opnMe by Boehringer Ingelheim

Lymphatic dysfunction in chronic lung diseases

How would you propose to decipher the role of lymphatic dysfunction in chronic lung diseases, using relevant complex human in vitro models?

Submit your scientific proposal for a chance to be selected to conduct your proposed research plan as part of your PostDoc project at the Development facilities of Boehringer Ingelheim in Biberach, Germany, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies worldwide. This opportunity is open for submissions through March 10, 2026, 11:59 pm PST.

Boehringer Ingelheim

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What is the context of the opportunity that we are currently offering?

Shape the future of lung health – Postdoc Opportunity on Pulmonary Lymphatic Dysfunction

Lymphatic vessels are the unsung heroes of lung health—maintaining fluid balance and orchestrating immune responses. When they fail, the consequences ripple through chronic pulmonary diseases like pulmonary fibrosis (PF) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). We know they matter. What we don't know is how and why. That's where you come in.

The current scientific discussion evolves around the following topics:

- Spatial and Temporal Remodeling: How do microvascular lymphatic networks adapt during disease initiation, progression, damage resolution and what governs the timing and localization of these changes?
- Cellular Crosstalk: Which molecular mediators or physiological cues from the lymphatic microvasculature influence immune and structural cell behavior? (focus on epithelial, myeloid and stromal interactions)
- Immune and Fluid Balance: How do lymphatics fine-tune the equilibrium between immune tolerance and inflammation? How the optimal interstitial fluids? How the resolution of inflammation and edema?
- Phenotypic Signatures: What signals distinguish protective lymphatic adaptations from pathological ones? Do we understand lymphatic endotypes in lung diseases?
- Causality: Are lymphatic abnormalities drivers of disease or early bystander adaptations to a disturbed lung microenvironment?
- Disease Modeling and Biomarkers: Can we develop relevant complex *in vitro* models to study lymphatic dysfunction, and generate biomarkers to detect and quantify dysfunctional traits in lymphatic microvasculature?

Focus Area

Focus should be placed on **lymphatic microvascular dysfunction in PF and COPD endotypes**, aiming to uncover mechanistic insights and translational opportunities.

Special emphasis is on the **alveolar region** of the lung as the unit driving gas-exchange and thus lung function in patients. The proposal will need to include **complex human *in vitro* model** development to study the mechanisms proposed. As we do have access to fresh human lung tissue material, this proposal should propose isolation or generation strategies for the cells needed in case those aren't commercially available.

What potential solutions could be in scope?

The proposed human-derived model should enable the analysis of cellular crosstalk of lymphatic cells with epithelial, myeloid, and/or stromal cells, among others in PF and COPD

endotypes. As such, it should support the identification of relevant phenotypic signatures, disease mechanisms, and biomarkers.

In addition, the project proposal should address at least one of the following scientific aspects with special emphasis on the gas-exchange unit:

- Differences in lymphatic versus respiratory microvascular endothelial cell biology
- Spatial and temporal regulation of lymphatic microvasculature
- Functions in human health and disease (PF versus COPD)
- Causality of lymphatic defects for pathogenesis (PF versus COPD)

What potential solutions would be out of scope?

- Animal work
- Human clinical trials
- Pure in silico work
- Adaptive immunity
- Specific target proposals (we are looking for a broad and unbiased assessment of potential disease mechanisms)
- Proposals that use the lymphatic system as a route for drug delivery

What will be the reward for the winner?

As a winner of this call, you will have the unique opportunity to pursue your own submitted research project as a fully resourced PostDoc project in the Immunology and Respiratory team at Boehringer Ingelheim at the Discovery Research site in Biberach/Riss, Germany. You will obtain a position for up to 3 years* with Boehringer Ingelheim within a cross-functional, international team of world-class scientists working on retinal diseases. The grant would also allow you to carry out parts of your planned experiments at your current home institution. [*The offered position initially covers a duration of 24 months with an option for extension by another 12 months.]

You want to learn more about living in Biberach at the river Riss?

Find out more here

At Boehringer Ingelheim, you will have access to a fully equipped laboratory in a state-of-the-art research facility including access to all relevant tools and materials (e.g., human lung tissue, primary cell bank, organoid and MPS formats, small molecules, antibodies etc.) and technologies. Benefit from mentoring through our internal experts, have the chance to attend international conferences, and to publish your results in high-ranking journals. You will be part of the vibrant PostDoc community at Boehringer Ingelheim in Biberach with manifold opportunities for scientific, cross-functional exchanges for your personal development. You will have the opportunity to learn the process and challenges of drug discovery from the inside, including additional training and mentoring program.

In addition, benefit from the rich packages for employee benefit. Our most important asset in achieving our global vision is our people. We prioritize your growth, investing in our people through mentoring, coaching, skill-building, leadership development, and academic support. Our infrastructure promotes wellness with sports groups, health counseling, onsite medical services, and regular check-ups. Achieve work-life balance with flexible work hours, remote working, childcare support, counseling, and convenient amenities. We ensure financial health with employer loans, private insurances, access to discounts, and a company pension scheme. Benefit also from our excellent and healthy on-site catering and the opportunity to take away meals. We offer relocation support and interim accommodation to make joining us easy.

What are the requirements to participate in this call?

- PhD with a strong background in Molecular and Cell Biology.
- Hands-on *in vitro* and *ex vivo* experience in human disease modeling using primary cells, tissue slices or iPSCs. FACS experience is a must.
- Experience in generating multicellular models including media adaptations
- Displayed examples of creativity that led to out-of-the-box scientific ideas and results.
- Strong understanding of lymphatic biology and/or the pathways that drive the pathophysiology of lung diseases.
- Track record of independent research as exemplified through publications or patents.
- Very good oral communication and presentation skills as well as the ability to work in multidisciplinary teams in a matrix environment.
- Fluent language skills in English are mandatory, German language skills is a plus.
- Candidates with prior funding from other organizations will be preferred.

What information should be included in your answer submission?

Please use our PostDoc grant application template to provide a 4–5-page non-confidential proposal (available for download on the following site). Please complement with your CV, publication list, and recommendation letters.

If confidential data exists that would strengthen the proposal, please indicate that information is available to share under a Confidential Disclosure Agreement (CDA). If we find the non-confidential concept proposal sufficiently interesting, we will execute a CDA for confidential discussions.

What are the individual steps and timelines for the overall program?

Step 1	Please complete your application including a project proposal by March 10, 2026, 11:59 pm PST at the very latest. A full application package consists of your CV including references and a publication list. In addition, please submit the scientific project proposal based on our template (available for download from the following site). Please note that we will be unable to accept applications without a research proposal addressing our scientific question.
Step 2	We plan to finalize the review of all applications through March 2026.
Step 3	All final candidates will be invited for an opn2TALENTS interview week that will take place from March 25-31, 2026. Even as we plan to give enough time for the finalists to prepare their travel plans, we suggest that you block this time frame in your calendars already now. Please expect that you will be invited for only one day during this time frame. Depending on your location, please reserve more than one day for travel. All final candidates have the chance to present and discuss their research proposal at an internal meeting. Please prepare a PowerPoint version of your project proposal and be prepared for an in-depth scientific discussion of your ideas and approaches. Please also be prepared for additional interviews with members of the scientific team and our human resources department. Please address any questions you may have during this week as well.
Step 4	Beginning of April 2026, we plan to announce the final winner of the opn2TALENTS PostDoc grant.
Step 5	May 1, 2026, represents the earliest start date to work on your project at our Research and Development site in Biberach, Germany.

How to apply?

- Check the outline of the opn2TALENTS grant opportunity "Lymphatic dysfunction in chronic lung diseases" on opnMe.
- Alternatively, you may click the "Get Application Template" banner.
- Follow the instructions to upload your submission document (requires login or registration).
- The upload allows you to attach additional application files such as your CV, publication list, and references. Please note that the maximum file size is 15MB per file.
- You will be able to access your final submitted collaboration proposal in your personal dashboard and follow its review status.
- Please also visit the FAQ section on opnMe.com to learn more about our opn2TALENTS program.

What else is important to Boehringer Ingelheim?

- Our purpose is to transform lives for generations. Therefore, we developed three key principles for our PostDoc program which are determining our plans and actions: Drive cutting-edge science, new concepts and technologies; enrich Boehringer Ingelheim's innovation ecosystem with highly motivated, young fellows, who will help to build on science to develop new medicines; and train the next generation of leading scientists.
- Our campus community culture is great for sharing ideas and makes it easy to access technologies, meet experts, and approach leaders of all levels. There's a great spirit of freedom, fluidity, and fierce collaboration.
- Interactions are sound and informal. It's not particularly hierarchical, more team-based with a start-up attitude. We are always keen to help and speak up, open to positive change and new ideas that support our mission to improve lives.
- Our Speak-Up policy is an important part of our Code of Conduct. Only in this way we can continuously develop and improve as a company.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is an integral part of Boehringer Ingelheim's identity; a key element of our culture and contributes to our 'Sustainable Development – For Generations'.
- Our core values of empathy, respect, passion, and trust nurture a diverse, collaborative, open and inclusive environment which is key to innovation, value creation and sustainable growth. With the inclusion of various experiences, backgrounds, and characteristics, Boehringer Ingelheim creates an openness to different approaches, solutions, and perspectives, all contributing to create "Value through Innovation".