



## **Successful Kick-off of CoCA, a large new research programme on ADHD**

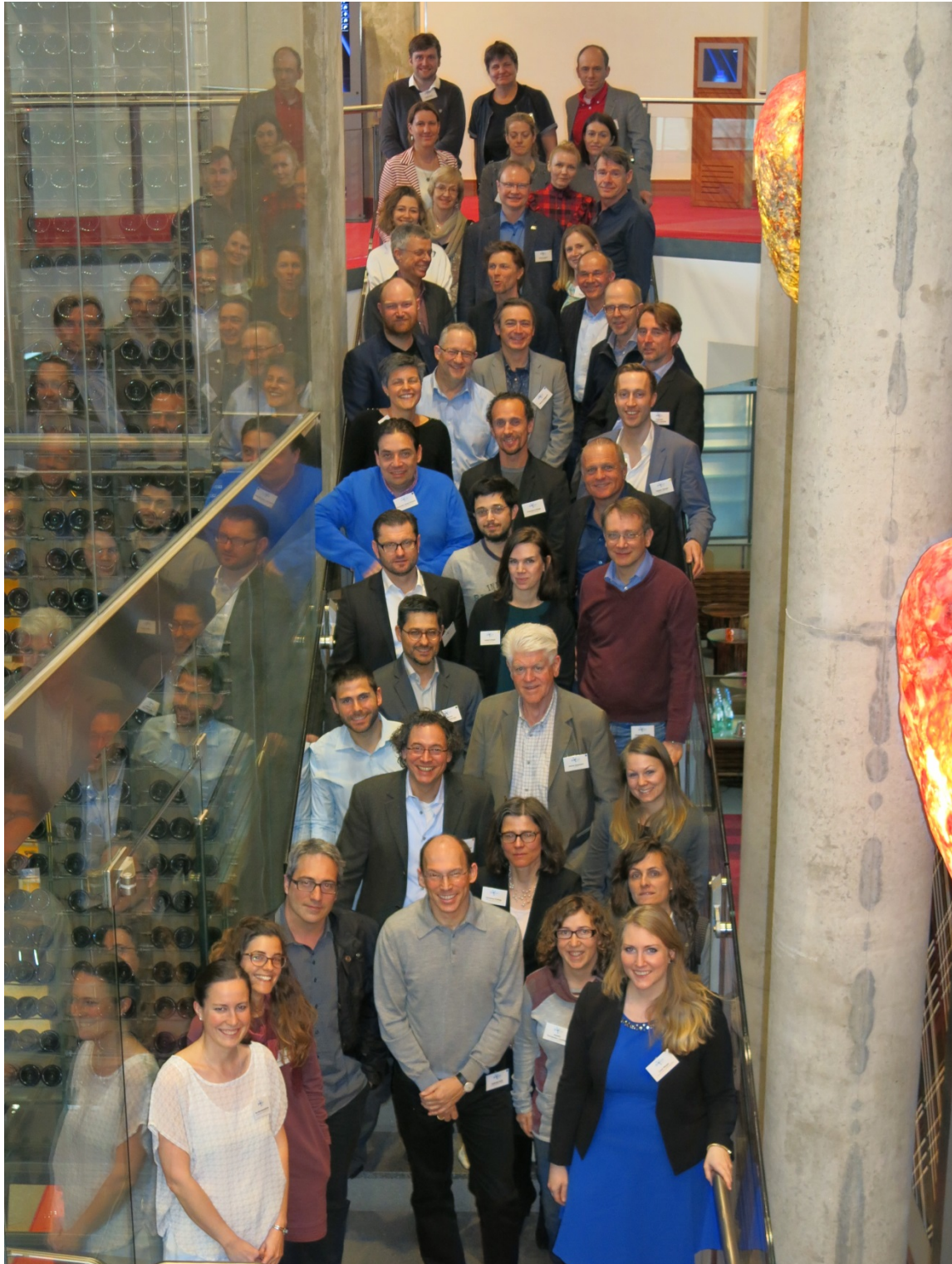
With an inspiring three-day meeting, the international research project 'Comorbid Conditions in ADHD' (CoCA) was successfully kicked-off in Frankfurt on March 1 to 3. The CoCA programme is a new EU-funded project on biological mechanisms shared by attention-deficit/hyperactivity (ADHD) and several of its most frequent psychiatric and somatic comorbidities, i.e. anxiety/depression, substance use disorders, and obesity.

In fierce competition, the CoCA project was selected for funding from over 300 submitted proposals, together with only six others. CoCA will receive 6 Mio Euro for research from the European Commission during the next 5 years. This funding will provide the 17 partners from 8 European countries and the US with the opportunity to investigate the role of dopamine neurotransmission and the circadian rhythm machinery (as well as additional relevant biological processes to be identified as part of CoCA) in the co-occurrence of the different disorders. In addition, they will perform randomized clinical trials for two non-pharmacological, inexpensive, and easy accessible interventions, i.e. physical exercise and bright light therapy, to study their potential to prevent ADHD comorbidity.

In stimulating and fruitful discussions, the 45 meeting delegates finalized plans for a total of 11 comprehensive and highly complementary work packages during the Kick-off meeting. Amongst the project partners are also a representative of the European patient support group ADHD-Europe, which will actively contribute to research and dissemination of CoCA and US-based and German leading experts, who form the Scientific and Ethics Advisory Board of CoCA.

More than 21 million people suffer from ADHD in the EU, with direct medical cost and loss due to decreased productivity adding up to over €70 billion per year. ADHD, being a childhood-onset disorder, forms the entry route into a (preventable) negative developmental trajectory later in life; importantly, more than 80% of adult ADHD patients suffer from a comorbid disorder. However, exact numbers of ADHD patients suffering from the comorbidities under study is not yet available. CoCA will provide such information, based on large epidemiological data sets, and – for the first time – will calculate the costs associated with such comorbidity. Through the research approaches taken in CoCA, we hope to raise awareness for ADHD, reduce the stigma associated with this disorder, and empower prevention and therapy approaches.

The CoCA programme is coordinated by Prof. Andreas Reif from the Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. Prof. Dr. Ulrich Ebner-Priemer from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is part of the scientific research programme ([http://www.sport.kit.edu/Personal\\_Prof\\_Dr\\_Ulrich\\_Ebner-Priemer.php](http://www.sport.kit.edu/Personal_Prof_Dr_Ulrich_Ebner-Priemer.php)).



CoCA consortium at the Kick-off meeting in Frankfurt, Germany (1-3 March 2016)

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**Notes for Editors:**

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