



Julia Klaus and Yasmin Parr win the 2021 Young Scientist Award

The 2021 ABCD Young Scientist Award, funded by Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health goes to Dr Julia Klaus (30), of the Zurich University VetSuisse Faculty, and to Dr Yasmin Parr (28), of the MRC-University of Glasgow, Centre for Virus Research. The award winners will deliver short presentations during the congress of the International Society of Feline Medicine, held virtually from 25 to 27 June 2021. Their posters will also be available for viewing.

SARS-CoV-2 infection in domestic cats – Julia Klaus

Cats have been shown to be highly susceptible to infection with the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2), and cases of infected pet cats have been reported worldwide. *'As this virus easily crosses species barriers, the risk of potential anthropogenic and zoonotic transmission needs to be investigated,'* Julia Klaus explains, adding she also intended to look at the role of pet cats in the current pandemic and at the potential risk of cats becoming a reservoir.

Dr Karin Moestl, vice president of the European Advisory Board on Cat Diseases (ABCD) commented: *'This topic is not only important to cat populations but also examines the potential epidemiological role of cats, which is of great importance from a One Health perspective.'*

Distinguishing FeLV regressively and progressively infected cats – Yasmin Parr

The outcome of FeLV infection is influenced by the host immune response, with progressively infected cats having weaker immune responses. *'In our study, we measured the humoral response in naturally exposed cats using a novel ELISA to measure antibodies recognizing the surface unit (SU) glycoproteins in plasma,'* says Yasmin Parr. *'We found that cats with regressive FeLV infection had significantly higher levels of antibodies against SU glycoproteins, which correlated well with neutralising antibodies.'*

Dr Karin Moestl added, *'This new serological assay provides the foundations for developing an antibody-based diagnostic test that will allow differentiation between regressively and progressively infected cats.'* This could allow clinicians to rapidly identify regressively infected cats that are unlikely to develop FeLV-related disease.

ABCD & Boehringer Ingelheim Young Scientist Awards

'Our company is strongly committed to supporting independent research in the field of feline infectious diseases, and the Young Scientist Award represents a wonderful collaboration between Boehringer Ingelheim and the ABCD,' said Dr Jean-Philippe Tronel, director of the global technical services for pet vaccines at Boehringer Ingelheim. *'We warmly congratulate this year's winners and encourage everyone to check out the previous winners, most of whom are still very active researchers and contributing to the health of our beloved cats.'*

The awards will be officially presented to Julia Klaus and Yasmin Parr during the ISFM International congress, held virtually from 25 to 27 June 2021.

The 2020 recipient of the award was Conor O'Halloran (University of Edinburgh).

The Young Scientist Award, created in 2008, is presented annually to young scientists in veterinary or biomedical sciences, who have made an original contribution in the field of feline infectious diseases and/or immunology.

Photo captions: Julia Klaus and Yasmin Parr, recipients of the 2021 ABCD and Boehringer Ingelheim Young Scientist Awards. For further information, please contact Karin de Lange, ABCD secretary, karin@abcdcatsvets.org

Notes to Editors:

■ The European Advisory Board on Cat Diseases (ABCD) is an independent panel of 16 leading veterinarians (14 active and 2 consulting members) from eleven European countries, with an expertise in immunology, vaccinology and/or feline medicine. The ABCD was set up to

compile guidelines for the prevention and management of major feline infectious diseases in Europe, based on current scientific knowledge. For more information, please visit www.abcdcatsvets.org

■ **Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health** is a global leader in the animal health industry and part of family-owned Boehringer Ingelheim, founded in 1885. The company is committed to making the industry even better at improving animal health. With over 10,000 employees worldwide, Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health has products available in more than 150 markets. For more information, please visit <https://www.boehringer-ingelheim.com/animal-health/animal-health>