

Highlights

Advice from the expert: “How to talk about science”

Reports on workshops, lectures and award ceremonies

Science communication: six personal experience reports

Upcoming events

22 January – 27 January 2023

Physical Virology Conference, Luca, Italy

25 January 2023 (virtual, 5 pm)

jGfV virology lecture series: Poxviruses

15 February – 17 February 2023

21st International AEK Cancer Congress, Kassel

28 March – 31 March 2023

Annual meeting of the Society for Virology, Ulm

News

Dear fellows,

the application process for the election of the new student representatives serving one year within the jGfV board is now open (page 3). Furthermore, applications for the ACHIEVE workshop “ViReady” (page 9) and our science slam competition at the annual meeting in Ulm (page 6) are highly welcome. We will continue next year with our virtual virology lecture series (page 33).

Last but not least, we want to thank all contributors of this issue.

Your newsletter team

Preface

You may have heard that two federal countries – Saxony and Brandenburg – have not implemented a special training for infectious diseases. We, together with other young societies, co-signed the letter of appeal of the jDGI, which was published on their twitter account:

<https://twitter.com/JungeInfektio/status/1593750207895928832>

What have we done in addition? After having received great feedback for our virtual virology lecture series, we will continue with a new round directly in January 2023! If you are interested in chairing future lectures – you may write to jGfV@g-f-v.org!

We have also finalized our jGfV session at the annual meeting of the Society for Virology in Ulm and highly welcome applications for our science slam competition! All jGfV working groups now have their own homepages so that you can better stay informed about different activities. For example, the working group ACHIEVE will also start a virtual “How to...?” lecture series in 2023 (<https://achieve.g-f-v.org/seminar-series/>) - so stay tuned.

With that we would like to send you our season’s greetings and wish you a happy, healthy and successful new year 2023!



Application open to join the jGfV board

Are you a **young virologist** (GfV member, student to 3rd year PostDoc / physician in training) and interested in actively shaping the jGfV, contributing your own ideas and making decisions?

If so, apply for **joining the jGfV board** as an official „Student Representative Member“ **for one year!**

We meet online every month and distribute our to-do's in smaller teams, such as the newsletter team, the virtual virology lecture team, etc.

If you are interested, please send your short CV and a letter of motivation to jGfV@G-f-V.org by **28th of February, 2023**.

Depending on the number of applications, you will have the opportunity to introduce yourself during the jGfV session at the annual meeting of the Society for Virology in Ulm 2023. Afterwards, an online election of the candidates will take place.



Reports

jGfV virology lecture series

- West Nile virus –

Antonia Sophia Peter, Institute of Clinical and Molecular Virology, Erlangen

On the 10th of November 2022, we had the opportunity to get an insight into the clinical and molecular properties of West Nile virus. The lecture was given by Prof. Dr. Jonas Schmidt-Chanasit (Bernhard-Nocht-Institut für Tropenmedizin, Hamburg) and Dr. Pietro Scaturro (Leibniz-Institut für Virologie, Hamburg) and was hosted by Dr. Philipp Steiniger (Institute of Clinical and Molecular Virology, Erlangen). In the first part of the lecture, Prof. Dr. Schmidt-Chanasit presented the virus from a clinical point of view. Here, he explained how this ss(+)-RNA flavivirus which is primarily transmitted by mosquitos of the genus *Culex* was first identified in the 1930s in Uganda and spread globally from there, especially during the last few decades. He furthermore pointed out that humans are a dead-end host for this virus that usually stays within a bird–mosquito–bird

transmission cycle, therefore no urban cycle exists. Currently no vaccine or therapy is available. He also elaborated on the link between the weather/climate and number of West Nile virus cases. Here, an association between shorter extrinsic incubation period (time between vector infection and potential pathogen transmission to a vertebrate host) and increased temperatures has been observed. This illustrated also the importance of continuous monitoring of West Nile virus infections in animals and humans, as performed for example by the EYWA (Early Warning System for Mosquito-Borne Diseases) at times of global warming. Since 2019, autochthonous human West Nile fever cases in Germany are seasonally observed, peaking in August and September.

The second part of the lecture, given by Dr. Scaturro, largely focused on the molecular aspects of West Nile Virus. He described the large similarity yet diversity of viruses in the flavivirus genus. He also spoke about the fact that many questions regarding West Nile

virus pathogenesis, virus entry and replication still remain to be answered. Dr. Scaturro also explained the sophisticated mechanisms by which West Nile virus enters host cells, for example by being able to interact with various receptors or by using antibody-dependent enhancement (enabling a potential ecological cross-talk amongst different flaviviruses). He also emphasized the ability of the virus to evade the host cell immune system. Here, the replication of the virus within so-called virus factories plays an important role. Lastly, he presented the molecular tool box employed by West Nile virus researchers.

Concluding, this lecture once more emphasized the need to be vigilant of emerging viruses. In case of West Nile virus, we can for example, as Prof. Dr. Schmidt-Chanasit mentioned, all contribute to reduce the risk of infection by observing the four Ds that reduce mosquito encounters and therefore also transmission. These recommend to stay indoors at dusk and dawn,

dress in long sleeved clothes, use repellents (like DEET) and drain standing water sources. It is of course also of great importance to gain a deeper understanding of this virus for the development of vaccines or efficient therapeutic agents.

If you have attended a jGfV-related workshop / conference / seminar and want to write a report about it, please email to jGfV@G-f-V.org.

Science Slam Competition



Are you a young virologist (student to 3rd-year postdoc or physician in training), GfV member and plan to attend the annual meeting in Ulm?

Would you like to communicate your research in 3 minutes at our jGfV session during the annual meeting of the Society for Virology, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?

Then upload a 3 min video until **1st of February 2023 via the following link:**

<https://forms.gle/r18hTFnFdZMEPxi16>

You may find some inspiration here: <https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au>.

The best presentation out of 5 preselected candidates wins a cool prize!

Your jGfV annual meeting team

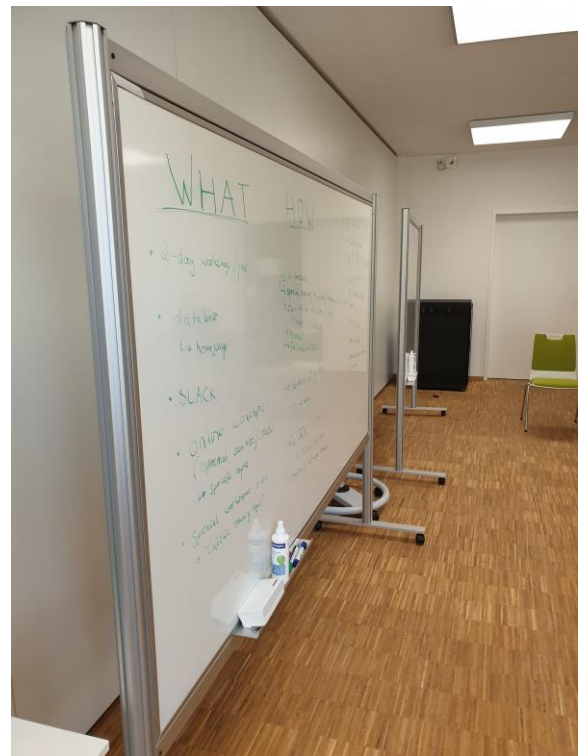
Young PI virology faculty kick-off meeting

Dr. Björn Meyer, Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg

Under the umbrella of the jGfV, a provisional new working group Young PIs was formed this year. The working group will form a network for research and clinical junior groups (not yet a W2 professorship) to help with the switch from bench to a successful PI role. The idea of the working group was welcomed by not only young PIs but also the virology community to help start successful new research labs.

To discuss this group's general setup and framework, around 20 junior PIs met at the University of Witten/Herdecke from 28th - 29th September, hosted locally by Florian Kreppel. Participants who took part are running labs in Germany, Poland and Sweden and included biologists as well as medics. The meeting was kindly supported by DZIF. The meeting focused on networking where each group leader could present their previous work and future plans for their individual labs.

Over breaks and dinner, the participants could exchange their experiences thus far and discuss possible future collaborations. In addition to discussions amongst junior PIs, the group invited more senior scientists to give an impression of their experiences. On the first day of the meeting, Eva Herker (Marburg) told about her career steps as a group leader and emphasised the importance of soft skills, including strategies to solve conflicts. Florian Kreppel (Witten/Herdecke) was the invited speaker on the second day of the meeting. He talked about some 'dos and don'ts' he learned throughout his career.



The meeting was concluded with general discussions of how the working group should take shape and votes on who will represent the Young PIs for the coming years. The group decided to have an annual in-person meeting, ideal for networking, exchanging experiences and ideas, and getting valuable insights from senior PIs. To represent the Young PIs, the group voted for the two speakers Christina Karsten (Essen) und Björn Meyer (Magdeburg).

Additional support will come from Nadine Bidenkopf (Marburg), Lisa Oesterreich (Hamburg), Aydin Malik (Witten/Herdecke) und Mathias Munschauer (Würzburg). The working group is already planning for next year's events. Have a look for updates on the website and for possible registrations to news and events: <https://youngpi.g-f-v.org/>





ACHIEVE

Academy for Clinical and Experimental Virology

ViReady - Kick-Start Your Career in Virology

Calling for all students from the fields of medicine, veterinary medicine, life sciences, physicians in training and first-year PhD: Do you want to learn more about virology and what career opportunities you have in this field? Then “**ViReady**” and join us at the **4th ACHIEVE Spring School** of the Society for Virology which will be held from **March 27th to 28th in Ulm**, Germany. Get inspired by experienced and enthusiastic virologists from academia and industry who share their success stories and “backstage” secrets. Participate in our science slam and win a prize!

We hope to make you as enthusiastic about virology as we are and help you to jumpstart your career!

Applications should include a CV and a letter of motivation (no more than one page). Apply now <https://achieve.g-f-v.org/registration-workshop/> and win a scholarship for the ViReady workshop and the annual GfV meeting 2023 in Ulm.

Registration is open until 01.02.2023!

Alumni Postdoctoral Symposium meeting in Berlin,

Stephanie Pfänder, Ruhr-University Bochum

Hanna-Mari Baldauf, LMU Munich

On the 10th and 11th of November, the [alumni symposium](#) of the postdoctoral prize awardees of the Robert-Koch-Foundation took place in Berlin! Have you not heard of that award? Every year, the Robert-Koch foundation honors postdocs in immunology, microbiology and virology. It is a great opportunity to get your postdoctoral discoveries honored! All you have to do is to talk to your mentor and get nominated until the 31st of March at the Society for Virology ([GfV](#)).

The alumni symposium had been postponed due the COVID-19 pandemic, so we celebrated this year 25 years of Robert Koch Postdoc Prizes with great talks from former awardees and networking opportunities during the breaks and dinner. You can check out the former winners on [the Robert Koch Homepage](#), you might recognize one or two names ;-). We were honored to listen to great talks of

this year's Robert Koch awardees Dr. Philip Felgner (aka Mr. Lipofectamine®) and Dr. Drew Weissman, who both pioneered in the lipid-based delivery of nucleic acids and mRNA therapeutics, as well as this year's Robert Koch Gold Medal Laureate Dr. Jörg Hacker. After the symposium, the [Robert Koch award ceremony](#) took place at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities – a very nice location for this prestigious award – where also this year's postdoctoral prize awardees in immunology, microbiology and virology received their award. We thank the organizers for this great symposium and are very much looking forward to the next alumni symposium in 2026.





Impressions from the alumni symposium and Robert Koch award ceremony in Berlin





Interesse an der **klinischen und diagnostischen Virologie** als Naturwissenschaftler*in oder Veterinärmediziner*in?

Dann wäre das **Zertifikat für Medizinische Virologie und Infektionsprävention („Medizinische/r Fachvirologe/in)** der GfV vielleicht das Richtige?

VORTEILE

- Qualifikation zur technischen Leitung eines Labors der medizinischen Virologie
- ggf. medizinische Freigabe technisch validierter Ergebnisse der Virusdiagnostik

Weitere Informationen unter:

<https://g-f-v.org/zertifikat-fachvirologe/>

9th European Seminar in Virology on Next Gen Virology

Sriram Kumar, Institute of Virology, Münster

With the discovery and applications of diverse high-throughput technologies in the last decade, and how these techniques revolutionized virology research, the 9th European Seminar in Virology of the European Society for Virology was organized on the theme 'Next Gen Virology', aiming to discuss the new frontiers and methods in research and diagnostics. The event was organized at the University of Bologna Residential Center in Bertinoro, Italy, under the esteemed leadership of Prof. Gabriella Campadelli-Fium (University of Bologna), Prof. Dana Wolf (Hebrew University Jerusalem), Prof. Thomas Stamminger (Ulm University Medical Centre) and Prof. Michael Kann (University of Gothenburg) from 21-23 October 2022.

The event was kicked off by two eminent keynote lectures: Prof. Ileana Cristea (Princeton University, Department of Molecular Biology, Princeton, USA) talked about the

dynamic organelle remodelling and how viruses exhibit mechanisms to subvert host cell biology. Prof. Jens Bosse (Hannover Med School, RESIST group Quantitative Virology, CSSB Centre for Structural Systems Biology, c/o DESY, Hamburg, Germany) discussed the spatiotemporal orchestration of herpesvirus morphogenesis. The adjoining session on cellular and viral structures included several talks by early-career researchers (ECRs) on diverse topics ranging from DNA damage signalling and chromatin modifications to host protein interaction in the context of herpesviruses, fostering discussions on this virus family from different perspectives. This was followed by a poster session given by ECRs, broadly covering latest findings on HIV, Influenza and coronaviruses.

The second day was kicked-off by Prof. Adam Grundhoff (Leibniz-Institute of Virology, Virus Genomics, Hamburg, Germany) with his keynote talk on chromatin programming during herpesvirus latency, followed by oral presentations given by young scientists on topics related to virus replication and gene expression.

This session also had a great mix of topics dealing with the implications of gene expression modulating aspects of virus replication, disease tolerance, and determinants of viral pathogenicity, with examples of HIV, herpesviruses, and Influenza. It was accompanied by an exclusive session on modulating innate immunity by viruses, with a keynote lecture given by Prof. Noam Stern-Ginossar (Weizmann Institute of Science, Department of Molecular Genetics, Rehovot, Israel), followed by two ECR talks covering aspects of chromatic accessibility and IFN therapy in the context of antiviral innate immunity.

A dedicated session discussed the impact of systems biology in understanding virus infection and disease progression in a systemic context. Dr. Ujjwal Neogi (Karolinska Institutet, Division of Clinical Microbiology, Department of Laboratory Medicine, Huddinge, Sweden) opened this session with his keynote lecture on genome-scale metabolic atlas for emerging and re-emerging RNA viruses, using SARS-CoV-2 as an example. Dr. Finn Grey (University of Edinburgh, Roslin Institute, Easter Bush Campus, Midlothian, UK) delivered

the second keynote on the importance of high throughput screening techniques to identify novel host-pathogen interactions, with examples of human, avian and swine influenza viruses. The third keynote lecture of this session given by Dr. Silke Stertz (University of Zürich; Institute of Medical Virology, Zürich, Switzerland) on the identification of MHC class II as novel entry receptor of influenza A viruses highlighted how we can exploit modern high-resolution techniques in identifying novel entry receptors of viruses. The session was closed by another keynote given by Dr. Christian Münch (University Hospital Frankfurt, Goethe University, Institute of Biochemistry II, Frankfurt, Germany) highlighting the dynamics of host proteome with the example of coronavirus infection.

The event also had a dedicated session on SARS-CoV-2, with keynote lectures given by Dr. Birgit Sawitzki (Berlin Institute of Health (BIH) & Charité University Medicine, Translational Immunology, Campus Virchow-Klinikum, Berlin, Germany) and Dr. Matteo Iannacone (San

Raffaele Scientific Institute & University, Dynamics of Immune Responses, Milan, Italy), discussing immune responses to SARS-CoV-2 infection, and Dr. Jutte De Vries (Leiden University Medical Center, Clinical Microbiological Laboratory, Leiden, The Netherlands) highlighting how clinical viral metagenomics can revolutionize virology research.

The final session of the event was reserved for discussing antivirals and diagnostics, with Dr. Nicole Fischer (University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Medical Microbiology, Virology and Hygiene, Hamburg, Germany) highlighting the importance of pathogen metagenomics during COVID-19, and Prof. Dana Wolf (Hadassah University Hospital, Dept. of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases, Clinical Virology Unit, Jerusalem, Israel) discussing biomarker proteomics for predicting the severity of congenital CMV infection. These keynote talks were followed by an array of ECR talks, highlighting their novel approaches for diagnostics and treatment,

quoting examples from SARS-CoV-2.

On the whole, the event promoted and acknowledged the concepts and ideas of how novel high-throughput technologies could be used to support diagnostic approaches, and further our understanding of host-virus interactions. The eminent state-of-the-art speakers and an equal mix of ECR talks fostered a balanced environment of people from different career stages, discussing several different viruses, including, but not-limited-to, SARS-CoV-2, various herpesviruses, polyomaviruses, influenza viruses and dengue virus. The focus on systems approaches to explain immune defence mechanisms against viral infections fostered discussions at higher levels of biological complexity. The attendees thank the organizers for putting together this high-quality event, and look forward to next year's event within this seminar series.

Online-Weiterbildungszirkel

des jGfV-Arbeitskreises
„Klinisch-virologische Forschung“

Inhalt und Ziele

- Vorträge zu Themen der diagnostischen und klinischen Virologie
- Einblick in die verschiedenen universitären und außeruniversitären Tätigkeitsfelder
- Diskussionen zu aktuellen Themen
- Vernetzung unter jungen klinischen Virologinnen und Virologen
- Vorbereitung auf die Facharztprüfung

Wer:

Alle Ärztinnen/Ärzte und Fachvirologinnen/Fachvirologen in Weiterbildung (und auch darüber hinaus)

Wann:

Jeden ersten Mittwoch des Monats um 9:00 Uhr

Wo:

Online-Veranstaltung (Zoom)

Weitere Infos und Anmeldung unter:

<https://clinviro.g-f-v.org/online-education-circle/>

...talk about your science



Anke Kautz, coach and mediator

Anke Kautz is a graduate media consultant and has worked as a journalist for 25 years. As a trained coach and mediator, she works in scientific institutions.

Anke uses her expertise from both fields to address science communication, to coach scientists in this area and to share her knowledge in workshops.

Of course, you do this every day with your colleagues and peers. But this is about a different aspect - namely, talking about your research in public. Science communication is an important part of research today. Not least the past pandemic years have just brought your research field into the public eye. It also showed how many ways there are for science communication and what it can mean for scientists to become a public person.

But why should you talk about research in public when your career depends on scientific publications and not on how often you talk about research in public? The answer is, for different reasons.

Of course, it is about making results known and bringing scientific content into society. There is hardly an area of society in which scientific findings are not used or at least are the basis for decisions.

But another crucial function of science communication is to show how science works, how scientists gain knowledge. They are increasingly expected to explain their work. Science needs to be recognizable as a process of asking questions, searching, and finding answers,

disproving them, and continuing to search for new ones. It is exactly this transparency that allows lay people to understand what science can do and that science does not produce facts on an assembly line that politicians or economists can simply take to make decisions. So, it's not just about explaining things in an understandable way. It is more about creating a dialogue between science and society about how science works and how it can become a good basis for orientation in our very complex world.

In addition, funding organizations have now included science communication as a requirement in their funding guidelines. To receive such funding, you have to be visible in public with your research.

Last but not least: Science communication is also about making science tangible. Telling children and young people about scientific work can arouse their curiosity. And maybe you get to know your future colleagues this way.

But how do you succeed in talking about your own research in a lively and accessible way?

Know your target group

First of all, you should know your target group. The more precisely you know your audience, the better you can tailor your message to them. This article focuses on non-experts as your target audience, which is huge. So, who exactly is to read, hear, or watch your information? Students, colleagues from other fields, politicians, association members, journalists, teenager, children?

The target group plays an important role because the language you use depends on it. The biggest challenge is to adapt your language:

- Translate technical and English terms into everyday language. It's worth putting some brainpower into because then more people will understand what you are talking about. And it gives more people access to knowledge.
- Translate dry figures and data by drawing comparisons from everyday life, so that your audience can get an idea of them.
- Use language rich in images to illustrate your statements.

- It is also much more fun to listen to you or read your texts if you use lively language. Use verbs instead of noun monsters.
- Formulate clearly and in short sentences. This is especially true when you are giving interviews or recording podcasts and people need to listen to you. Of course, it is often difficult to simplify complex issues. Therefore, you should explicitly name the balancing act you have to perform to achieve this. Say that you deliberately simplify complex issues to reach as many people as possible. This also takes the wind out of the sails of experts who might criticize you for simplifying matters. Sandra Ciesek and Christian Drosten can serve as good examples from your field. Both have kept large audiences informed in their podcasts under great time pressure while retaining their individual ways of speaking and presenting facts. Essential to their success with the podcast was that they became visible as personalities. They also worked with good science journalists.

Choose your medium

It is also important to consider which medium will fit your purpose best and what you would enjoy doing. Social media are providing platforms to reach huge audiences. However, the battle for attention may also tempt you to make quick oversimplified statements.

If you use classic media such as newspapers, radio or television you work with journalists who know what their audience wants. They help you break down your complex issues into morsels that people can digest easily.

Other formats are nights of science, children's universities or open house days. For these to succeed, it is crucial to have fun entertaining people and to have patience for many questions.

Prepare yourself

No matter which medium you choose, it is always worth to invest time in being well prepared. The following questions can help you:

- Who do I want to address or reach?
- What do I want to say?
- Why do I want this? What is my goal?
- Where do I want to communicate?
- How do I say it?

And, finally – as always in life, practice makes perfect.

If you have topics for the „how to“ section we have not yet touched, please email to jGfV@Gf-V.org.

6 interviews about experience with science communication



Prof. Dr. Sandra Ciesek, Institute for Medical Virology, University Hospital Frankfurt

Interviewers:

Sriram Kumar, PhD Student, Institute of Virology, Munster

Dr. Philipp Ostermann, Postdoc, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York

QUESTIONS:

1. Was there a specific aspect of the pandemic that you found inclined to communicate about? How/When did you realize your inclination to communicate on this specific aspect?

A. I feel most comfortable talking about aspects where my institute has own data from studies, or where I have experience from my prior work as a clinician. It's helpful to first do scientific research before talking to a huge audience about something that is very impactful. You can also communicate a lot more confidently this way.

2. What were your communication platforms (eg. via Twitter, Podcasts, Newspapers, etc)? Was this a conscious choice? If yes, what was your line-of-thoughts in choosing these platforms?

A. My preferred platforms are podcast and twitter. In both, you have a lot of control on the content that you put out there. In a podcast, you can take time to prepare, and elaborate on a topic as long as is necessary to bring a point across.

It is important to have a skilled co-host on a podcast who guides the conversation and follows up on statements that were phrased ambiguously or that are too complex for the general audience.

On twitter, you need to focus a brief message, but you can then also moderate the conversation and clarify other users' comments if necessary.

For other media, I prefer written interviews to live radio or TV.

3. What were the (a) challenging and (b) rewarding aspects of this experience?

A. (a) Especially in the beginning it was challenging to phrase statements clearly so that your message doesn't get misunderstood or edited in a way that distorts what you want to express. (b) It was very rewarding to get feedback from so many followers and listeners who wrote me that my content reassured and guided them through the pandemic, a very difficult time in so many people's lives. Especially in these times, it's great to make a positive impact.



Dr. Björn Meyer,
Universitätsklinikum
Magdeburg

QUESTIONS:

1. Was there a specific aspect of the pandemic that you found inclined to communicate about? How/When did you realize your inclination to communicate on this specific aspect?

A. At the beginning, there were a lot of questions along the lines of “what does this mean? Can someone break that down for me?”. I think at the beginning of the pandemic everybody was scrambling for information. I think it was good to cover some basic information that picked up people where they were at the time in terms of their knowledge about viruses. The difference for me and others, of course, was that we worked with a new virus and learned new things almost daily, while there were some aspects you could generalize with knowledge from other coronaviruses. It made it more difficult because some information did change over time as new information became available, a concept quite normal for us, less so for the wider public. At the same time, I used Twitter as an information source as well. A very important aspect that we sometimes tend to forget about, is that it’s a huge resource of expertise in many different fields and niches where you can connect with some of the world’s experts in no time. I think it was also the first time where I started to switch more from English to German, just to reach a different group of people.

But usually, I just tweet in-between all the other things I do, so there is not really a fixed time where I'd say "now I have to tweet about this or do that", but that's usually where the format plays in and you can quickly send out a short tweet or a short thread.

2. What were your communication platforms (eg. via Twitter, Podcasts, Newspapers, etc)? Was this a conscious choice? If yes, what was your line-of-thoughts in choosing these platforms?

A. I think I simply started on Twitter. Before the pandemic, it simply was a networking tool amongst other virologists and scientists. A way to stay in touch, ask questions, get insights or sometimes to stay on some people's radar. I was around there when the pandemic hit and just took this as a starting point. Sometimes it also helps to sort one's ideas when you try to write them all down in a more or less orderly way. I think it was less conscious and more the logical starting point because Twitter was the place I was active before. I had a lot of positive experiences from Twitter in the past, professionally spoken, so it was just

the normal thing to continue on there. From there it snowballed a little every now and then, where you get media requests based on a Twitter thread or because you previously connected to some journalists and they already knew your area of expertise. So, don't get me wrong, we worked a lot on the virus and tried to figure out a lot of its interactions with the host cell and so on. It's not that the communication was just based on other people's information and knowledge. I think this is an important point - to gain knowledge and expertise and start from that perspective and communicate it. If this works, others will ask for your input on other platforms and formats as well. But at the same time I want to add that very often I did not take media requests, but rather passed them on to better-suited people for a particular topic or questions. Many of these were and are on platforms such as Twitter as well.

3. What were the (a) challenging and (b) rewarding aspects of this experience?

A. I think challenging is to stay on top of the information flow, especially in times things change quickly. Over time communication has changed a lot, when one single out pandemic-related communication. I think a huge challenge was and is misinformation, especially when this originates in from people in the scientific field, for reasons I still don't really know or understand. Personally, I think this is something we should find ways to address in a meaningful way. As we know from Brandolini's law, debunking something takes an order of magnitude more energy than the original wrong info, to begin with. Problematic is when you deal with not that obvious misinformation, but half-truths. Then you have to carefully dissect right from wrong. Often small differences are not appreciated and are finally lost in communications. I think the initial seeds of doubt then evolved into a terrible discussion culture on Twitter, which still lasts, where it is very difficult to impossible to have a "discussion". It often feels more like "I talk at you" point now. I hope

something that will change in future or on other platforms.

Not sure whether I really think about the rewarding part too much - the past almost 3 years are kind of a blur. I think I always go in with very low expectations - if the information is helpful to some, great. Personally, I would say that having connected with many great new people, public or professional, was and is the best part. I think this is also something that will last beyond the pandemic and something I can take forward from here.



Prof. Beate Sodeik,
Hannover Medical
School

QUESTIONS:

1. Was there a specific aspect of the pandemic that you found inclined to communicate about? How/When did you realize your inclination to communicate on this specific aspect?

A. No, there was no aspect that I found inclined to focus on. One memorable moment was the question of a dancing friend, whether I really believed that this coronavirus and viruses at all existed. I told him what I do for a living, and invited him to the lab to show him a plaque assay. Eye opening for both of us, as it taught us the distance between our areas of expertise, but also how we could overcome this with a high motivation for learning from both. Surely, the pandemic increased my communication on virology, cell biology, biochemistry, and on how science works, both with real people and on social media.

2. What were your communication platforms (eg. via Twitter, Podcasts, Newspapers, etc)? Was this a conscious choice? If yes, what was your line-of-thoughts in choosing these platforms?

A. My task as GfV board member was to transform our public outreach from short News & Views articles that had mainly circulated among our members to a wider audience on social media. Towards this, I took care of the GfV Facebook account from February 2015 until its closing in December 2020, and of the GfV Twitter account from November 2020 until September

2022.

We want to increase the visibility of the excellent virology research that takes place in the DACH countries (Deutschland, Österreich, Schweiz), the visibility of emerging and established DACH virologist, and the visibility of informative science communication on virology. Moreover, these activities help to better match inquiries from journalists to a more diverse number of expert virologist of the DACH countries than we had early in this century. Our aim is to advertise longer articles and interviews of non-scientific media, popular threads, videos or cartoons explaining any aspect of virology science. I hope that these activities will make it easier for younger scientist to reach out and contact more seasoned and established members of the GfV; possibly via you at the jGfV as the bridge over potentially troubling waters.

Personally, I joined Twitter in June 2018 to “Try to devalue competition and to foster collaboration, reasoning and fairness in science, politics and life”. My aims are all of the above, and to promote the work of my team on herpesviruses that cause a large health burden and for

which few vaccines and few antiviral drugs are available.

3. What were the (a) challenging and (b) rewarding aspects of this experience?

A. The amount of public hate, abuse, aggression, offence, insult, narcissism, and ridicule; particularly from anonymous, but also real-name accounts still intimidates me. However, the rewarding aspects predominate. I like the direct connection to own words, sophisticated aphorisms, discussion of studies or papers, and the chance to ask experts directly. My scientific pedigree is in cell biology and biochemistry with branching into virology, but through many social media contacts, whether started in real life or still exclusively online, I am learning so much in my as well as in neighboring fields.



Dr. Marco Binder,
German Cancer
Research Center,
Heidelberg

QUESTIONS:

1. Was there a specific aspect of the pandemic that you found inclined to communicate about? How/When did you realize your inclination to communicate on this specific aspect?

A. Funnily, it was just a few months before the pandemic that I was persuaded to join Twitter by a Master's student of mine– hat tip to Bianca ;-). It was the very same student, who, in January 2020, urged me to “say something” about the novel coronavirus on Twitter– “you’re a virologist after all!”. After initial reluctance (I may be a virologist, but clearly no coronavirologist!) I started explaining general concepts like the exponential growth behavior in spreading of infectious diseases. That really attracted a lot of attention and I realized that in such exceptional times, people indeed eagerly absorbed all the information they could get, as there was this general feeling that virology all of a sudden had a tangible relevance for everybody’s life.

2. What were your communication platforms (eg. via Twitter, Podcasts, Newspapers, etc)? Was this a conscious choice? If yes, what was your line-of-thoughts in choosing these platforms?

A. As stated above, my starting point was Twitter– this platform has the magic potential to directly speak to general public, in principle to the whole world (not if you tweet in German, of course).

Obviously, even on this platform, you can speak as much (and as eloquent) as you like, but you'll ever only reach the ones who listen. The pandemic was the catalyst that "ignited" this whole science communication thing for me personally— suddenly, people were listening, starting to follow my account, asking questions and engaging in discussions. Amazingly, I realized that even with the most sceptic and oftentimes even aggressive commentators an (eventually) productive discussion was possible, if they were approached cautiously and at eye level. This experience— one that I did not share with too many colleagues, honestly— was my personal fuel to keep up the time-consuming efforts communicating even complex or controversial topics on Twitter. In the following, more and more journalists started to follow my work on Twitter and this is how I was increasingly often approached by magazines, newspapers, radio and TV stations. With those requests, I was very reluctant, as I knew I had no experience, let alone any training in dealing with the media. Only after my employer, the DKFZ, thankfully offered me professional media coaching, I was confident enough to

also accept requests by TV and radio stations. Throughout my first year of public communication, I stayed in close contact with our DKFZ media office, who offered my frank and open feedback and helped me a lot in that regard (thank you, Dr. Kohlstädt!). So, to answer your question: yes, my choice of platforms was actually very conscious all along.

3. What were the (a) challenging and (b) rewarding aspects of this experience?

A. The challenging part of public communication in times of the pandemic very clearly was the very aggressive, often offensive tone of sceptics (here I include people with a healthy sense of criticism along with all shades of gray up to full-blown conspiracy believers). As I said above— and this clearly qualifies as one of the most rewarding experiences— I realized many of them were still willing to discuss politely, once their initial anger was gone. Unfortunately, this did not hold true for every single one of them, and particularly as the pandemic lasted longer and longer, quite a number of those sceptics got increasingly more radical and unreachable.

In those cases, when an attack, accusation, insult, ... really hit me, the single biggest challenge for me was to read and re-read my own reply after typing and simply press the "delete" button. Like that, I think I largely managed to remain objective and not get personal, which in return (possibly in addition to my irrelevance in the larger context) led to the fact, that I never really got threatened or anything the like. And of course, all of this was counterbalanced by many, many rewarding situations when old (and almost forgotten) friends or even complete strangers approached me thanking for some well-done explainer or a thoughtful comment in the news.



Foto: HZI

Prof. Melanie
Brinkmann, Technische
Universität
Braunschweig

QUESTIONS:

1. Was there a specific aspect of the pandemic that you found inclined to communicate about? How/When did you realize your inclination to communicate on this specific aspect?

A. In the beginning I communicated because the knowledge about virology and hygiene measures in the public was low and there was a strong need to explain what was going on and how people could protect themselves (e.g. transmission via aerosols, risk of infection higher inside than outside, usefulness of masks). A bit later, I communicated when I thought that decisions may go in the wrong direction – for example in the summer 2020 when many people thought that we will not be hit by another wave or suggested to immunize our society by infection instead of vaccination. Or in autumn 2020 when politicians first wanted to see what happens instead of acting proactively. Another example is January 2021 when the vaccine roll-out just started, but voices became very loud to open up before the elderly population could have been vaccinated. So, I felt a strong responsibility to communicate until we had the vaccines rolled out, a substantial part of our society vaccinated and when we saw the number of new cases and hospitalisations/deaths diverge. After that I felt that my voice was not needed anymore – but I was also quite exhausted I must admit.

2. What were your communication platforms (eg. via Twitter, Podcasts, Newspapers, etc)? Was this a conscious choice? If yes, what was your line-of-thoughts in choosing these platforms?

A. *No conscious choice in the beginning – I was approached by many different media outlets (TV, radio, podcast) and tried to answer as much as possible. It was a steep learning curve! In the beginning, I thought that talk shows were useful because science was heard there and many people indeed watch them – later, when everything became more political and less science-oriented, I did not see them as a useful format anymore. I really appreciated podcasts and newspapers – I had more room there to explain complex contexts. I did not enjoy short short TV clips that much – I had to invest a lot of time, but the impact was rather low. Although I must admit that my little role in the Jan Böhmermann show Magazin Royale was my personal highlight because I developed the text together with his team and got to know Jan – that was fun (laughing).*

I have a split view on Twitter – we shared great science there and I connected with many wonderful

people – but the hate I and many other people were confronted with on this platform surprised and stunned me.

3. What were the (a) challenging and (b) rewarding aspects of this experience?

A. *Definitely both – challenging to find the right words to explain science in a way that people can understand and accept it - and trust us. Most challenging the hate speech. Rewarding: encouraging words from colleagues, many thankful emails and letters.*



Foto: JLU / Rolf K. Wegst

Prof. Dr. Friedemann
Weber, Institute of
Virology, University
Gießen

QUESTIONS:

1. Was there a specific aspect of the pandemic that you found inclined to communicate about? How/When did you realize your inclination to communicate on this specific aspect?

A. Like many of us, I had been approached by journalists in early 2020 to comment about the pandemic. So it was not really a specific aspect that got me into pandemic communications, but rather all sorts of questions the public had back then. Over time, however, Christian Drosten, who is an outstanding expert on Coronaviruses, came more and more under crossfire from people who thought they knew better. And of course the antivaxxers also raised their voices. I have tried to contribute resolving the confusions ensuing these disinformations, and this is indeed an aspect I find especially important with respect to pandemic communication.

2. What were your communication platforms (eg. via Twitter, Podcasts, Newspapers, etc)? Was this a conscious choice? If yes, what was your line-of-thoughts in choosing these platforms?

A. In the beginning it was mostly print and radio/TV stations. Then came websites of News Outlets and fact checkers, and I also did online vaccine Q&As that were organized by the Focus magazine or by care home managers. As said above, this was not a conscious selection of mine.

From a certain point on, however, I used my Twitter account to more proactively take part in the discussions. The traditional media I interacted with (not meaning the less reputable ones that I happily ignored) are important to reach a broad and interested audience. Twitter is good for rapid outreach and information, but represents only a subset of the real world. The downside of Twitter communication is of course that its unmoderated and can include personal attacks. Quality-wise it seems to get worse just now.

3. What were the (a) challenging and (b) rewarding aspects of this experience?

A. (a) Spending time with pandemic communication means neglecting family and research. That unsolvable conflict between a responsibility and the drive to do cool and relevant science was very challenging. (b) I got feedback from several people that they changed their minds and got vaccinated after they heard or read what I was saying. This is certainly rewarding and shows that I it was not a waste of time.

We cordially thank all our interviewees for sharing their personal experiences!

The DGfI Young Immunologists

The Young Immunologists of the DGfI (German Society for Immunology) is an association for young scientists working in the field of immunology. Besides active participation in the DGfI interest groups, where members can deepen their knowledge and expand their network within a wide range of immunology topics, the Young Immunologists offers their own social activities, networking platforms and career planning events for their members, from students to young group leaders and early-career scientists.

The main goal of the DGfI-YI is to support young scientists in their scientific career development and enable networking opportunities, but also to support members outside these scientific aspects, and topics like diversity, equality and mental health in science are prioritized. Monthly webinars with various speakers and *Day of Immunology* activities are part of the regular Young Immunologists undertakings.

New members are always welcome!

Keep updated and get in touch via the DGfI-YI social media platforms:



[@YI_dgfi](https://twitter.com/YI_dgfi)



youngimmunologists@dgfi.org



www.dgfi.org/young-immunologists



linkedin.com/company/dgfi-yi

Job posts & Advertisements

In this section, we will post any job vacancies or workshops / conferences. If you are aware of any advertisements, please email to jGfV@G-f-V.org or post them on SLACK.

Conferences / Workshops / Seminars

[22 January – 27 January 2023](#)

2023 Physical Virology Conference GRC
Viruses at Multiple Levels of Complexity
Luca, Italy

<https://www.grc.org/physical-virology-conference/2023/>

[25 January 2023 \(virtual; 5:00 pm\)](#)

jGfV virology lecture series:

Poxviruses – from a molecular to a clinical point of views by

Prof. Dr. Asisa Volz & Prof. Dr. Andreas Nitsche

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUoceCtqzgsG9bfY5t9Uv6vhtn-PsBp-yvM>

[26 January – 27 January 2023](#)

LCI Symposium 2023 – Compartments of Infection
Hamburg, Germany

www.lc-infection.de

[15 February – 17 February 2023](#)

21st International AEK Cancer Congress “Towards New Cancer Therapies: Mechanisms and Molecules”

Kassel, Germany

<https://www.aek-congress.org/>

19 February – 22 February 2023

Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI)
Seattle, Washington

<https://www.croiconference.org/>

28 March – 31 March 2023

Annual Meeting of the Society of Virology (GfV)

Ulm, Germany

<https://virology-meeting.de/>

21 April – 22 April 2023

Symposium on HIV Immunology, Vaccine, and Cure Research

Essen Germany

<https://g-f-v.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2023-HIV-Workshop-Flyer.pdf>

04 May – 07 May 2023

8th European Congress of Virology
Gdańsk, Poland

<https://www.eusv-congress.eu/index.php?id=1930>

05 May – 06 May 2023

16st Workshop “Clinical Virological Research”

Würzburg, Germany

<https://clinviro.g-f-v.org/registration-abstracts/>

11 May – 13 May 2023

31. Frühjahrstagung des Berufsverbandes der Ärzte für Mikrobiologie, Virologie und Infektionsepidemiologie (BÄMI)
Göttingen, Germany

<https://www.baemi.de/?page=Veranstaltung>

22 May – 27 May 2023

48th annual meeting on Retroviruses
Cold Spring Harbor, NY, USA

<https://meetings.cshl.edu/meetings.aspx?meet=RETRO&year=23>

31 May – 02 June 2023 (on-site and digital)

Novel Concepts in Innate Immunity
Tübingen, Germany

<https://innate-immunity-conference.de/>

19 June – 23 June 2023

25th International KSHV Conference
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

<https://ksvirus.org/>

10 September – 13 September 2023

Annual Conference 2023 of the Association for General and Applied Microbiology (VAAM)
Göttingen, Germany

<https://www.vaam-kongress.de/>

23 September – 26 September 2023
10th European Meeting on Viral
Zoonoses
St. Raphaël, France
<https://escv.eu/portfolio-posts/10th-european-meeting-on-viral-zoonoses/>

Open positions

PhD Position
Research Group Systems
Arbovirology headed by Dr. Pietro
Scaturro
Leibniz Institute of Virology (LIV),
Hamburg, Germany
[https://g-f-v.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022 -
Open-Position PhD-
PostDoc_Scaturro.pdf](https://g-f-v.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022_Open-Position_PhD-PostDoc_Scaturro.pdf)

PhD Position
Research group “Cellular Virology”
Faculty of Medicine of the Rheinische
Friedrich Wilhelms-University Bonn,
Germany
<https://karriereamukb.de/offer/phd-student-position-in-infection-b/30a98636-c62e-467b-b382-827103747457>

PhD Position
Center for Infection Biology (ZIB),
PhD Programs “Infection Biology”

and “Dynamics of Host Pathogen
Interactions (DEWIN)”
Hannover Medical School (MHH),
Hannover, Germany
<https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/zib>

PhD Position
Lab of Prof. Dr. Niels Lemmermann
University Hospital Bonn
[https://g-f-
v.org/job/universitaetsklinikum-
bonn-institute-for-virology-bonn-42-
phd-position-m-f-d-part-time-
position-65/](https://g-f-v.org/job/universitaetsklinikum-bonn-institute-for-virology-bonn-42-phd-position-m-f-d-part-time-position-65/)

Scientist Position
Core Manager for Bioinformatics
Robert Koch Institute (RKI), Berlin,
Germany
[https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Serv
ice/Stellen/Angebote/2022/170_22.h
tml](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Service/Stellen/Angebote/2022/170_22.html)

Postdoctoral and PhD Position
Lab of Prof. Dr. Lars Dölken
Institute for Virology and
Immunobiology, University Hospital of
Würzburg, Germany
[https://www.graduateschools.uni-
wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/43030100/2
022/Stellenausschreibung Doelken
HSV-1_2022-10.pdf](https://www.graduateschools.uni-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/43030100/2022/Stellenausschreibung_Doelken_HSV-1_2022-10.pdf)

Postdoctoral Position

Group leader “Genetics, Microbiology, Virology and Immunology”
Frauenhofer Institute for Translational Medicine and Pharmacology (ITMP), Frankfurt, Germany

<https://jobs.fraunhofer.de/job/M%C3%BCnchen-Gruppenleitung-%28mwd%29-Genetik%2C-Mikrobiologie%2C-Virologie-und-Immunologie-80799/864373701/>

Postdoctoral Position

Epidemiologist / Biostatistician in the Laboratory Group Fusco (Control of Poverty Related and Neglected Tropical Diseases - PRNTD)
Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM), Hamburg, Germany

<https://jobs.bnitm.de/Epidemiologist-Biostatistician-mfd-eng-j260.html>

Postdoctoral Position

Working Group “B cell immunology”
Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI), Greifswald-Insel Riems, Germany
<https://www.fli.de/de/karriere/stellenausschreibungen/einzelansicht/wissenschaftliche-mitarbeiterin-wissenschaftlicher-mitarbeiter-m-w-d-im-institut-fuer-immunologie-1/>

Postdoctoral Position

Teamlead Viroinformatics
Robert Koch Institute (RKI), Berlin, Germany

https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Service/StellenAngebote/2022/169_22.html

Postdoctoral Position

HIV Molecular Virology and Bioinformatics (Lab of Dr. Guinevere Q. Lee)

Department of Medicine Division of Infectious Diseases at Weill Cornell Medicine, Manhattan, NY, USA

<https://postdocs.weill.cornell.edu/opportunities/postdoctoral-positions/postdoctoral-position-hiv-molecular-virology-and-bioinformatics>

Postdoctoral Position

Lab of Prof. Dr. Sandra Ciesek
Institute for Medical Virology, University Hospital Frankfurt

<https://kgu-karriere.softgarden.io/job/26099392/Postdoctoral-Researcher-%E2%80%93-Institute-of-Medical-Virology?jobDbPVID=65420520&l=de>

Postdoctoral Position

Lab of Prof. Dr. Gesine Hansen,
Hannover Medical School
<https://g-f-v.org/job/hannover-medical-school-helmholtz-center-for-infectious-diseases-twincore-frauenhofer-institute-hannover-30-postdoctoral-position-to-investigate-mechanisms-of-respiratory-infections/>

Scientific editor in the EMBO

Molecular Medicine team
<https://www.embl.org/jobs/position/EMBO00131>

Funding / Awards

DZIF PhD Award

Application deadline: 10 February 2023

<https://g-f-v.org/forschungspreise/>

Best “Paper of the Season” award for early career virologists - by the young Society for Virology Germany (jGfV)

Application deadline: 01 March 2023

<https://g-f-v.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/jGfV-awards-and-scholarships.pdf>

Emmy Noether Program (DFG)

https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/programme/einzelfoerderung/emmy_noether/

Postdoctoral Award of the Robert Koch Foundation

Deadline for nomination: 01 March 2023

<https://g-f-v.org/forschungspreise/>

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-msca-2022-pf-01-01>

Useful Webpages

Graduate Student Funding
Opportunities – compiled by the
Johns Hopkins University
<https://research.jhu.edu/rdt/funding-opportunities/graduate/>

<https://research.jhu.edu/rdt/funding-opportunities/graduate/>

<https://www.nature.com/naturecareers/jobs/search?text=virology&location>

<https://careers.cell.com/searchjobs/?Keywords=virology&radialtown=&LocationId=&RadialLocation=20>

<https://www.jobvector.de/stellensuche/?keyword=virologie&sort=score&pn=1>

<https://www.dfg.de/>

<https://g-f-v.org/>

<https://fems-microbiology.org/>

Announcements

❖ If you are interested in joining the jGfV board, please send us your application by 28th of February (page 3).

❖ Don't forget to register for our next jGfV virology lecture series:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUoceCtqzgsG9bfY5t9Uv6vhtn-PsBp-yvM>

❖ Apply for ViReady (page 9) and our science slam competition (page 6) at the annual meeting of the Society for Virology

❖ Check out the homepages of [ACHIEVE](#), [Immunobiology of viral infections](#), [Cell biology of viral infections](#), [Clinical Virology](#), [One Health and zoonotic viruses](#), [Viral vectors and gene therapy](#) and [Young PI virology faculty](#) for updates

WE WISH YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A GREAT & SUCCESSFUL YEAR 2023!



IMPRESSUM

Newsletter team:

Sriram Kumar, Philipp Osterman, Daniel Sauter, Hanna-Mari Baldauf, Philipp Steininger

Correspondence:

jGfV@G-f-V.org

Design:

Ramya Nair

