

## BIOTECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

# A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE OF HEALTH

3D printing, digital health, plasma technology – around 60 biotech experts from science, clinics and industry came together in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania to discuss how regional stakeholders aim at changing this leading health region in the future.



Every four years, the Northern biotech community discusses the current state of the biotech sector. One session was dedicated to approaches of "Biotechnology 4.0".

To put a face on northern excellence in biotechnology across all application fields as well as connecting science and business – that's the driving force behind the "IHK North Biotechnology Conference", which is organized every four years by the Northern Regional Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK Neubrandenburg/IHK Nord) in cooperation with BioCon Valley and the WTSH in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. "Our aim is to showcase the diversity of regional biotech activities and to find possible intersections for industrial applications in this health region and beyond," said Wolfgang Blank, President of IHK Neubrandenburg. "In addition, the event demonstrates the importance of the sector from an economical and political perspective," Blank stresses.

The two-days event from 22 to 23 September entered in its fourth year. Discussing various topics such as financing trends, industrial biotechnology solutions, health-related innovations and the role of Big Data

for the development of new treatments, the conference highlighted the current state of the biotech sector. Northern companies such as Centogene, Altona Diagnostics and Euroimmun shed light on their business strategies. Start-ups like Topas Therapeutics shared their experiences on how to attract investors. Insights into the biologization of industry and the use of marine resources were given by representatives from Hamburg Technical University, among others. The potential of emerging technologies such as 3D printing and plasma research for the health sector was also presented.

The session "Biotechnology 4.0" gave a glimpse into future therapeutic developments. Jens Fiehler, a neuroradiologist at the University Clinic Eppendorf (UKE), a medical professor at Hamburg University and also a CEO of Hamburg-based Eppdata GmbH, talked about how new statistical methods could optimize clinical trials. "Based on predictive algorithms developed from other sectors, we

would like to facilitate clinical studies in a way that doctors can see the difference between two treatment strategies by analyzing the data of 20 patients instead of 100," Fiehler explained. According to him, the use of image-data-related tools could speed up therapeutic development in the pharma and biotech industry. The advantage: the success or the failure of an approach could be estimated much earlier in the R&D process than with methods currently available. "We are still at the beginning, but our first results with stroke patients are encouraging," said Fiehler.

Hinrich Habeck from Life Science Nord gave insights into the current state of the Bonebank consortium that was started in 2015 to establish a German-Danish biobank with stem cells gained from bone marrow. (see p. 12) SW

#### Further information:

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