



The cover illustration shows a simplified model of an influenza virus. Influenza is still one of the most significant infectious diseases worldwide. According to the World Health Organization, it causes up to 500,000 deaths per year. The likelihood of a new influenza pandemic is the subject of this issue's cover story: see page 8 for the full article.

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FELLOWSHIPS The Board of Trustees of the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds includes six renowned scientists, the speaker of the Board of Managing Directors at the company Boehringer Ingelheim and, as a permanent guest, a representative of the German Research Foundation (DFG). Their expert judgment characterizes the work of our foundation. The trustees meet three times a year to decide on the allocation of fellowships. In July 2012, they met in Boston, USA, to discuss 49 applications selected from the 205 applications originally sent to the secretariat. The limited funding available meant that a number of excellent applications had to be turned down. In the end, 16 applications were approved and all 16 fellowships were taken up.

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RESULTS The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds does not intervene in the scientific work of its fellowship holders, who, together with their supervisors, decide whether new findings should make them alter their original aims. The extent to which intentions and results correspond at the end of the fellowship is demonstrated in the final report by the fellowship holders. Here we present a synopsis of their work and publications.

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THE FOUNDATION The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds (BIF) is a public foundation – an independent, non-profit institution for the exclusive and direct promotion of basic research in biomedicine. The foundation pays particular attention to fostering junior scientists. From the start it has provided its fellowship holders with more than just monthly bank transfers: seminars, events and personal support have nurtured the development of a worldwide network of current and former fellows.

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