
PRESS RELEASE

2023 WSAVA Michael J Day Scholar Announced

Awardee to investigate canine distemper virus maternal antibody transfer in dogs

German veterinary student Lotta Truyen has been announced as the WSAVA 2023 Michael J Day Scholar.

Ms Truyen, a student at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Hannover, Germany, will receive a grant of US\$15,000 to support her research, which aims to gain a better understanding of how canine distemper virus (CDV)-specific maternal antibodies are transmitted from mothers to puppies in order to inform future CDV vaccine strategies. She will carry out her research between February and April 2024 at the Caddy Lab at Cornell University, New York. The Caddy Lab is developing a panel of canine-specific functional antibody assays that can be used to better understand antibody activity.

CDV can cause severe disease in dogs and vaccination is advised by international veterinary guidelines. Ms Truyen will study antibodies extracted from colostrum and cord blood and compare them, in both function and structure, with those detected in their mother's blood.

Commenting on the award of the Scholarship, Dr Mary Marcondes, Chair of the WSAVA Vaccination Guidelines Group, said: "Among the many high-quality applications we received in this second year of the WSAVA Michael J Day Scholarship, Ms Truyen's project stood out and we look forward to reviewing the outcomes of her study. It will undoubtedly have a positive impact on our understanding of maternal antibody transfer."

The WSAVA Michael J Day Scholarship provides financial assistance to enable the selected

Scholar to carry out research into an aspect of small companion animal infectious disease, clinical vaccinology or immunology. It was created to recognize Emeritus Professor Michael Day's contribution to vaccinology and immunology in companion animals in his role as Chair of the [WSAVA's Vaccination Guidelines Group](#) from 2009 until March 2020. The Scholarship is generously supported by [MSD Animal Health](#).

It is expected that clinically applicable results from the study will become available from this project towards the end of 2024.

Lotta Truyen said: "I feel honored to have been selected and am looking forward to working with Sarah Caddy at the Baker Institute at Cornell University on maternal antibodies. I am also excited to be able to attend WSAVA World Congress 2024, where I will present my results. Thank you, WSAVA, and thank you, MSD, for creating this wonderful opportunity."

"MSD Animal Health believes that the next generation of veterinarians will be instrumental in impacting the way we prevent, treat and manage companion animal infectious diseases," said David Sutton global technical director, Companion Animal Vaccines, MSD Animal Health. "Although we've known about the basic role of maternal antibody in dogs for years, many important details still remain to be investigated. A deeper knowledge and understanding of canine distemper maternal antibody transfer and function will help establish improved vaccine strategies in the future, which is why we're proud to support Ms Truyen's research in honor of Michael J Day."

Full details and guidance on the Scholarship application process for 2024 will be available soon on the [WSAVA website](#).

Note to editors:

About the WSAVA

The WSAVA represents more than 200,000 veterinarians worldwide through its 116 member associations and works to enhance standards of clinical care for companion animals. Its core activities include the development of WSAVA Global Guidelines in key areas of veterinary practice, including pain management, nutrition and vaccination, together with lobbying on important issues affecting companion animal care worldwide.

About MSD Animal Health

At MSD, known as Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., USA in the United States and Canada, we are unified around our purpose: We use the power of leading-edge science to save and improve lives around the world. For more than a century, we've been at the forefront of research, bringing forward medicines, vaccines and innovative health solutions for the world's most challenging diseases. MSD Animal Health, a division of Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., USA, is the global animal health business of MSD.

Through its commitment to The *Science of Healthier Animals*®, MSD Animal Health offers veterinarians, farmers, producers, pet owners and governments one of the widest ranges of veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines and health management solutions and services as well as an extensive suite of connected technology that includes identification, traceability and monitoring products.

MSD Animal Health is dedicated to preserving and improving the health, well-being and performance of animals and the people who care for them. It invests extensively in dynamic and comprehensive R&D resources and a modern, global supply chain. MSD Animal Health is present in more than 50 countries, while its products are available in some 150 markets. For more information, visit www.msd-animal-health.com and connect with us on LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter).

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