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The Théodore Ott Prize 2022 is awarded to Burkhard Becher

Burkhard Becher, Professor at the Institute of Experimental Immunology at the University of Zurich, is the recipient of the Théodore Ott Prize 2022. He is recognized for his remarkable contributions to elucidating the role of inflammation in diverse neuropathological contexts. The Ott Prize, endowed with CHF 50'000, is awarded every five years to a scientist or a research group who has done outstanding work in basic research in Neurology.

The SAMS recognizes Prof. Becher for the originality and quality of his scientific work and for its exceptional translational impact. He has identified key molecular mechanisms in the progression of chronic inflammatory brain diseases, such as in multiple sclerosis and brain cancer, using both preclinical models and patient tissue.

With his research group, he has developed state-of-the-art tools, including multidimensional single-cell mapping, allowing to decode the sophisticated communication system of immune cells. These developments have brought about groundbreaking insights into diverse pathological processes where inflammation is involved. His scientific work has been published in outstanding scientific journals, and Prof. Becher enjoys an international reputation in the domain of neuroinflammation. He is also known for fostering the careers of his group members, and for his engagement in public outreach activities.

The award ceremony will take place on 2 June 2022 in Bern. Further information and an overview of past Ott Prize laureates are available on the SAMS website: sams.ch/ott-prize.

About the Prize
The Théodore Ott Prize was founded in 1997 in accordance with the will of the physician Théodore Ott (1909 – 1991), Professor of Neurology in Lausanne. Well-established researchers or research groups with remarkable scientific achievements, international recognition, and a proven track record in basic research in Neurology are eligible for the prize. Swiss researchers and research groups as well as researchers who have been active in Swiss higher education institutions for a significant amount of time are preferred award candidates.

About the laureate
Prof. Burkhard Becher studied Biology at the University of Cologne, Germany, obtained his PhD in Neuroimmunology at the Montreal Neurological Institute of McGill University, Canada. As a postdoctoral fellow at Dartmouth Medical School in New Hampshire, USA, he developed preclinical models of multiple sclerosis. He was appointed assistant professor of Neuroimmunology at University Hospital Zurich in 2003 after receiving the prestigious Harry Weaver Neuroscience Scholar Award of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Since 2012, he is full professor and co-director at the Institute of Experimental Neuroimmunology at UZH, and heads the unit for inflammation research. He is laureate of the Bing Prize 2008, among other distinctions, and has received an ERC Advanced Grant in 2019.

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A portrait of the laureate can be downloaded from the SAMS website: sams.ch/media

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