

Franziska Michor One of the Heroes of Cancer

Chris Ryan July 28, 2015



Cancer.im Heroes of Cancer Series

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(Newswire.net -- July 28, 2015) -- Franziska Michor is a hero of cancer, taking both the world of medicine and of mathematics by storm. By 22 years of age, she had finished her doctorate in evolutionary biology at Harvard University. This was in 2005, and it is fair to say that she was just getting started.

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Michor is a native of Vienna, Austria. Her parents are a nurse and a mathematician. As a little girl, she quickly developed a love of math. This is something that mankind will be forever grateful for that she stuck with into her adult years. Michor jokingly said that when her and her sister were children, her father told them that they would either study math or would have to marry a mathematician. Neither of them were too keen on the idea of marrying a mathematician, so according to Michor, "we studied math."

Many people might have the mistaken idea that science, mathematics, and medicine form a holy Trinity that just go together. However, according to Michor, this is not necessarily true.

She said that people who like science but are not that fond of math usually study medicine. She also added that even though many people who study medicine are not that fond of math, cancer is.

She is convinced that if there will be a victory in the battle against cancer, math is going to play a role. This is why her

love of both mathematics and medicine is so important.

While she was in Vienna, she started to study both math and molecular biology. Needless to say, many thought this was a unique academic path. Realizing that her ability to grow in this field was going to be limited in Vienna, she came to the United States to complete her graduate studies.

After graduating, Michor gained recognition for her unique way of using math to tackle the challenge of treating one of the most dreaded illnesses on the planet: cancer.

Currently, Michor serves as a professor at the Danna Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard School of Public Health. In her desire to understand what it is that fuels cancer cells, Michor uses a mixture of quantitative methods with the things she has learned about evolutionary biology. From her standpoint, cancer represents a battle between the body and a form of fast evolution that is taking place inside the body.

By this, she means that at any given time the human body is in some form of change. Within the human body there are literally millions and in some cases billions of cells that are mutated. The scary fact is that the possibility is there that any one of these cells could become cancerous. Thankfully, the vast majority of the cells that have mutated are harmless and are actually attacked and destroyed by the body.

The challenge that currently exists when it comes to treating cancer is that cancer does not happen in a vacuum. This means that while there are treatments that can very easily destroy cancer cells, they also destroy the healthy cells that a person needs to survive. The problem that this creates is very clear to see.

As a result of the work that Michor has done in developing a new approach for treating cancer, in 2005 she was awarded the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Biomedical Science. This is a prize that is given to individuals who have immigrated to the United States and have made long-lasting contributions to American society. The work that she has done has proven without a doubt that Michor belongs in this category.

A good portion of the work that she does focuses on the idea of making the most out of the scheduling and the doses of drugs that are given when battling cancer. Her approach has had tremendous success.

In part, when discussing the reasons for giving her the Vilcek foundation's award, their website mentions that Michor shows courage in the way that she is able to approach cancer treatment that defies convention.

When talking about her journey within the United States, Michor said that what she's loves about the United States is that people are not afraid of taking risks. She contrasted the attitude seen in the United States with that seen in Europe. She said that in Europe a person has to be convinced that something is going to work prior to trying it. She expresses her thanks for being able to work with people who would support her and her ideas.

Many in the scientific community believe that the work that Michor is doing is going to save millions of lives from cancer. Her goal is to teach math to medicine, which means using math to create better medicine and help more people beat cancer.

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