
Zoom On: Boris Zernikow Wins 2015 Communicator Award



Dr. Boris Zernikow

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Boris Zernikow, medical scientist and paediatric and palliative medicine researcher, has been awarded the 2015 Communicator Award for his dedicated and public outreach work on pain, pain therapy and palliative care in children. He will be the sixteenth recipient of the Communicator Award.

Dr. Zernikow will receive 50,000 Euros for his work on 30 June at the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft's (DFG, German Research Foundation) annual meeting in Bochum. The award is considered to be one of the most important prizes for science communication in Germany and is usually awarded to scholars and scientists whose research is varied and original. He will also receive a hologram representing the Communicator Award. The hologram represents the significance of transparency in science and expresses the importance of looking at things 'in the right light'.

Dr. Zernikow is a pioneer of appropriate pain therapy and palliative care for children and adolescents in Germany. He studied medicine in Münster and at Harvard Medical School and became a consultant in paediatrics, specialising in paediatric oncology. He spent a period in clinical practice after which he established the Vodafone Foundation Institute for Paediatric Pain Therapy and Palliative Medicine. He is also the medical director, at Vestische Kinder- und Jugendklinik Datteln, a paediatric clinic of the private Witten/Herdecke University. He was also appointed by Witten/Herdecke University to the first chair for paediatric pain therapy and palliative care in Europe.

A core aspect of Dr. Zernikow's work has been to help people understand his clinical research and its results as well as highlight the need for special treatment and care for children with chronic and life-limiting illnesses. He is involved with the media and the general public and also communicates with specific groups such as healthy and sick children and their families and representatives of healthcare policy and the healthcare system. There are approximately 400,000 seriously and terminally ill children and adolescents in Germany and Dr. Zernikow aims to be an "ambassador" for their needs.

Some of his creative communication activities include an animated film called "Understanding Pain – And Coping with It", "Giving Pain the Red Card" and the websites of the German Paediatric Pain Centre and Kinderpalliativzentrum Datteln. Along with articles and interviews, Dr. Zernikow has been successful in bringing forward the issues of pain, pain therapy and palliative care for children and adolescents in Germany into the public eye.

Source: Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)

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