

TRANSLATION

of the

Rector's Statement about the results of the investigation

of the Committee for the Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct of the University of Bremen

concerning allegations against Dr. Kathrin Mädler

Dr. Kathrin Mädler is exploring new ways of fighting against the widespread disease diabetes. Since 1st of February 2008 she has been employed at the University of Bremen as head of the Islet Biology Laboratory at the Centre for Biomolecular Interactions of faculty 2 (biology / chemistry). Her research group investigates new mechanisms to improve the survival and function of insulin-producing beta cells in diabetes as well as to identify the disease at an early stage. During her doctorate under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Donath, she worked from January 2000 until December 2004 at the University Hospital Zurich (Switzerland). From January 2005 until January 2008 she was Assistant Professor at the Larry Hillblom Islet Research Center, UCLA (USA). She has received several awards and her research is carried out in peer-reviewed, third-party-funded projects.

The University of Bremen has committed to investigate any concrete suspicion of scientific misconduct at the university in accordance with its "Regulations assuring good scientific practice" of the University of Bremen ("Ordnung zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis", hereinafter referred to as "Regulations": <http://www.uni-bremen.de/rechtsstelle/rechtssammlung/verfahrensrecht/31-verfahrensrecht.html>) and to comply with the "Principles of good scientific practice", adopted by its Academic Senate on February 23, 2002, which are annexed to the Regulations. The seven members of the "Committee for the Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct" (hereinafter referred to as "Committee") are elected by the Academic Senate of the University of Bremen.

Since 2014, publications by Dr. Mädler as author or co-author have been commented upon in "PubPeer" and other media. In the comments, attention was drawn to some noticeable features in the publications, in particular to image duplications. In February 2015, an investigation was initiated by the "Committee for the Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct" to investigate the allegations of scientific misconduct against Dr. Mädler. Dr. Mädler herself also requested the Committee to investigate the allegations.

After completing the investigation into the allegations of scientific misconduct brought to the attention of the Committee, the Committee finds that, in several cases Dr. Mädler has published a number of duplicated images and has repeatedly violated her duty of care in the organization of her working group over a longer period of time. In addition, she did not appropriately secure the storage of primary data on solid and secure media for all publications. Thereby, she acted negligently.

According to § 1 paragraph 1 of the Regulations, however, "scientific misconduct" would require that, by means of the identified image duplications, Dr. Mädler would have made "deliberate or grossly negligent misrepresentations". After a comprehensive and thorough assessment the

Committee has found that there are not “sufficient indications” to provide evidence of deliberate or grossly negligent misrepresentations. The external assessment also concluded that so far none of the experiments has been refuted. On the contrary, additional controls were able to confirm the results.

After the assessment of the allegations, the Committee has come to the following conclusions:

- Dr. Kathrin Mädler repeatedly violated her obligation to exercise duty of care according to §2 paragraph 2 and §2 paragraph 3 of the Regulations, each in conjunction with § 2 paragraph 4 of the Regulations and Nr. 2 and Nr. 3 or alternatively Nr. 4 of the “Principles of good scientific practice” over a period of time.
- It is the Committee’s conviction that Dr. Mädler violated her duty of care and thereby acted negligently. The violation of her duty of care, both in the organization of her laboratory, especially in the storage and documentation of data, as well as in the quality control of the images submitted for publication, led to an unusually high number of image duplications.
- After a comprehensive and thorough assessment the Committee has decided that there are not “sufficient indications” appropriate to provide evidence that these publications of duplicated images were “intentional or grossly negligent misrepresentation” according to §1 paragraph 1 of the Regulations.

The Commission reached these conclusions based on convincing external evaluation as well as the written comments and a personal hearing of Dr. Mädler. Dr. Mädler publicly admitted most of the errors in her publications, i.e. image duplications, through Errata. In these Errata, faulty images in the publications were corrected in the journals concerned.

The Committee’s decisions were taken unanimously.

The Rector of the University of Bremen, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Scholz-Reiter takes this result of the investigations very seriously. The initiated investigation has been concluded with an admonition by the Rector. With this admonition the Rector of the University of Bremen followed a recommendation by the Committee concerning the identified violation of duty of care.

Dr. Mädler has been admonished concerning the identified violation of her duty of care. It has also been made clear that such errors, particularly in the publication of research results, must not occur again. With the admonition the Rector also obliged Dr. Mädler to communicate the image duplications identified in the investigations to the publishers of the concerned journals and possibly publish Errata in consultation with the co-authors. Dr. Mädler has also been obliged to present a concept suitable for an external evaluation, which particularly includes information about data documentation, data storage, data backup, about the prevention of the confusion of images and the implementation of her surveillance obligation as a research director. This includes an internationally verifiable accurate laboratory organization.

Bremen, October 25th 2016