Trends in Parasitology

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TrendsTalk

The Drug Design & Development Seminar 2026: joining forces with the European Cost Action 'OneHealthDrugs'

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Being founded in 1999 as an active working group of the German Society for Parasitology (DGP), the Drug Design & Development Seminar (DDDS) celebrated its 26th meeting as a joint event with the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action CA21111 – 'OneHealthDrugs', held under the theme: Human and Animal Parasitic Diseases – Bridging the Innovation Gap. The DDDS aims to connect human and veterinary health through complementary approaches in antiparasitic chemotherapy, medical and veterinary parasitology, and medicinal chemistry, thereby fostering One Health strategies to combat parasitic diseases. The COST Action 'OneHealthDrugs' focuses on coordinating the discovery of drugs that halt vector-borne infections in both human and veterinary contexts, aiming to enhance quality while reducing environmental impact. It serves as a platform designed to integrate and generate synergies among drug R&D experts across academia, small and medium enterprises, industry, and governmental institutions. In this *TrendsTalk*, we invited the conference organizers to highlight the keynote lectures and scientific presentations featured during the 3-day meeting in 2026.



Simone Haeberlein

Back to the University of Giessen, returning to the scientific roots of parasitology

Rudolf Leuckart, during his tenure as a professor at the University of Giessen (1850–1869), laid the foundations of modern parasitology. Giessen, therefore, remains a symbolic and fitting place to return to, and the Drug Design & Development Seminar (DDDS) did so for the second time after 2019, once again benefiting from the exceptional dedication and professionalism of the local organizing team.

The 26th DDDS of the German Society for Parasitology (DGP)[i] was held as a joint meeting with the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action CA21111,[ii] 'OneHealthDrugs'.[iii] The event opened on Tuesday afternoon, March 17, with a welcome reception and concluded on Friday, March 20. The scientific committee consisted of Simone Häberlein, Christoph G. Grevelding, Franco H. Falcone, Maria Paola Costi, Sandra Noack, and Paul M. Selzer.

This year's meeting brought together 93 participants from Europe, the United States, Asia, and Africa and featured eight keynote lectures delivered by internationally recognized experts (Figure 1). These talks provided deep insights into current advances in parasitology and antiparasitic drug discovery and development. Alongside the keynote sessions, the program included 29 scientific presentations and 17 posters, covering a broad range of topics related to diseases caused or transmitted by ectoparasites, helminths, protozoa, and viruses (see the supplemental information online). The diversity of contributions reflected the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of the field.

The meeting also offered numerous opportunities for informal networking during coffee and lunch breaks. A memorable highlight of the social program was the conference

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Christoph G. Grevelding



Figure 1. Group picture of the Drug Design & Development Seminar (DDDS) 2026 participants. The meeting attracted 93 participants from 20 countries to the Biomedical Research Center of the Justus Liebig University in Giessen.



Franco H. Falcone



Paul M. Selzer

dinner on Thursday evening, accompanied by an outstanding live performance from Christoph G. Grevelding and his band, 'Dribbdeblues', complemented by a surprise appearance from Ronald Kaminsky, who delighted attendees with a banjo performance. This lively evening created an excellent atmosphere for networking and informal scientific exchange.

The Scientific Board expresses its sincere appreciation to the EU COST Action, the DGP, and especially to the industry partners—Boehringer-Ingelheim Animal Health, MSD Animal Health, Zoetis, ASTRA Therapeutics, TROPIQ Health Sciences, Elanco, Euroimmun, Invenesis, and Springer Nature—whose generous support made the event possible. The Board also extends heartfelt thanks to all speakers, presenters, and participants for their enthusiasm, engagement, and scientific excellence, which collectively ensured the success of the meeting.

Tools, ticks, and targets

The meeting opened on Wednesday morning with welcome notes from the scientific advisory board and Prof. Dr Stefan Arnhold, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. The first keynote was delivered by Ard Nijhof (FU Berlin), who presented advances in artificial tick feeding systems. These platforms support research on hematophagous arthropods, vector competence, and colony maintenance, while reducing animal use in ectoparasiticide studies. Although artificial feeding is well established for many blood-feeding arthropods, ixodid ticks remain challenging due to their complex feeding biology. Nevertheless, these systems enable controlled exposure to defined compound concentrations and allow *in vitro* assessment of mortality, feeding inhibition, and reproductive effects. Despite their inherently low throughput, artificial feeding systems provide an important bridge between early *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies. Two presentations by Maxime Madder (Clinglobal, Mauritius) and Koen Dechering (TropIQ Health Sciences, Nijmegen) followed, both highlighting their collaborative work on the promising molecular target 4-hydroxyphenylpyruvate dioxygenase (HPPD). Nitisinone (NTBC), an HPPD inhibitor, was evaluated as a systemic endectocide using both *in vitro* and *in vivo* models. *In vitro* assays demonstrated high mortality, up to 91%, in several engorged female tick species, whereas topical application showed no acaricidal effect. *In vivo* studies in cattle indicated that NTBC was well tolerated, rapidly absorbed, and achieved up to 40%

efficacy against most tick species, except for *Ixodes ricinus*. TropIQ further characterized recombinant mosquito, tick, and human HPPD orthologues, showing potent inhibition by triketone and diketonitrile herbicides. Rapid killing was observed in mosquitoes, while *Ixodes* responded more slowly. Supplementation with homogentisate did not rescue lethality, suggesting toxicity arises from upstream metabolite accumulation. An *in vivo* cattle study with *Rhipicephalus microplus* larvae confirmed significant reductions in adult tick counts. Both presenters concluded that HPPD is a validated, selective, and druggable target for controlling one-host ticks.

Kinetoplastid models for drug discovery and the benefits and hazards of antiparasitics

Keynote speaker Guy Caljon (University of Antwerp) introduced challenges, novel assays, and drug discovery strategies in antitrypanosomal and antileishmanial drug discovery. Challenges include the elimination of parasites from protected tissue niches. To help close this gap, his team developed new animal models of blood–brain barrier crossing (antitrypanosomals) and bone marrow infection (antileishmanials). Sarah Hendrickx introduced the 'Fail fast, fail cheap' concept in drug discovery, which aims to identify and abandon ineffective drug candidates early in development. A bioluminescent mouse model for leishmaniasis helped shed light on the clinical failure of fexinidazole for visceral leishmaniasis and allopurinol for canine leishmaniasis, caused by post-treatment relapse. As with the previous speakers, Ronald Kaminsky (ParaConsulting) and Maria Paola Costi (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia) emphasized in their talks the urgent need to balance the therapeutic benefits of antiparasitic drugs with their ecological hazards. The extensive application of antiparasitics contributes to the contamination of ecosystems, which may have detrimental effects on nontarget organisms. Ronald Kaminsky pointed out that current risk assessments overlook ectoparasiticides used on pets, such as imidacloprid and fipronil, which have high environmental persistence. Regulatory frameworks still underestimate environmental exposure, which calls for a new European Medicines Agency guideline to evaluate exposure, fate, and effects of ectoparasiticidal veterinary medicinal products on the environment. It was inspiring to see how ecotoxicologically relevant assays are already implemented in the speakers' R&D pipelines, such as immobilization and growth inhibition tests against *Daphnia magna* and *Bodo saltans* used by Guy Caljon. Maria Paola Costi, Chair of the COST Action OneHealthDrugs, introduced a machine learning-driven approach to generate environmentally friendlier starting compounds for drug development. After an ecotox-based evaluation, calpain protease could be selected as a target for anti-*Leishmania* agents.

Structure–function relationships in targeted drug discovery approaches in apicomplexan parasites

The third session focused on understanding apicomplexan biology and using this knowledge to leverage target identification and drug discovery. In her keynote, Lilach Sheiner (University of Glasgow) summarized work on *Toxoplasma gondii* and the mitochondrial electron transport chain (mETC) as a validated drug target. CryoEM of purified complexes of *T. gondii* revealed the discrete organization of conserved apicomplexan mETC super-complexes, suggesting their independent evolution in eukaryotes. Besides genetically disrupting super-complexes, chemical inhibition by the antimalarials atovaquone (ATQ) and endochin-like quinolone (ELQ)-300 (in preclinical development) further substantiated complex inactivation and their antiparasitic potential. Furthermore, unraveling binding modes and parasite-specific interactions enabled the synthesis of

ELQ derivatives with subnanomolar activity against *T. gondii*. Wesley Van Voorhis (University of Washington) discussed bumped kinase inhibitors (BKIs) for calf cryptosporidiosis and sheep toxoplasmosis. BKI-1708 reversed diarrhea and cleared mice and calves of *Cryptosporidium parvum* infection within 3 days. No toxicity was observed in mice, rats, and dogs, highlighting BKI-1708 as a safe preclinical lead. However, it exhibited a short half-life and poor oral exposure in sheep. BKI-1748 demonstrated superior ADME and PK profiles in ovine congenital toxoplasmosis. Treatment of sheep reduced fetal losses and terminated infection. This, along with the significant reduction in transplacental transmission after seroconversion to anti-*T. gondii* IgM, positioned BKI-1748 as a promising drug candidate for congenital toxoplasmosis. Walter Bronkhorst (TropIQ Health Sciences, Nijmegen) introduced target-based discovery of malaria drugs at TropIQ. The focus was on serine hydroxymethyltransferase (SHMT), which had been identified by the Malaria Drug Accelerator consortium as a high-priority target. Recombinant SHMTs from *Plasmodium falciparum* (*Pf*SHMT), *Plasmodium vivax* (*Pv*SHMT), and humans (*Hs*SHMT) were used for comparative biochemical assays with small molecule inhibitors identified through high-throughput screenings of various libraries. *Pf*SHMT-selective compounds were discovered and are currently under analysis. Ross Douglas (Justus Liebig University of Giessen) reported on actin-like proteins (Alps) of *Plasmodium berghei* (*Pb*) as potential targets for novel antimalarials. Knockout (KO) and complementation experiments demonstrated essential roles for two Alps, *Pb*Alp1 and *Pb*Alp2, which are critical for mosquito transmission and midgut colonization (both Alps), ookinete motility (*Pb*Alp1), fertilization, and gametocyte commitment (*Pb*Alp2). Together, these findings underscored the target potential of Alps.

Natural compounds and other chemistry

Natural compounds and synthetic molecules were the focus of this session. The session began with Thomas J. Schmidt (University of Münster), who has discovered aminosteroids from Buxaceae and Apocynaceae as leads for new drugs against *Trypanosoma brucei* and *P. falciparum*. With knowledge of the structural diversity and *in vitro* activity of the compounds, and by applying quantitative structure–activity relationship (QSAR) modeling, the group was able to reveal the major structural determinants in this class of compounds. David Magri (University of Malta) approached natural products from a completely different angle: the bright emissive properties of cinchona alkaloids make them suitable as fluorescence imaging tools. Another straightforward approach to deriving new antiparasitic candidates is the derivatization of existing drugs into more effective and safer analogues. Theodora Calogeropoulou (National Hellenic Research Foundation) searched for new phosphomimetic derivatives of alkylphosphocholines to overcome the drawbacks of drugs like miltefosine. She took the audience on a journey from the initial synthesis of novel analogues to *in vitro* screening against *Leishmania infantum* and *in vivo* efficacy studies in mice. It was speculated that the absence of antiparasitic activity *in vivo* might be due to poor targeting of specific organs in the animals.

Old targets, new approaches; old compounds, new applications

Session five began with a keynote presentation delivered by Natacha Gaillard and Ashwani Sharma (Astra Therapeutics), who introduced their ParaX® platform for the rational design of precision antiparasitic drugs. This innovative approach applies principles from precision medicine to parasitology. The presenters showcased this methodology by explaining how even a highly conserved target, such as tubulin, can

be exploited for small differences between parasites and humans through structural studies. A practical example is Parabulin, a tubulin inhibitor that can be used to treat *Toxoplasma* infections with very low toxicity to mammalian cells. André Lopes (University of Minho) followed with a medicinal chemistry talk on the synthesis of 8-aminophenyl pyrimidopyrimidine-based compounds for the treatment of leishmaniasis. Various derivative compounds were screened against promastigotes of *L. infantum* (a species infecting both humans and dogs). Of the 13 compounds synthesized, 12 were active against promastigotes, 5 of which had an $IC_{50} < 1$ μM. Four compounds were active on intracellular amastigote forms. The presentation also highlighted the importance of specific substituents as a prerequisite for anti-amastigote activity. In the third talk of the session, Harry de Koning (University of Glasgow) presented recent advances in anti-trypanosomal drugs. One of the main challenges is that the available drugs are not equally effective against all *Trypanosoma* species. Using aquaporins and drug transporters as targets for pentamidine and other drugs, de Koning explained how *T. brucei* develops resistance to commonly used drugs such as melarsoprol and pentamidine (cross-resistance). The key takeaway from his presentation was the urgent need for new drugs that do not rely on known drug transporters. Finally, Joachim Kloehn (Université de Genève), one of the recipients of the DDDS early-career scientist award shared recent findings on novel fosmidomycin analogues with improved bioavailability for use against *T. gondii*. These compounds target isoprenoid synthesis in apicoplasts, a cellular organelle found in apicomplexans. The newly developed fosmidomycin analogues can overcome the poor pharmacokinetics of fosmidomycin but are ineffective against the bradyzoite stage, possibly due to their inability to penetrate the thick cyst wall.

Combining target identification and phenotypic screening

Keynote speaker Mostafa Zamanian (University of Wisconsin-Madison) took the audience along the 'roadmap' of his personal motivating questions in filaria research, such as: how do these parasites end up in the correct places, how do they manage to evade host defenses, and how do they communicate with the host? In a target-based approach, he applied tissue-directed transcriptomics that, together with behavioral assays, identified G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs) as regulators of parasite behavior and the control of secretory processes. Parallel to this strategy, multi-dimensional phenotypic screens of microbial natural products from understudied marine bacterial genera were conducted. This led to the identification of lead candidates with multistage activity and demonstrated how anthelmintic discovery can be promoted through parallel tracks of target identification and phenotypic whole-organism screening. Nematodes were also the focus of the presentation by Hala Fahs (New York University/UAE). She introduced an impressive high-throughput screening pipeline that was applied to uncover anthelmintics targeting filarial and intestinal parasites. Screening 50 000 compounds led to the identification of several nematicidal molecules with new mechanisms of action. Among the active candidates were avocado fatty alcohols/acetates (AFAs), which demonstrated effects against *Haemonchus contortus*, *Dirofilaria immitis*, and other nematodes *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Genetic and biochemical tests revealed that AFAs inhibit POD-2, the rate-limiting enzyme in lipid biosynthesis. Phase I clinical trials are planned as the next step. The two following talks spotlighted work on microbial products as a resource for antiparasitics conducted at the Fraunhofer Institute IME in Giessen. Maria Alexandra Patras received the second DDDS early-career scientist award for her talk about a metabologenomic-assisted natural product discovery campaign that is executed as a

research collaboration with Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health. Profiling parts of the huge Fraunhofer microbial collection delivered fungal and bacterial extracts with activity against endo- and ecto-parasites. The subsequent dereplication of compounds within extract fractions was discussed as a critical step in the identification of bioactive natural products. Successful dereplication was achieved for Strevertene A. This *Streptomyces*-derived macrolide was discovered by phenotypic screening of almost 1000 bacterial and fungal extracts against adult *Schistosoma mansoni*. These data were presented by Marius Spohn, who stepped in for his colleague Felix Mühlemeyer.

Targets and compounds against cestodes and flukes

Session 7 was dedicated to Platyhelminthes. The first three presentations were from the Institute of Parasitology in Bern, Switzerland. Britta Lundström-Stadelmann opened the session with a keynote lecture on the discovery of novel targets for the treatment of echinococcosis. In her introduction, many conference participants were surprised to learn that echinococcosis regularly affects gorillas in zoos. The speaker presented a strategy for finding new drugs using *in vitro*-derived metacestodes as a starting point, which facilitated the screening of over 1700 repurposed compounds. This identified mefloquine as a candidate with *in vivo* activity. Furthermore, mitochondrial targets are in focus as new therapeutic strategies. María Eugenia Ancarola followed up by describing how the succinate dehydrogenase (SDH) activity of complex II is a putative target for benzimidazoles, known to target β-tubulin and inhibit its polymerization. Twenty benzimidazoles were screened—the highest inhibitory activity on SDH was found for triclabendazole (TCBZ). Due to the high conservation of SDH across species, it cannot be ruled out that long-term TCBZ treatment may have toxic side-effects on humans. Pascal Zumstein presented work on the characterization of cytosolic malate dehydrogenase (MDH) in *Echinococcus granulosus*. MDH is highly expressed in the parasite, and its knockdown in germinal layer cells led to impaired development. *Gossypium*, a dimeric sesquiterpene found in cotton seeds, inhibited *Echinococcus multilocularis* MDH with a submicromolar IC_{50} and showed activity against larval stages. Simone Häberlein (Justus Liebig University of Giessen) closed the session with their work on searching for new treatment options against the liver fluke *Fasciola hepatica*. Single-cell and spatial transcriptomics enabled precise localization of drug targets (e.g., in the tegument), as shown by the example of $TRPM_{PZQ}$, the orthologue of the Praziquantel target in schistosomes. Single-cell transcriptomic data were used to prioritize protein kinases as drug targets, based on their cellular localizations. This approach identified Ets transcription factor 5 (Elf5)-positive cells as a cell type located near the parasite's surface with particularly high expression of protein kinases.

Antiprotozoals

Session 8 presented recent research on three protozoan parasites. Gaëlle Lentini (University of Bern) discussed proteases as druggable targets in *Trypanosoma evansi*. The emphasis was on egress inhibitors, for which an analysis pipeline was presented. A total of 343 compounds from a library enriched with protease inhibitors were screened, yielding 14 potential egress inhibitors. Two of these, Nirogacestat and Crenigacestat, demonstrated strong (>90%) potency. The work highlighted γ-secretase, a member of the parasite intramembrane-cleaving protease family (I-CLiP), which localizes at the flagellar pocket and serves as a key regulator of egress. The significance of this target was further explored for *T. cruzi*, the causative agent of Chagas disease. Daniel Sojka (Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences) delved into *Babesia divergens*, a zoonotic protozoan parasite transmitted by ticks. His presentation focused on targeting

the ubiquitin-proteasome pathway (UBP), specifically the proteasome 20S catalytic core complex. Two potential drugs were introduced: carfilzomib (an FDA-approved synthetic proteasome inhibitor used for multiple myeloma treatment) and the structurally related carmaphycin B (a naturally occurring compound isolated from marine cyanobacteria). Carfilzomib exhibited an *in vitro* IC_{50} of 29 nM and was also active *in vivo* in a murine model of babesiosis with *Babesia microti*. In the session's final presentation, Martin Blume (Robert Koch Institute) explored classical metabolic targets in *T. gondii*. A total of 653 compounds from the MMV Pathogen Box (400 compounds) and 253 natural myxobacterial compounds were screened against the bradyzoite stage. The mETC bc1-complex was shown to be a promising target, with known inhibitors ATQ, ELQ-400, and buparvaquone (BPQ) displaying IC_{50} values in the low nanomolar range against tachyzoites and high nanomolar to micromolar range against bradyzoites. The effects of bc1 inhibitors were further analyzed through metabolomics studies. Another active compound was argyrin D, which targeted both tachyzoites and bradyzoites as a translational inhibitor, though it appeared less efficient than the bc1 inhibitors. The presentation concluded with the important observation that the widespread notion of drug-tolerant bradyzoites may be more reflective of inadequate drugs rather than a consequence of the purported metabolic inactivity of bradyzoites.

Mechanism-based approaches

This session comprised 'omics'- and mechanism-based approaches to identify candidate targets, hits, and novel compounds to fight filaria and other parasites. In her keynote lecture, Makedonka Mitreva (Washington University) summarized 'omics'-approaches to prioritize FDA-approved library compounds against adult *Brugia pahangi* as a model for filaria infections. Among the hits were GPCRs. Using structurally diverse GPCR-antagonist classes such as clemizole (CLE), pimozide (PMZ), poroxan (PRO), suloctidil (SUL), and 45 rationally designed analogs of these compound classes for activity against *B. pahangi* and *Onchocerca* sp., 27 were active against adult worms *in vitro*. *In vivo*, the analog CLE-C8 reduced worm burden by about 50–60%, while PMZ-6 (25%) and SUL-S17 (36%) showed lower worm number reductions, but each of these analogs reduced worm fecundity. Transcriptomics post-treatment revealed elevation of stress responses and downregulation of target GPCRs following CLE-C8 treatment. Furthermore, the CLE and SUL analogs exhibited increased parasite GPCR selectivity, while PMZ analogs were less selective. Analogs of CLE, PMZ, and SUL may represent promising candidates for lead optimization. Denis Voronin (NIAID, NIH) focused on *Wolbachia* endosymbionts as therapeutic targets for filariasis following a dual approach, targeting the bacterium and filaria host autophagy at the same time. Computational analyses indicated niclosamide binding to membrane proteins of *Wolbachia*, suggesting a role in bacterial secretion systems and viability. Furthermore, niclosamide and its ethanolamine salt (NEN) negatively affected *Wolbachia* density, motility, and reproduction at 1 μM. Both compounds induced the expression of lysosome-associated membrane protein, which confirmed autophagy induction and suggested host-governed processes impeding *Wolbachia*-filaria symbiosis. Therefore, niclosamide and its analogs may represent candidates for novel macrofilaricidal approaches. Biljana Arsic (University of Niš) discussed common kala-azar-, malaria-, and toxoplasmosis-associated genes identified by a computational approach searching for target and drug candidates. This approach led to the transcription factor STAT3 (signal transducer and activator of transcription 3) as a potential target and nifuraxide, which is a nitrofuran antibiotic used to treat colitis and diarrhea in humans, as a candidate for drug repurposing.

Viruses, helminths, and anthelmintic therapies

This session covered new targets, compound classes, and repurposing candidates toward novel antihelmintics. In his keynote talk, Arnold Grünweller (Philipps University Marburg) summarized work on RNA helicase eIF4A, a target for diverse pathogens like viruses that depend on eIF4A unwinding activity in their host cells. Rocaglates and pateamines are natural compounds derived from plants and sponges, respectively, and their derivatives exhibited pan-antiviral activity by inhibiting eIF4A and suppressing virus replication. These compounds also affected the reproduction of *Candida*, *Toxoplasma*, *Trypanosoma*, and *Schistosoma* at nanomolar concentrations. However, eIF4A inhibitors are complex, laborious to synthesize, and exhibit low bioavailability. Therefore, alternative eIF4A inhibitors were sought through fragment-, ligand-, and structure-based approaches and by virtual screening of compound libraries. Together with functional assays and cytotoxicity tests, 16 hits were identified for further development. Sophie Welsch (Justus Liebig University of Giessen) reported in more detail on the detrimental effects of specific rocaglates and pateamines on adult *S. mansoni* (Sm) *in vitro*. Biochemical assays confirmed their binding activities against recombinant SmeIF4A. Treatment affected schistosome attachment, motility, stem-cell proliferation, and embryogenesis. Together with RNA interference (RNAi) results, which showed similar adverse effects, the target potential of SmeIF4A was confirmed, as well as the potency of rocaglates and pateamines as foundational compounds for anti-schistosomal drug design. Frederic Risch (University Hospital Bonn) discussed the efficacy of fosfomycin, an essential bactericidal antibiotic primarily used to treat lower urinary tract infections in humans, against filaria. *Litomosoides sigmodontis*-infected BALB/c mice were orally treated, covering early (day 1 post-infection) and late (day 35 post-infection) applications, and analyzed every 5 weeks post-treatment. Early treatment significantly reduced worm burden by 96–100%, which was paralleled by a reduction of *Wolbachia*. However, fosfomycin failed to kill adult worms. Raffi Aroian (UMASS Chan Medical School) addressed new approaches to combat gastrointestinal nematodes in livestock and humans. The focus was on pore-forming crystal (Cry) proteins of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), which showed activity against *Ancylostoma ceylanicum*, *H. contortus*, and *Trichuris muris in vitro* and *in vivo*. Cry protein combinations, domain swapping of Cry proteins, and combinations with small molecule antihelmintics open new perspectives toward broad-spectrum compounds.

Closing of the meeting on Friday, March 20th

The meeting was formally closed by Paul M. Selzer. During the farewell session, he announced PD Simone Häberlein as the new co-lead of the DDDS. This was followed by the presentation of five early-career awards, moderated by PD Simone Häberlein in her new role as co-chair.

In recognition of outstanding contributions from emerging researchers, the DDDS awarded two book prizes/vouchers, sponsored by Springer Nature, to Maria Alexandra Patras (Fraunhofer Institute Giessen) and Joachim Kloehn (University of Geneva) for their exceptional oral presentations. In addition, three poster prizes for high-quality poster contributions were given to María Alejandra Villamizar Monsalve (Universidad de Salamanca), Hannah Wegner (University Hospital Bonn), and Erik Wotschel (University of Giessen). These awards underscored the meeting's commitment to supporting early-career scientists and fostering meaningful dialogue between junior and senior researchers (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Early-career scientist awards. Drug Design & Development Seminar (DDDS) coordinators Paul M. Selzer (University of Tübingen; left) and Simone Häberlein (University of Giessen, right) handed over book vouchers sponsored by Springer Nature and prices for the best talks and posters to (from left to right): María Alejandra Villamizar Monsalve (Universidad de Salamanca), Maria Alexandra Patras (Fraunhofer Institute Giessen), Erik Wotschel (University of Giessen), Hannah Wegner (University Hospital Bonn), and Joachim Kloehn (University of Geneva, missing in the picture).

Looking ahead, participants are encouraged to save the date for the biannual meeting of the German Society for Parasitology, scheduled for 9–12 March 2027, in Munich, Germany. As in previous years, the DDDS will be featured as a workshop within this event. The next independent DDDS is scheduled for March 2028, with the location to be announced later this year.

Declaration of interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Resources

[i]https://dgparasitologie.de/

[ii]https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA21111/

[iii]https://onehealthdrugs.com/

Supplemental information

Supplementary information associated with this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pt.2026.05.002.

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pt.2026.05.002

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