

## PRESS RELEASE

### **First Science Slam event held at the German National Library of Medicine**

Library celebrates 40th anniversary with audience of 200

**Cologne, 3 July 2013 – 40 years promoting the scientific achievements of the future: That was the motto of the first ever Science Slam held at the German National Library of Medicine (ZB MED) in Cologne on 2 July 2013. Five "slammers" presented their research findings to an enthusiastic audience of some 200 people in the library foyer. The topics included renewable energies, highly-sweetened food products aimed at children, the placebo effect, reptiles in South America and instrumented implants. In the end, the first prize of an e-book reader went to the slammer Sebastian Lotzkat for his presentation on research into different species of reptiles and snakes in Panama, entitled "Who am I, and how many of me are there?!" The Science Slam was hosted by actor and anchorman Andreas L. Maier.**

"We wanted to offer people something special to mark our 40th anniversary – that's what gave us the idea of holding a Science Slam in our foyer," explains Ulrich Korwitz, the Director of the ZB MED. And the idea certainly paid off: An enthusiastic audience of some 200 people attended the Science Slam in the library foyer on the site of the University Hospital of Cologne, the first event of its kind to be held at the ZB MED. "We were keen to have scientists presenting research findings from our library's own key subject areas," Korwitz continues.

Five young scientists took to the stage during the course of the evening. First up was medical engineer Peter Westerhoff from Münster with a presentation on instrumented implants which, as he explained, have nothing whatsoever to do with music. Sebastian Lotzkat, who came second in the 2012 German Science Slam Championship, presented the results of his research into South American reptiles and snakes. The winner of the Science Slam in the Year of Science 2012, Oliver Adria, an electrical engineer from Cologne, took the opportunity to discuss the topic of renewable energies and the transition towards alternative energy, using lemmings to illustrate his point. Next up was Tim Gailus, a media expert from Berlin, who presented his research findings on the topic of advertising using online games for highly-sweetened children's foods. He began his presentation by mixing a sweetened drink for himself and drinking it on stage! The last slammer to take to the stage was the Hamburg-based psychologist Nathalie Wrobel, who presented her latest findings on the topic of the placebo effect. She explained how this works by asking us to imagine pain as an intruder in a well protected villa and comparing the brain to doormen.

There was a major emphasis on entertainment in all the presentations. The slammers had just 10 minutes to convince the audience of their merits and – just like in a Poetry Slam – the public got to vote for their favourite slammer at the end of the event.

First prize went to Sebastian Lotzkat for his presentation on research into different species of reptiles and snakes in Panama. The audience was won over by his enthusiasm for snakes, including the new species "Sibon noalamina" which he discovered. "Snakes are absolutely fascinating," said Lotzkat. "They wriggle their way through life without any legs while eating just about everything else that has legs regardless of how much bigger it is than them!" His enthusiastic presentation gained him an e-book reader.

"We're delighted that the Science Slam went so well," said Korwitz after the event was over. "We hope to get another opportunity to organise something similar in the future."

**Background information: The German National Library of Medicine (ZB MED)**

The ZB MED is an independent and non-partisan public institution. Since it was founded 40 years ago, it has developed into the world's largest specialist library covering the combined fields of medicine, health, nutrition, the environment, and agriculture. Alongside its traditional role in the field of library services, the ZB MED is also actively engaged in a number of projects aimed at developing, publishing and promoting electronic literature, primary data and research findings and facilitating access to these resources. The ZB MED's projects include the semantic search engines MEDPILOT and GREENPILOT. The Cologne and Bonn branches of the national library also promote free access to scientific literature ('Open Access') through initiatives such as the German Medical Science (gms) portal. As a member of the Leibniz Association, the ZB MED helps provide the information infrastructure required for scientific research. It plays a major part in maintaining Germany's status as a key player in the world of science and research.

Find out more at [www.zbmed.de](http://www.zbmed.de)

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