ANDREAS BERGTHALER



Andreas Bergthaler **is Professor of Molecular Immunology at the Medical University of Vienna. His research connects inflammation, metabolism and viral infection, and develops advanced wastewater-based pathogen surveillance to inform public health decisions.**

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Trained as a veterinarian at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Bergthaler earned his doctorate at the University of Zurich in the Institute of Experimental Immunology under Hans Hengartner and Nobel laureate Rolf Zinkernagel. Postdoctoral work in Geneva and at the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle followed, supported by EMBO and Swiss National Science Foundation fellowships. From 2011 to 2021 he led an independent group at the CeMM Research Center for Molecular Medicine of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, where he remains an adjunct principal investigator. Since 2022 he has headed the Institute of Hygiene and Applied Immunology at the Medical University of Vienna.

His laboratory investigates how the immune system and metabolism communicate during viral infection. Using mouse models of chronic infection with lymphocytic choriomeningitis virus, the team showed that CD8+ T cells can induce cachexia, and that type I interferon signaling disrupts the hepatic urea cycle and alters systemic metabolism to suppress T cell function. A second research line addresses transmissible cancers, notably devil facial tumor disease in Tasmanian devils. During the COVID-19 pandemic, his group built national wastewater surveillance that resolved SARS-CoV-2 variants across Austria, and it now extends this work to other pathogens, including airborne pathogens in school classrooms and human papillomavirus.

Bergthaler served on Austria's GECKO pandemic advisory board from 2021 to 2023, co-founded the immunotherapy company Hookipa Pharma, and is a committed science communicator, sharing research with the public. His work has been widely recognized. Outside the lab, he enjoys time with his family and hunting for mushrooms.

AWARDS AND HONORS

2020 Finalist, Science Breakthrough of the Year in the Life Sciences, Falling Walls Remote, Berlin
2019 Nomination for „Austrian of the Year" in the category Research, Vienna
2017 Austrian Infection Research Prize, Austrian Society for Infectious Diseases & Tropical Medicine
2016 Milstein Young Investigator Award, International Cytokine & Interferon Society, San Francisco
2016 Georges-Köhler Prize, German Society for Immunology (DGfI), Hamburg
2016 Löffler-Frosch Prize, Society of Virology (GfV), Münster
2006 Award for Distinguished Doctoral Thesis, University of Zurich
2006 Golden Honour Medal for Special Merits, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna

Grants and fellowships

- ERC Starting Grant (European Research Council)
- 2008-2010: EMBO Long-Term Fellowship
- 2008-2010: Fellowship for Advanced Researchers, Swiss National Science Foundation
- 2004-2006: Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds PhD Fellowship