

Press release

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Tracking the coronavirus

The NMI in Reutlingen is investigating the immunological response triggered by the coronavirus

The NMI Natural and Medical Sciences Institute at the University of Tübingen is focusing its research efforts into infections with the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). The NMI is investigating COVID-19 immunity and has also joined an international consortium working towards developing neutralising antibodies for the virus. This urgent corona research at the NMI is supported by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing.

The NMI as strategic partner in research

The NMI in Reutlingen is investigating the immune response to coronavirus infections and identifying specific antigens that can be used to improve diagnostics and advance the development of a vaccine. The aim is to determine the seroprevalence within society and whether immunity has been reached. "Findings on immune protection are particularly relevant for medical personnel involved in patient care," explains Dr. Nicole Schneiderhan-Marra, Deputy Head of the Pharma and Biotech Division at the NMI. High-throughput robotics will be used to carry out a large number of sample measurements quickly and efficiently. In addition to sophisticated technical equipment, the NMI will draw on its many years of experience in carrying out screening projects for infectious diseases in the development of serological analyses.

The NMI is involved in various networks and alliances. For example, the NMI is a member of a recently founded international consortium that is working on the development of SARS-CoV-2 neutralising antibodies. Within the scope of this alliance, research institutions and clinics will work together to advance the development of a therapy for immunocompromised individuals. This is necessary for patients with weakened immune system, such as cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, because they cannot be vaccinated, when a vaccine against corona will be developed in the future.

Everyone does what they can

The NMI's broad range of expertise enables the institute to approach the coronavirus at different levels and thus contribute to the development of diagnostic and therapeutic options. Prof. Dr. Katja Schenke-Layland, Director of the NMI, summarises: "In this crisis, we have to stick together and everybody has to make their contribution. As a research institution, we are working together with partners from industry, clinics and university and non-university research institutes to shed light on further facets of the disease in order to help overcome the pandemic".

For this very reason, the NMI is open for further cooperations and joint projects that will help society in the fight against corona.

About the NMI

The NMI Natural and Medical Sciences Institute at the University of Tübingen conducts application-oriented research at the interface of biological and material sciences. It has a unique, interdisciplinary spectrum of competence for R&D and services for regional and international companies. The NMI addresses both the health care industry and industrial sectors such as vehicle-, machine- and tool construction.

The NMI is divided into three business areas, which are connected by a common mission statement: The search for technical solutions is always conducted according to the highest scientific standards. In the pharmaceutical and biotech business area, the NMI supports the development of new drugs using biochemical, molecular and cell biological methods. The Biomedicine and Materials Sciences division researches and develops future technologies such as personalised medicine and micromedicine for new diagnostic and therapeutic approaches. The focus of the services offered to customers is the structuring and functionalisation of materials and their surfaces. The Analytics and Electron Microscopy business unit provides answers to analytical questions.

The NMI is known beyond the borders of Germany for its incubator concept for start-up companies with a background in bio- and material sciences.

www.nmi.de

The NMI Natural and Medical Sciences Institute at the University of Tübingen is supported by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Economics, Labour and Housing and is a member of the Baden-

Württemberg Innovation Alliance, an association of 13 non-university and industry-related research institutes.

www.innbw.de



Development of a serological test to examine blood and plasma samples to identify whether there is a basic immunity to SARS-CoV-2.

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