

**For the third time already, Austria's internationally renowned cancer researcher Professor Michael Gnant, MD, FACS, FEBS has been named as one of the worldwide "Highly Cited Researchers 2022". Frequently cited researchers have a great influence on the scientific community and study achievements. Thus, they make a significant contribution to new, far-reaching developments to improve therapeutic options. As a *Highly Cited Researcher* one ranks among the top one percent of all scientific researchers whose work can be found on the Web of Science™ (<https://clarivate.com>). In 2022, 6,938 scientists are listed. The publications in the *Cross Field* category, for which Dr. Gnant received his award, are characterized by their strong influence on several scientific disciplines. This year in Austria there are 25 *Cross Field* honorees, including only three within the field of clinical medicine.**

**Professor Gnant, why is research and its publication important and how do you think does it affect or influence the general public?**

A: Research determines our lives – whether we are aware of it or not. *Creating knowledge* plays a crucial role in all the advances that mankind is aspiring, this applies to everyday life, technology, the hopefully successful fight against climate change, and of course in medicine. Unfortunately, especially in Austria, the public awareness of the importance of research is quite modest – as recently indicated by the Eurobarometer surveys results. This is distressing, given that - in some fields of science - Austrian researchers are among the world pioneers, as the current list of *Highly Cited Researchers* shows.

**What value do you ascribe to interdisciplinary scientific discourse, especially in your field of research?**

A: Contemporary science needs interdisciplinary discourse. By the way, the same pertains to medical excellence in clinical care. Especially in oncology, and particularly in breast cancer research, through interdisciplinarity we have made significant progress by shaping the knowledge and innovations of individual in diagnosis and treatment involved disciplines to obtain common improvements in favor of those affected.

**What does it personally take, in order to achieve decisive success in research? Do you set yourself milestones?**

Successful research depends on diligence, creativity, and resilience. For instance, the ABCSG-16 study - one of our greatest joint research achievements, which has been highly recognized on a global level - lasted more than 20 years! And since innovation cannot directly be planned, it requires constant attention – always stay up to date, read a lot and most importantly of all: keep it up and don't lose courage! Institutionally, research advances are promoted through diversity, but also through reaching a crucial mass of smart people. Also, not only allow *out-of-the-box thinking*, but even encourage it!

**Which fundamental or most urgent problems do you see in terms of your field of research?**

In comparison with other countries, we still have an embarrassingly low research quota in Austria with respect to public funding, especially in fundamental basic research. However, clinical research as well is neglected by the public sector, lot of it is left to industry, which is of course also strongly influenced by commercial considerations when it comes to the choice of research topics. It definitively takes a national effort to really make Austria an "innovation leader" in considerably more scientific fields. As much as I'm delighted for the great Anton Zeillinger on his well-deserved Nobel Prize, I also see the apparent danger that politics settles back and rests on his laurels "since everything's fine anyway...". This also means that we need to keep an eye on academic careers, which must be sustainable, attractive, and characterized by academic freedom.

**On a final note, how does it feel to rank once again amongst the world's most cited research elite?**

Personally, of course, such an honor is a pleasant appreciation, which is also the reward for many years of hard work and invested spare time. However, what is way more important to me, is that the appreciation and success for a large group of Austrian enthusiasts is enunciated. Decades of collaboration come to fruition and for that I'm deeply grateful!