



Professor Valter Longo Receives the 2016 Friedrich Merz Guest Professorship

The American gerontologist studies the beneficial effects on health of fasting

Frankfurt, November 10, 2016 – The researcher into aging Valter Longo has been appointed to the 2016 Friedrich Merz Guest Professorship. The gerontology professor and director of the Longevity Institute at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles has an interest in the beneficial effects of fasting for the promotion of health and lifespan prolongation. This year, Merz is funding the guest professorship in the fields of medicine and pharmacy for the 26th time.

The Merz Guest Professorship, first awarded in 1987, is one of the oldest chairs for visiting professors at Frankfurt's Goethe University. "The purpose of our guest professorship is to further cutting-edge research and promote the exchange between science and business on an international level," explains Philip Burchard, CEO of Merz. "In Valter Longo, we have appointed an acclaimed gerontologist who has done outstanding work on the subject of health in old age."

Valter Longo, who was born in 1967 in Genoa, has proved that not ingesting solid food over a given period effectively enhances the efficacy of chemotherapy and radiation therapy in cancer patients. While healthy cells fall into a hibernation-like state during fasting, cancer cells cannot adapt in the same way: they can survive only in conditions that are optimum for them—fasting is seemingly a nightmare for cancer cells. Furthermore, Longo has established that if a so-called fasting mimicking diet is followed, whereby a person cuts their calorie intake by between a third and a half of their usual consumption for five days, the biomarkers (i.e. indicators of diseases) for diabetes, cancer, heart conditions, adiposity, and aging, are reduced.

Professor Longo will participate in two public events as part of his guest professorship. At a panel discussion at the Frankfurter Bürger-Universität on Thursday, November 24, together with Professor Agnes Flöel, a neurologist at Berlin's Charité teaching hospital, he will elucidate how fasting and sports can influence healthy aging. From Frankfurt's Goethe University and University Hospital, Professor Helmuth Steinmetz, Director of the Neurological Clinic, and Professor Joachim Steinbach, Head of the Dr. Senckenberg Institute of Neurooncology, will take part in the

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discussion. The panel discussion will be moderated by Professor Manfred Schubert-Zsilavec, Vice President of the Goethe University. The experts will naturally be happy to field questions from interested individuals or those affected. The event, which is free of charge, will be held in the Arkadensaal of the Goethe House, Grosser Hirschgraben 23-25 in Frankfurt and begins at 5 pm.

Alongside this public forum, an all-day scientific symposium will be held at the University Hospital on Wednesday, November 23 to discuss Longo's clinical studies and the current state of research and knowledge under the heading "Cancer Metabolism: Mechanisms and Treatment Strategies". The symposium starts at 9.30 am in auditorium 22-2 and ends at 5.15 pm.

The Friedrich Merz Guest Professorship

The Friedrich Merz Guest Professorship was founded in December 1985 in honor of the 100th birthday of the Merz company founder, Friedrich Merz, who, as one of the first members of the Senckenbergische Gesellschaft, had close ties with the University of Frankfurt and was a patron of science. The purpose of the Guest Professorship is to appoint an especially well-reputed scientist from the field of pharmaceuticals or human medicine to the University of Frankfurt each year. Awarded for the first time in 1987, the Professorship has been awarded yearly ever since with just two exceptions. Alongside the symposium, which presents a spectrum of topics ranging from basic research to health care research, the Guest Professorship offers researchers from both the academic world and the industry the opportunity to participate in an annual exchange of knowledge and to build a foundation for further collaboration in the future.

About the Merz Pharma Group

With more than 2,900 employees and 36 subsidiaries, Merz is a leading global provider of innovative medical products in the fields of Aesthetics and Neurotoxins. Privately held for more than 100 years, the company is distinguished by its in-house research and development, solid financial strength and continuous growth. Complementing its unique portfolio of products for minimally invasive and non-invasive skin rejuvenation and tightening, Merz also develops therapies to treat neurologically induced movement disorders. Products for medical dermatology, OTC medicines, dietary supplements and skincare complete the offering from the company, which is headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany. In fiscal year 2014/15 the Merz Pharma Group generated revenue of EUR 1,157.0 million. More information is available at www.merz.com.

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