

My dear Dr. Steiner,
Dr. Haass,
Mr. & Mrs. Breuer,
ladies and gentlemen,

I am happy to be able to address a few words to you at this opening of the Eibsee-Meeting concentrating on cellular mechanisms of the Alzheimer disease on occasion of the presentation of the Hans and Ilse Breuer Award to Dr. Harold Steiner, a co-worker of the Adolf-Butenandt-Institute, in the name of the Medical Faculty of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University (LMU).

The Medical Faculty of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) is concerned since many years with the question which structural actions must be taken to increase the efficiency of research and concurrently the excellence and cost efficiency of patient care. These plans are in accordance with recommendations of the German research council (Wissenschaftsrat) and of an Executive Committee consisting of external experts and members of the directorates of hospitals and faculties within the LMU and the Technical University Munich go along with these deliberations.

Essentially a concentration of all preclinical, theoretical, clinical-theoretical and clinical facilities belonging to the Medical Faculty of the LMU is foreseen in Großhadern/Martinsried. Thereby, a gain in scientific and clinical competence is achieved: on one hand the accommodation of basic science and clinical research in one location close to patient care will foster interdisciplinary collaboration. On the other hand, collaboration with already existing bodies of biomedical research (GSF, faculty of biology, chemistry and pharmacy, Max-Planck-Institutes, Gründerzentrum) at the campus Großhadern/Martinsried will be promoted. The close contact between theoretical and clinical research shall further be supported by the foundation of a biomedical centre (BMC) in which the preexisting preclinical facilities (Adolf-Butenandt-Institut, Biochemistry, Physiology and the Walter-Brendel-Centre for surgical research) will integrate the clinical research groups.

At present 8 Collaborative Research Centres of the German Research Foundation (DFG) are funded at the Medical Faculty of the LMU. Additionally 5 Research Training Groups, sponsored also by the DGF and numerous other funded projects of excellence clearly demonstrate that this faculty is one of the most active in research in Germany. A ranking

taking funding levels, publications and teaching resources into account has demonstrated the top position of the Medical Faculty.

Nevertheless, the scientific committee has rightfully recognized innovation impediments and demanded corrective measures. These are, for example, setting up performance-based funding (LOM) – which in spite of my intensive efforts is still not implemented, the formation of a clinical study centre and improvements in networking as foreseen by the excellence initiative of the States and Federal Governments as well as improvements in student education within the scope of the new problem-oriented teaching model “McCuM”.

In spite of all efforts to build a structural framework for excellence in research and teaching, the quality of the university's basic duties still depends on its personnel. The Medical Faculty considers itself fortunate to have found in the person of Dr. Haass, a member, who internationally holds a top level position in the area of basic research on neurodegenerative diseases, especially on Alzheimer disease. The numerous outside sponsoring and awards in the highly competitive Alzheimer research attest to the absolute top level position reached by Dr. Haass and his co-workers. These include: a priority programme on “Cellular Mechanisms of Alzheimer Disease” of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation); a collaborative research centre on neuro-degenerative diseases of the DFG; the highly decorated DFG “Leibniz-Award” and the recently “Promising Work Award” given to Dr. Haass. Many high-ranking published articles from him and his co-workers underlie the innovative research impulse which come from the “Haas”-Institute. But what is a chief without his co-workers? It is therefore highly satisfying to see research personalities growing out of this institute, who develop their own ideas and methods to track the molecular and cellular mechanisms of neurodegenerative diseases. One of these outstanding personalities of this institute is Dr. Harald Steiner, the first laureate of the Alzheimer research award of the Hans and Ilse Breuer foundation. He studied Chemistry in Stuttgart, then worked with Dr. Neupert, one of the directors of the Adolf-Butenandt-Institute and simultaneously prodean (Prodekan) of the Medical Faculty of the LMU in Munich, then joined Christian Haass in Mannheim at the “Central Institute of Mental Health” and finally followed him in 1999 to the Adolf-Butenandt-Institute where he has since then been the “Senior Scientist” and “Group Leader”. He received his postdoctoral qualification in 2002 and became assistant professor for biochemistry at the LMU in 2003. 50 international high-ranking publications, 2 of these in the renowned “Nature Cell Biology”, establish him as one of the leading scientist in the

competitive field of activity in Alzheimer research. His work is part of the basis for the development of sekretasis inhibitors for which he is now receiving this Alzheimer award.

This day and this symposium is certainly a special day in the life of Dr. Steiner. The nomination for the Alzheimer Award recognizes the many years of tedious scientific work in the right direction. The Medical Faculty is proud of him, his scientific mentors and the institute. Awards contribute to the self-image of a university and demonstrate that, beyond the individual distinction, the internal promotion and support of scientific peak performance is only then possible when the right vocational politics are followed and also when the internal funding is correctly applied. Even more famous than Christian Haass and Harald Steiner, as well as the nobel prize laureates who have worked in the Medical Faculty of the LMU, e.g. Adolf Butenandt, Fedor Lynen, Emil von Bering is Alois Alzheimer. He, a Bavarian coming from Frankfurt, who first described the age dementia of the 51 year old female patient, Auguste Deter, worked for 9 years under Kraepelin in the Psychiatric Clinic of the LMU until he followed his call to Breslau. Kraepelin later named this disorder after his disciple. According to the World Health Organization, WHO, the Alzheimer disorder will become one of the major medical problems of the future. At present there are about 1.6 million people affected and 70,000 new cases are reported each year in Germany. The worldwide scientific efforts to research the causes and to find effective therapies reflect this fact.

The medical faculty of the LMU Munich is proud that the first "Hans und Ilse Breuer-Award" for Alzheimer Disease Research is being presented this year to a young innovative researcher of the LMU. I, personally, and the faculty thank the consulting panel for their choice, the DFG for their support of the LMU in this area of scientific research and for the arrangement of this symposium and, but not least, the Breuer Foundation for the creation of this award. I hope, that this award will be a stimulus for both Dr. Steiner himself and for the entire institute to continue their work. My sincerest congratulations for Dr. Steiner and I wish him all the best!