

## **Press Release – Background Report**

### **MEDICA LABMED FORUM: Trends, topics and innovations in laboratory medicine – examined in detail and discussed by experts**

#### **Important impetus for almost all medical disciplines**

Laboratory medicine forms a bridge between clinical practice, research and patient care. This makes it a key driver for a progressive healthcare system. As a result, the MEDICA LABMED FORUM has developed in recent years into a particularly noteworthy scientific programme element of MEDICA in Düsseldorf, the world's leading trade fair for the healthcare industry and medical technology. Under the direction of Prof. Dr. Stefan Holdenrieder, German Heart Centre (Technical University of Munich), the forum will once again offer a varied agenda on all days of MEDICA 2025 from 17 to 20 November in the middle of the exhibition area for laboratory equipment and diagnostics in Hall 1. Thanks to the central role that blood tests and other laboratory medical procedures play in medicine, the high-calibre stage programme will provide in-depth knowledge transfer, in-depth discussions and thus impulses relevant to almost all specialist disciplines.

#### **Digitalisation, AI and automation take centre stage**

While the coronavirus pandemic and its virological, diagnostic and clinical aspects were the focus of attention in 2021 and 2022, the focus has shifted towards digitalisation, artificial intelligence and automation since 2023. Large language models and artificially intelligent robots not only fascinate visionaries and techies – they also solve very specific everyday problems that arise from a shortage of skilled workers and increasing demands on medical laboratories. In this context, there are regular reports on current legal challenges for clinics and industry – for example, through the In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation (IVDR).



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U78, U79: Messe Ost/Stockumer Kirchstr.  
Bus 722: Messe-Center/Verwaltung



Regardless of current trends, the MEDICA LABMED FORUM has always paid particular attention to cardiological and oncological diseases as the leading causes of death in the Western world, flanked since 2024 by the latest findings from research into ageing and longevity.

### Key topics & highlights 2025

This year's key topics and highlights on the individual days of the event are:

- Monday, 17 November: Skills shortage & IVDR led by Prof. Dr Thomas Streichert (University of Cologne)
- Tuesday, 18 November: Cardiogenetics & oncology led by Prof. Dr. Stefan Holdenrieder (Technical University of Munich)
- Wednesday, 19 November: Young scientists, AI & tele-lab care led by PD Dr. Verena Haselmann (University of Mannheim)
- Thursday, 20 November: Healthy ageing and longevity led by Dr Kai Prager and Dr Peter Quick (VDGH Berlin)



The morning sessions of the forum begin at 10:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m. After a lunch break with selected industry presentations, the afternoon sessions continue from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. – on Thursday, the schedule will be slightly different due to the shortened exhibition hours (10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.).

### Day 1: Skilled labour shortage and in vitro regulation

According to recent surveys of medical laboratories, staff shortages are currently the biggest challenge to maintaining regular laboratory operations. Prof. Thomas Streichert, chair of the Monday session, explains: 'The ongoing shortage of qualified specialists is making it increasingly difficult for hospital laboratories to ensure fast, high-quality results in the face of rising sample numbers and increasingly complex diagnostics.' On the forum stage, experts from the fields of practice, management and training will discuss:

- Causes and current developments in staff shortages

- Innovative approaches to employee recruitment and retention
- Digitalisation and automation as a relief in everyday life

During the session, best practices will be presented for laboratories that are ready to break new ground for a secure future.

The afternoon session will focus on the latest developments in the field of In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation (IVDR), a European Union regulation governing the approval, marketing and monitoring of tests for laboratory examinations on humans. Among other things, the panel will address new developments in cybersecurity and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and will deal with consumer protection in direct-to-consumer testing (DTCT), a relatively new form of direct marketing of laboratory tests via the internet and pharmacies without medical supervision.

## **Day 2: Cardiology and oncology**

The Tuesday session will be chaired by Prof. Stefan Holdenrieder, who is also the organiser of the overall scientific programme. Traditionally, on the second day of the exhibition, he presents current developments in laboratory medicine for the two disease complexes that determine mortality in the Western world: cardiovascular disease and cancer.

This year, he will focus on the emerging field of cardiogenetics in the morning session. 'At the German Heart Centre at the Technical University of Munich, we not only record and examine mono- and polygenic risk factors that promote the development of coronary heart disease in our young patients with congenital heart defects and cardiomyopathies, but also increasingly in adults,' says Holdenrieder. The aim here is to intervene in good time to prevent serious long-term damage. Two renowned experts from his institute, Prof. Dr. Cordula Wolf and PD Dr. Teresa Trenkwalder, will discuss these topics with Prof. Eric Schulze-Bahr, Director of the Institute for Genetics of Heart Diseases (IfGH) at Münster University Hospital.

### **Early detection of cancer from blood**

In oncological diagnostics, Prof. Holdenrieder addresses the ‘hot topic’ of ‘multi-cancer early detection’ (MCED). This involves highly sensitive and highly parallelised techniques that enable the early detection of cancer from blood. The basis for this are DNA molecules that are released from cancer cells into the circulation – known as cell-free or cfDNA – and which, due to certain biochemical characteristics such as methylation and fragment length patterns, can provide information about which tumours they originate from, even before these become clinically or radiologically detectable. Advanced bioinformatic techniques are required to evaluate the flood of data generated in this process.

### **Day 3: Young Scientists Day**

The ‘Young Scientists Day’ has also become a firm tradition, with PD Dr Verena Haselmann inviting young scientists to present their research results and represent the interests of the next generation of laboratory medicine professionals. This year's main topics are artificial intelligence in laboratory medicine in the morning and ‘Tele-Lab Care’ in the afternoon. Both sessions focus on the increasing digitalisation of laboratory medical patient care and collaboration with other diagnostic areas, such as imaging in the context of integrated diagnostics or continuous self-monitoring with wearables. The spectrum of presentations ranges from the support of integrated diagnostics through large language models to special AI applications in haematological oncology and paediatrics to regulatory aspects of telemedical patient care via digital platforms.



### **Day 4: Healthy ageing and longevity**

To conclude this year's MEDICA LABMED FORUM, Dr Kai Prager (DiaSys Diagnostic Systems GmbH) and Dr Peter Quick from the Association of the Diagnostics Industry (VDGH) will continue the exciting discussion on healthy ageing and new approaches to prolonging human



life, which they launched with great success in 2024. Anti-ageing is a controversial topic in medicine because the boundaries between serious science and dubious commercial promises are blurred.

The two chairmen have set themselves the task of strengthening confidence in this branch of research with scientifically sound contributions. Dr Kai Prager comments: 'This year, we are focusing specifically on the question of how cellular processes and epigenetic changes influence our ageing and what role stem cells play in this.' Another focus is the prevention of dementia and the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases through personalised diagnostics and therapy.

Direct link with information about the MEDICA LABMED FORUM:  
<https://www.medica-tradefair.com/mlf2>.

All information about MEDICA 2025 is available online at:  
<https://www.medica-tradefair.com>.

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