
Objectives and Activities



PREFACE

Acute diseases were the major threat to human health in the developed countries up to well into the first half of the 20th century. Today, the causal mechanisms of most of these diseases are understood and can be treated successfully. The average life expectancy is increasing and humans are becoming older and older. Chronic, degenerative diseases that accompany ageing have become the greatest challenge for our healthcare systems. Cancer, cardiovascular disease and degenerative brain diseases, such as cerebral sclerosis or Alzheimer's disease, are not only causing enormous suffering to the afflicted and their families, but are imposing immense financial burdens on society.

In contrast to acute diseases, the chronic, degenerative diseases of the aged are triggered by interactions between numerous influences: on the one hand the genetic predisposition, on the other, physical and chemical environmental influences and personal life-style. Only with arduous, detailed interdisciplinary work will it be possible to discover just how the many and diverse factors, through molecular-biological changes that are mostly gradual and that accumulate over decades, effect organs and cell systems. Intensive, long-term research will be essential before myriad individual results can finally be put together to reveal the entire picture.

The VERUM Foundation has set itself the goal of supporting and promoting research into the effects of personal behaviour and of the environment on cell systems, organs, the entire organism and, thus, indirectly also on the body's ageing process. Understanding the interrelation of endogenous and exogenous influences on human health are a prerequisite for new approaches towards the development of preventive medical measures and also the treatment of this kind of diseases.

FOUNDATION

VERUM was established in 1992 as a public, non-profit foundation incorporated under civil law. Its capital, today more than Euro 4 million, provides the means to successfully support research.

The Foundation pursues the following purpose: research dealing with the effects of behaviour and the environment on human health, the genesis of degenerative diseases and the process of ageing. Within this area the Foundation selects issues, which are of scientific and social relevance. The Foundation achieves its objectives by supporting research work, scientific meetings, publications, and other scientific activities.

In the meantime the Foundation supported more than 100 research projects and more than 40 scientific meetings altogether with about Euro 15 million. In addition, four scientists were awarded a fellowship for higher qualification in the years 1999 to 2002.

STRUCTURE

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GRANTS

In December 2006, the Board of the Foundation identified the following priority for support:

Correlation of exogenous and endogenous factors in the development of neurodegenerative diseases.

As the Foundation supports and co-ordinates large-scale research projects, it is currently not possible to submit grant applications.

EU PROJECTS

For further details on the EU-funded projects REFLEX, DIADEM, APOPIS, MEMOSAD, and EMF-NET (all completed in the meantime) please click on "EU-PROJEKTE" on the VERUM homepage (<http://www.verum-foundation.de>).

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