

Axel Ullrich



Professor Axel Ullrich was trained as a biochemist at the University of Tuebingen (Germany) and earned a Ph.D. in Heidelberg in Molecular Genetics in 1975. After a postdoctoral tenure at the University of California, San Francisco, he joined Genentech in 1978.

His work in the field of signal transduction research has elucidated major fundamental molecular mechanisms that govern the physiology of normal cells and allowed insights into patho-physiological mechanisms of major human diseases.

For over 25 years Professor Ullrich has been a leader in gene-technology, translating basic science discoveries into medical applications. This led in the mid eighties to the development of Humulin (human Insulin for the treatment of diabetes; Lilly), the first therapeutic agent to be developed through gene-based technology and the first biotechnology product ever. Another biotech product that is based on Professor Ullrich's work is Herceptin, the first target-directed, gene discovery-based cancer therapy for the treatment of metastatic breast carcinoma (Genentech/Roche). Another cancer drug, SU11248/SUTENT, was conceived on the basis of discoveries of Professor Axel Ullrich at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry and developed by SUGEN/Pharmacia and Pfizer. It was recently approved by the FDA (1/2006) and the EMEA (7/2006) for the treatment of Gastro Intestinal Stromal Tumors and Renal Cell Carcinoma (Pfizer). Since 1988, Professor Ullrich has been Director of the Department of Molecular Biology at the Max-Planck-Institute of Biochemistry in Martinsried and in addition since 2004 he is Research Director of the Singapore OncoGenome Project. He is an Honorary Professor of the Second Military Medical University (Shanghai, China) and the University of Tuebingen (Germany) and elected member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO), the German Academy of Natural Scientists "Leopoldina" and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS). Among numerous other honors and awards Professor Ullrich received the Robert Koch Prize, the Bruce F. Cain Memorial Award of the American Association of Cancer Research and the King Faisal Prize of Medicine. Because of his major contributions to Science he has been appointed to advisory boards of internationally renowned institutions such as the Wistar Institute (USA), the Biomedicum (Finland), the Max-Delbrueck-Center for Molecular Medicine (Germany) and the International Advisory Council of the EDB (Singapore). His scientific work has been published in more than 500 articles in international journals and with over 58000 citations he is one of the ten most cited scientists over the past 25 years worldwide. Professor Ullrich has been a leader in international Biotechnology development with activities stretching from Germany, to the USA, Singapore and Australia. He is cofounder of four Biotech companies - SUGEN Inc. (USA), Axxima Pharmaceuticals AG (Germany), U3 Pharma AG (Germany) and Kinaxo (Germany). In addition he has served on numerous Boards of Directors and Science Advisory Boards of Biotech companies including SUGEN, Inc. (USA), BioImage (Denmark), Bionomics (Australia), Cryptome Pharmaceuticals (Australia) and S*Bio (Singapore) and pharmaceutical companies (Boehringer Ingelheim, Germany). Since 2000 he is a Biotech Advisor of the Economic Development Board of the Singapore Government and its Biotech Investment organization BioOneCapital. Moreover, he is a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Bavarian Biotech Management Company BioM. In 2001 Time Magazine Europe has named Professor Ullrich as one of 25 European "tech leaders who are changing how we work, live and play".