

Open PhD Position

“Aging at the interface of placental trophoblasts, NK cells and endogenous retroviruses”

The research group “Mechanisms of Innate Antiviral Immunity” (Prof. Dr. D. Sauter) at the University Hospital Tübingen is looking for a

PhD student (f/m/d)

to investigate the interplay of human endogenous retroviruses (HERVs), immune activation, cellular senescence, and aging in the context of pregnancy-associated disorders. The PhD candidate will primarily investigate how HERV-driven mechanisms contribute to pregnancy complications, in particular preeclampsia (PE). PE is associated with impaired placental development, dysregulated immune responses, and accelerated maternal and fetal tissue aging. Recent data suggest that senescence-associated secretory phenotype (SASP) factors and aberrant trophoblast–NK cell interactions impair syncytiotrophoblast formation and placental function. The PhD project will help to understand how dysregulated immune-developmental programs trigger immunosenescence and accelerated aging in placental cells. Starting date is the second half of 2026.

Ideal candidates will be excited to do fascinating science together with an international team of highly cooperative and competent lab members. They will be creative, curious, highly motivated, and have a strong background in cell biology and immunology. Research experience in the fields of retrovirology, transposable elements, women’s health or aging is a plus. Applicants can read, write and speak English fluently, have a strong ability to learn new techniques and to advance their scientific projects. We seek candidates with a strong interest in HERV biology and a desire to pursue a career in research.

Please send your application as a single pdf file to daniel.sauter@med.uni-tuebingen.de. Application deadline is July 15th 2026. Find out more about the research group via the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/zw3y2mhv>.

We offer remuneration in accordance with TV-L (collective wage agreement for the Public Service of the German Federal States) in addition to all the customary benefits granted to employees working in Public Services. Severely handicapped persons with equal qualifications are given preferential consideration. The University of Tübingen is anxious to increase its quota of female scientific staff, and therefore emphatically requests women to apply for this position. The Administration of the University Hospital is responsible for all employment matters. Personnel appointments will be made pursuant to the fundamental stipulations of the legal statutes for universities in Germany. Before taking up employment, proof of sufficient vaccination against measles or immunity against measles in accordance with § 23a in conjunction with § 20 Para. 9 of the Infection Protection Act must be provided (scope of application birth cohorts as of 01.01.1971). Interview expenses are not covered.