Kathrin Leppek, Ph.D. (she/her)

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Place of Birth/Nat.: Heidelberg/German

Research Experience / Appointments

01/2022 – present Tenure-track W1 Junior-Professor for Immunobiochemistry

University Clinic Bonn (UKB), University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

• Topic: Transcript-specific Translation by the Ribosome

(RNA, Ribosome and Immunology)

01/2015 – 12/2021 Postdoctoral Fellow/Research Associate, Stanford University, CA, USA

• Advisor: Maria Barna (Department of Developmental Biology & Genetics)

• Topic: Mechanistic Characterization of 5' UTR RNA elements that confer translational

specificity to shape vertebrate embryonic development.

(RNA, Ribosome and Developmental Biology)

03/2014 – 11/2014 Postdoctoral Fellow, DKFZ and University of Heidelberg, Germany

German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and Center for Molecular Biology (ZMBH)

· Advisor: Georg Stoecklin (DKFZ-ZMBH Alliance)

• Topic: Structural Characterization of Roquin-CDE Complexes in CDE-mediated mRNA

Decay. (RNA and Structural Biology)

Education

11/2010 – 03/2014 Ph.D. in RNA, Immunology and Cancer Molecular Biology

German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and University of Heidelberg, Germany

Advisor: Georg Stoecklin (DKFZ-ZMBH Alliance)

• Ph.D. Thesis: RNA Affinity Purification and Characterization of Roquin Proteins in CDE-mediated mRNA Decay. 3.5 years, **summa cum laude** (Ph.D. defense 03/10/2014)

10/2008 - 08/2010

M.Sc. in Molecular Biosciences, Major: Molecular and Cellular Biology

University of Heidelberg, Germany

· Master Thesis, Georg Stoecklin: Affinity purification of Ribonucleoprotein Complexes via

RNA-tags and analysis of CDE-mediated decay. grade: 1.0 (1.0 highest grade)

10/2005 - 06/2008

B.Sc. in Biology, Focus: Molecular Biology

University of Heidelberg, Germany

• Bachelor Thesis, Thomas Rausch lab (Andreas Wachter): An RNA switch controlling Transcription Factor IIIA expression by alternative splicing and NMD-mediated transcript

turnover. grade: 1.3 (1.0 highest grade)

Scientific Positions

09/01 - 10/31/2010	Student Research Assistant - DKFZ-ZMBH Alliance, Germany, Georg Stoecklin lab
01/01 - 08/24/2010	Master Thesis - DKFZ, Heidelberg, Germany, Georg Stoecklin lab
08/18 - 12/14/2009	Visiting Scholar - UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA, Ming C. Hammond lab
06/02 - 07/10/2009	Internship - DKFZ, Heidelberg, Germany, Ingrid Grummt lab
03/03 - 04/24/2009	Internship - DKFZ, Heidelberg, Germany, Georg Stoecklin lab
06/14 – 10/31/2008	Student Research Assistant - Heidelberg Institute for Plant Research (HIP), now Centre for
	Organismal Studies (COS)), Heidelberg, Germany, Thomas Rausch lab
03/03 - 06/13/2008	Bachelor Thesis - HIP, Heidelberg, Germany, Thomas Rausch lab
01/07 – 01/25/2008	Internship - ZMBH, Heidelberg, Germany, Victor Sourjik lab
09/03 – 10/12/2007	Internship - Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Karlsruhe, Germany, Uwe Strähle lab,
	Institute for Genetics and Toxicology

Publications

Citations: **1271**, h-factor: 8, i10-factor: 8 (Google Scholar, June 2022) *. ** authors contributed equally

- 11. **Leppek K***, Byeon GW*, Kladwang W*, Wayment-Steele HK*, Kerr CH*, Xu AF**, Kim DS**, Topkar VV, Choe C, Rothschild D, Tiu GC, Wellington-Oguri R, Fujii K, Sharma E, Watkins AM, Nicol JJ, Romano J, Tunguz B, Diaz F, Cai H, Guo P, Wu J, Meng F, Shi S, Eterna Participants, Dormitzer PR, Solórzano A, Barna M‡, Das R‡. Combinatorial optimization of mRNA structure, stability, and translation for RNA-based therapeutics. *Nature Comm*. 2022 Mar;13(1): 1536,1-22. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-28776-w
- Leppek K*, Byeon GW*, Fujii K, Barna M. VELCRO-IP RNA-seq reveals ribosome expansion segment function in translation genome-wide. (*authors contributed equally)
 Cell Reports, 2021 Jan 19;34(3):108629. doi: 10.1016/j.celrep.2020.108629
- 9. **Leppek K**, Fujii K, Quade N, Susanto TT, Boehringer D, Lenarčič T, Xue S, Genuth NR, Ban, N, Barna M. Gene- and species-specific Hox mRNA translation by ribosome expansion segments. *Mol. Cell*, 2020 Dec 17;80(6):980-995.e13. doi: 10.1016/j.molcel.2020.10.023.
- Leppek K, Barna M. An rRNA variant to deal with stress.
 Nat Microbiol. 2019 Mar;4(3):382-383. doi: 10.1038/s41564-019-0396-7.
- 7. **Leppek K**, Das R, Barna M. Functional 5' UTR mRNA structures in eukaryotic translation regulation and how to find them. **Nat Rev Mol Cell Biol.** 2018 Mar;19(3):158-174. doi: 10.1038/nrm.2017.103. (Epub Nov 22, 2017)
- Simsek D, Tiu GC, Flynn RA, Byeon GW, Leppek K, Xu AF, Chang HY, Barna M. The Mammalian Ribointeractome Reveals Ribosome Functional Diversity and Heterogeneity.
 Cell. 2017 Jun 1;169(6):1051-1065.e18. doi: 10.1016/j.cell.2017.05.022.
- Codutti L, Leppek K, Zálešák J, Windeisen V, Masiewicz P, Stoecklin G and Carlomagno T. A distinct, sequence-induced conformation is required for recognition of the CDE RNA by Roquin. Structure. 2015 Aug 4;23(8):1437-1447. doi: 10.1016/j.str.2015.06.001.
- Leppek K and Stoecklin G. An optimized streptavidin-binding RNA aptamer for purification of ribonucleoprotein complexes identifies novel ARE-binding proteins.
 Nucl Acids Res. 2014 Jan;42(2):e13. doi: 10.1093/nar/gkt956. (Epub Oct 23, 2013)
- Leppek K, Schott J, Reitter S, Poetz F, Hammond MC, Stoecklin G. Roquin promotes constitutive mRNA decay via a conserved class of stem-loop recognition motifs.
 Cell. 2013 May 9;153(4):869-81. doi: 10.1016/j.cell.2013.04.016. (see Media Coverage for press release)
- 2. Spasic M, Friedel CC, Schott J, Kreth J, **Leppek K**, Hofmann S, Ozgur S, Stoecklin G. Genome-wide assessment of AU-rich elements by the AREScore algorithm. **PLoS Genet**. 2012 Jan;8(1):e1002433. doi: 10.1371/journal.pgen.1002433.
- 1. **Leppek K**, Schott J, Stoecklin G. Protein synthesis and translational control: at eye level with the ribosome. *EMBO Rep.* 2011 Dec 1;12(12):1214-6. doi: 10.1038/embor.2011.224.

Research Funding

02/2002 – present	MEMBERSHIPS / GRANTS ImmunoSensation2 Excellence Cluster, Member
09/2020	INDEPENDENT FELLOWSHIPS Snow Medical Fellowship, ANU finalist (Australia, application by invitation, \$7 Mio/7 years)
09/2019 – 08/2020	POSTDOC FELLOWSHIPS • Katharine McCormick Advanced Postdoctoral Fellowship to Support Women in Academic Medicine, Stanford (1 year, 1 fellowship/year at Stanford, \$70.000)
10/2015 — 09/2019	• Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation , Postdoctoral Research Fellow (4 years, DRG-2237-15, 15 fellowships/twice a year in the US, \$238.000)
07/2015 – 09/2015	• EMBO Long-Term Postdoctoral Fellowship (2 years, ALTF 539-2015, \$90.000)

Ph.D. FELLOWSHIPS

11/2010 - 11/2013 09/2010

• Ph.D. Stipend, DKFZ Helmholtz Intern. Grad. School for Cancer Res. (3 years, accepted)

• Ph.D. Stipend, EMBL International PhD Program (3 years, declined)

08/2009 - 12/2009• Research Stipend (Burroughs Wellcome Fund to M.C. Hammond), Visiting Scholar, UC Berkeley, USA (4 months)

Awards / Honors

11/2020	• RNA Society/Scaringe Postdoctoral Fellow Award 2021
11/2019	• Damon Runyon Dale F. Frey Award for Breakthrough Scientists, Finalist (3 awarded, 4th/12), NYC
12/2018	 1st Talk Prize: Bay Area RNA Club (BARC) Symposium, UCSF, CA, USA
05/2015	• Karl-Lohmann Award of the Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (GBM), best PhD Thesis
	in Biological Chemistry in 2014 (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl-Lohmann-Preis)
02/2015	• Ruprecht-Karls Award, best PhD Thesis in 2014 in the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics
	at Heidelberg University (http://www.foerderer.uni-hd.de/stiftung/preise_archiv.html)
01/2015	• 2 nd place Bayer HealthCare Award (Promotionspreis), PhD Thesis Award of GBM, (2 nd of 31)
06/2014	 Poster Award: Non-coding RNA – From Basic Mechanisms to Cancer, DKFZ, Heidelberg, Germany
06/2012	 Travel Award: 17th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society 2012, Ann Arbor, USA
02/2012	 Poster Award: 2nd Heidelberg Forum For Young Life Scientists, Heidelberg, Germany
11/2010	 Image Award: DKFZ-ZMBH Alliance Retreat, Image of the Year 2010, Heidelberg, Germany

Patents

09/2020 01/2019

05/2020	 Kathrin Leppek, Maria Barna: "Systems and Methods for Enhancing Gene Expression"
	Application: 63/022,898; 63/022,901
08/2020	• Kathrin Leppek, Gun Woo Byeon, Maria Barna: "Systems and Methods for Producing RNA Constructs
	with Increased Translation and Stability"
	Application: 63/072,669

Scientific Presentations and Conferences

	INVITED TALKS / OTHER
05/2022	University of Bonn, TRA Life Health "TRA2 - Life and Health Matter(s)", Flash Talk (Invited Talk)
04/2022	University of Giessen, Biochemistry, RTG2355 Guest Lecture (Invited Talk)
04/2022	• Hunters College CUNY, Hunter Belfer Seminar Series, NYC, USA, Guest Lecture (Invited Talk, Virtual)
03/2022	IMMEI institute (UKB) Introduction Seminar (Invited Talk, Virtual)
02/2022	ImmunoSensation2 Inaugural Member Lecture (Invited Talk, Virtual)
01/2022	TransRegio TRR237 Nucleic Acid Immunity, Guest Seminar (Invited Talk, Virtual)
05/2020	• 25th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society 2020 (Virtual, Participation)
11/2019	Damon Runyon Dale F. Frey Award for Breakthrough Scientists, NYC, NY, USA (Invited Talk)
12/2018	Columbia University, NYC – Biophysics Department, NYC, NY, USA (Invited Talk)
09/2017	 Nature Publishing Group San Francisco, Invited Discussion on "Success in Science" (Participation)
08/2017	GAIN (German Academic International Network) Conference, San Francisco, CA, USA (Participation)
06/2017	Miroculus (Start-up), San Francisco, Friday Seminar, San Francisco, CA, USA (Invited Talk)
08/2015	GAIN Conference, San Francisco, CA, USA (Participation)
	CONFERENCES – ORAL
06/2021	 26th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society 2021 (Virtual) – Scaringe Postdoc Award Invited Talk
07/2020	EternaCon (Eternagame Convention), OpenVaccine project, (Virtual)
12/2018	Bay Area RNA Club (BARC) Symposium, Genentech Hall, UCSF, CA, USA
05/2018	 23rd Annual Meeting of the RNA Society 2018, Berkeley, CA, USA
09/2015	 ZMBH Alumni Forum, 30th Anniversary, Heidelberg, Germany
07/2015	 40th FEBS Congress – The Biochemical Basis of Life, Berlin, Germany
06/2013	 18th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society 2013, Davos, Switzerland
06/2012	 17th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society 2012, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
09/2011	 EMBO Conference Series "Protein Synthesis and Translational Control", Heidelberg, Germany
	CONFERENCES – POSTER
06/2022	 EMBO Workshop: "RNA: Structure meets Function", Akersberga, Sweden
10/2020	 EMBO/EMBL Symposium: "The Complex Life of mRNA", Heidelberg, Germany, (Virtual)

• EMBO Conference Series "Protein Synthesis and Translational Control", CSHL, NY, USA (Virtual)

Ribosome – Structure and Function 2019, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico

• EMBO Conference Series "Protein Synthesis and Translational Control", Heidelberg, Germany 09/2017 09/2015 • EMBO Conference Series "Protein Synthesis and Translational Control", Heidelberg, Germany 11/2014 • SFB1036 Intern. Conf. "Mol. Mech. of Cellular Surveillance and Damage Responses", Heidelberg, Germany • TERM13: Tiny European RNA Meeting 2014, Paris, France 10/2014 EMBO/EMBL Symposium: "The Complex Life of mRNA", Heidelberg, Germany 10/2014 Non-coding RNA – From Basic Mechanisms to Cancer, Heidelberg, Germany 06/2014 12/2012 Cell Symposium "Functional RNAs", Sitges, Spain 02/2012 2nd Heidelberg Forum For Young Life Scientists, Heidelberg, Germany **INTERNAL SYMPOSIA** 06/2022 • ICCCP Institute Retreat, Monschau, Germany (Talk) • ImmunoSensation2 Cluster Retreat, Marseille, France (Participation) 05/2022 12/2020 Bay Area RNA Club (BARC) Symposium, (Virtual), (Participation) • Stanford Genetics Department Retreat, Stanford, CA, (Virtual), (Poster) 09/2020 • Joint ITI CCHI U19/Gates/DRC Research Meeting (Institute for Immunity, Transplantation and Infection 07/2020 (ITI); Cooperative Centers on Human Immunology (CCHI); Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Stanford Diabetes Research Center (SDRC)), Stanford, CA, (Virtual), (Talk) 12/2019 Bay Area RNA Club (BARC) Symposium, Genentech Hall, UCSF (Participation) 09/2019 • Stanford Genetics Department Retreat, Monterey, CA (Poster) 10/2018 • Developmental Biology Department Data Discussion (3D), Stanford, CA (Talk) 09/2018 • Stanford Developmental Biology Department Retreat, Monterey, CA (Talk) 09/2018 • Bay Area Postdoc Symposium, Berkeley Lawrence Lab, CA, USA (Participation) EMBO Fellows Retreat, Heidelberg, Germany (Talk) 06/2018 12/2017 • Bay Area RNA Club (BARC) Symposium, Genentech Hall, UCSF (Participation) 09/2017 Damon Runyon Fellows Retreat 2017, Boston, MA, USA (3rd year, Talk) Stanford Genetics Department Retreat, Monterey, CA (Poster) 09/2017 06/2017 Bay Area Postdoc Symposium, Buck Institute, Novato, CA (Participation) 11/2016 EMBO Fellows Retreat, Boston, MA (Poster) Stanford Genetics Department Retreat, Monterey, CA (Poster) 09/2016 • Stanford Developmental Biology Department Retreat, Monterey, CA (Poster) 09/2016 • Damon Runyon Fellows Retreat 2015, San Jose, CA, USA (1st year, Poster) 09/2015 07/2015 • Bay Area RNA Club Symposium, Genentech Hall, UCSF (Participation) 07/2013 • DKFZ Career Day, Science Communication (Participation) 03/2013 • Internal RNA@DKFZ Meeting, DKFZ, Heidelberg, Germany (Talk) • DKFZ-ZMBH Alliance Retreat, Kloster Schöntal, Germany (Poster) 02/2013 • Internal RNA@DKFZ Meeting, DKFZ, Heidelberg, Germany (Poster) 07/2012 05/2012 RNA Labs Retreat (Stoecklin, Mühlemann, Bühler), Miglieglia, Switzerland (Talk) 12/2011 DKFZ PhD Poster Presentation, Heidelberg, Germany 11/2011 DKFZ-ZMBH Alliance Seminar Series, Heidelberg, Germany (Talk) • DKFZ PhD Retreat, Weil der Stadt, Germany (Poster) 07/2011 ZMBH PhD Retreat, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany (Talk) 05/2011 11/2010 DKFZ-ZMBH Alliance Retreat, Altleiningen, Germany (Talk)

Teaching / Mentoring

06/2008

2012

INDEPENDENT SUPERVISION

	INDEPENDENT SUPERVISION
03/2022- present	 Mr. Martin Haimann, Master Student, Master Thesis, Biochemistry, 6 months
	STUDENT SUPERVISION
10/2012, 2013, 2014	4 • Master Program, RNA Methods Practical Course Supervision and Grading, 1 week/year
05/2012 - 12/2012	 Mr. Fabian Poetz, Bachelor Student, Lab Rotation, DKFZ, 6 months
03/2011 - 09/2011	 Ms. Sonja Reitter, Master Student, Master Thesis, DKFZ, 6 months
12/2010 - 02/2011	Ms. Ivana Cado, Master Student, Lab Rotation, DKFZ, 2 months
11/2009	• Ms. Stephanie Jones, Mr. Scott Hickey, Graduate Students, Lab Rotation, UC Berkeley, 1 month
	LECTURES
2010-2014	RNA Journal Club, DKFZ-ZMBH Alliance, 1 lecture/year
2010-2014	Joint RNA Lab Meetings (Stoecklin & Diederichs labs), 1 lecture/year
12/2012	DKFZ PhD Program, Lecture Series "Biology for Non-Biologists", 1 lecture

• B.Sc. Graduation Ceremony, Bachelor Thesis Poster Presentation (Poster)

Other Scientific Contributions

Media Coverage

07/2022	• The Ribozone Podcast (Episode 12): Making the Transition from Postdoc to PI with Dr. Kathrin Leppek.
	https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-12-making-the-transition-from-postdoc-to-
	pi/id1629937580?i=1000567715281

05/2022 • News Article Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation: Toward new and improved mRNA vaccines. https://www.damonrunyon.org/our-impact/newdiscoveries/entries/6746/Toward%20new%20and%20improved%20mRNA%20vaccines

10/2021 • Fifty Years Translation Podcast (Season 3, Episode 6): Screening for Enhanced RNA Vaccines with Kathrin Leppek, Gun Byeon, and Hannah Wayment-Steele. https://fiftyyears.com/translation-podcast/2021/10/14/screening-for-enhanced-rna-vaccines-with-kathrinleppek-gun-byeon-hannah-wayment-steele

07/2021 · News Article Badische Neuste Nachrichten (BNN): Kampf gegen Corona: Wie eine Forscherin aus Bretten mRNA-Impfstoffe verbessert. https://bnn.de/nachrichten/baden-wuerttemberg/kampf-gegen-<u>corona-wie-eine-forscherin-aus-bretten-mrna-impfstoffe-verbessert</u>

04/2021 • Stanford SoM SCOPE Blog: Stabilizing RNA molecules to strengthen vaccines — including for COVID-19. https://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2021/04/05/stabilizing-rna-molecules-to-strengthen-vaccines-includingfor-covid-19/?sf141833328=1

12/2019 • RNA Society Member Spotlight: Chun Kim and Olivia Rissland profiled me as a postdoc member of the RNA Society for their online spotlight series. https://www.rnasociety.org/dr-kathrin-leppek

05/2013 · DKFZ Press Release for Ph.D. work publication in Cell: Hairpin Serving As Gene Control. https://www.dkfz.de/en/presse/pressemitteilungen/2013/dkfz-pm-13-29-Hairpin-Serving-As-Gene-Control.php

Outreach / Leadership / Functions

03/2020 - 03/2022 • COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine Project

I lead a team of 7 postdocs/students from M. Barna's lab (Stanford) that, together with the R. Das lab (Stanford), optimized the stability and expression of mRNA vaccines for COVID-19 in close collaboration with the citizen-science Eterna RNA folding videogame community (OpenVaccine Project) and from 01/2021-01/2022 with Pfizer.

 Speaker at "Cutting-Edge Cancer Research: A Webinar for Bay Area High School Students" 04/2021 virtual event for the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation

• Initiator, organizer and moderator of a 2-hour Zoom discussion group on Translation Regulation as part of the virtual RNA2020 conference (115 scientists worldwide).

12/2018 - 2020• Initiator/organizer of a postdoc group supporting the organization and planning of the Bay Area RNA Club Symposium 2018, UCSF, CA, USA: secured funding from the RNA Society and bay area companies for mentor lunch/poster/talk prizes and meeting report for RNA Society newsletter.

• Represented scientists supported by the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation in a team in the Runyon Up Stair Climb For Cancer Research, Salesforce Tower, San Francisco. I personally ranked #7 and our team #6 for top donations to \$200.000 donated.

• Represented the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation at a benefit performance of the musical Hamilton in San Francisco that raised nearly \$1 Mio. to support cancer research.

05/2013, 2014 • Volunteer helper at "DKFZ läuft für die Krebsforschung" (Run for Cancer Research) Volunteer helper at "UniMeile" representing University of Heidelberg to the public

LANGUAGES • German (native), English (fluent), French (basic)

Advanced Training

06/2020

10/2018

05/2017

06/2011

Stanford, CA, USA 08/2020 Creating Connections: An Introduction to the Alda Method® (Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science, at Stony Brook University) (1 session) 04/2020 • Preparation for Faculty Careers (2 months, weekly lecture series) Scientific Management Series (lecture series) 01/2019 • Women Leadership Workshop: Improv Thinking with Speechless (1 session) 04/2018

• Improv for Communication II, 4-week workshop (4 sessions) 11/2016 04/2016 Improv for Communication I, 4-week workshop (4 sessions)

EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany

• EMBL Advanced Course "Next Generation Sequencing Data Analysis", 1 week

Collaborations

Ongoing: Daniel F. Jarosz (Stanford); Rhiju Das (Stanford)

Past: Philip R. Dormitzer (Pfizer); Nenad Ban (ETH Zürich); Howard Y. Chang (Stanford); Teresa

Carlomagno (EMBL/Hannover University); Ming C. Hammond (UC Berkeley/University of Utah),

Irmgard Sinning (Heidelberg University)

Bonn, 06/2022