

**The first conference of the GRK 2381 doctoral researchers: CanCaN 2021 “Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases & Neurological Disorders” (Tübingen, November 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021)**

In November 2021, the doctoral researchers of the **Research Training Group ("Graduiertenkolleg", GRK) "cGMP: From Bedside to Bench" (GRK 2381)** hosted their **first international meeting** in Tübingen: **CanCaN 2021 - a Conference on Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases & Neurological Disorders**. The conference provided an ideal platform for young scientists to learn from experts and to exchange information about the current state of research on these topics. The GRK 2381 started in July 2019 with the goal of investigating the role and pharmacological relevance of the **second messenger cGMP** in an array of cell and tissue types under different (patho-)physiological conditions. Therefore, CanCaN 2021 covered a broad spectrum of topics presented by **speakers from academia and industry**.

The conference was opened with a warm welcome by the GRK 2381 speaker Robert Feil, launching three exciting days for more than 100 participants. In these turbulent times, the GRK students successfully organized a **hybrid event**. About 70 participants were able to join in person at the prestigious “Alte Aula” of the University of Tübingen. In addition, a global audience could be reached, as the entire event was streamed by a professional media team. Furthermore, an **online poster gallery** with video presentations was available on the event website ([event.fourwaves.com/cancan](https://event.fourwaves.com/cancan); powered by [Fourwaves](https://www.fourwaves.com)).

Nineteen international speakers from Europe and the USA gave enlightening presentations in sessions on “Cardiovascular Research”, “Cancer & Immunology”, “Neuroscience”, “Pharmacology & Biotechnology”, and “cGMP Signaling”. In two keynote lectures, **Andreas Friebe** and **Peter Sandner** presented their impressive work on the function of NO-sensitive guanylyl cyclase and the development of cGMP-elevating drugs, respectively. The audience enjoyed getting exciting insights into modern approaches for drug discovery, highlighting the importance of exchange between academic and industrial research. Furthermore, the relevance of cGMP signaling, along with its many generators and effectors, in multiple (patho-)physiological systems was discussed. This was reflected in the multidisciplinary nature of the panel of speakers and the audience itself.

Young scientists from Tübingen and other sites in Germany, including other GRKs, had the opportunity to present their own research in **poster sessions**, which led to lively discussions and the all-important scientific discourse that can give rise to new ideas and cooperation. Getting to know each other and building new connections is an integral part of the scientific community. Thanks to the coffee breaks and especially the conference dinner this was able to flourish.

The conference ended with the award of two **poster prizes**. The poster by Lennart Kreutz (University of Würzburg) on “Cellular localization of NO-GC in the murine heart and its role in angiotensin II-induced fibrosis” was selected by the Poster Prize Committee (Robert Feil, Andreas Friebe, Peter Sandner, Gregory Schwartz). Ria Zalfen (University of Düsseldorf) received the Audience Favorite Award for collecting the most upvotes on her poster on “Defining the localization of epicardial cell clusters in the heterogenous infarcted mouse epicardium” in the online poster gallery. With that, GRK 2381 vice speaker Robert Lukowski wrapped up this successful first conference of the GRK doctoral students and gave an exciting outlook on the next big thing in cGMP research, the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on cGMP in summer 2022 in Augsburg ([www.cyclicgmp.net](https://www.cyclicgmp.net)).

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