer Immunology Immunotherapy (CII) and has built a network of partner organizations such as SITC (Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer) and CRI-CIC (Cancer Immunotherapy Consortium of the Cancer Research Institute).

What is your function at your organization?

Christoph Huber, chairman of the executive board

What were your "highlights" in recent vaccine research, development, or use?

From the many highlights in 2011 we would like to emphasize two activities:

- First, for the first time it was shown that the cancer mutanome can be exploited for tumor vaccination. About one third of mutational epitopes are immunogenic, most immune responses induced are mutation-specific and prevent or reduce tumor growth in vivo disease models (Castle J. et al., *Cancer Res* 2012 Mar 1;72:1081-91J)
- Second, in collaboration with our partner organization CIC we have developed a methodological framework to enhance the clinical success of cancer immunotherapy (Hoos A. et al., *Nature Biotechnology*. 2011; 29:867)

What areas or topics does your organization currently focus on?

Personalized Immunotherapy. Biomarkers for stratification, breaking tumor-associated immunosuppression

What are your main goals for the next five years?

To advance cancer immunotherapy in particular by establishing individualized cancer immunotherapy approaches in the clinics and to further establish CIMT as Europe's leading education and networking organization

For more information, please visit:

<http://cimt.eu/>