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Newcomer Naomi Weitzel Wins LifeScienceXplained Award 2025

- Science Slam “How light becomes stronger: the superpower of tiny particles” shows how rare earth nanoparticles made of can amplify weak light stronger and potentially help fight cancer in the future
- 99 entries for the communications prize endowed with 15,000 euros in prize money
- NDR Non-fiction Book Prize goes to Eva Biringer for her book “Unversehrt. Frauen und Schmerz” (Unharmd: Women and Pain)

Naomi Weitzel, PhD student at the Institute of Analytical Chemistry at the University of Regensburg, wins the LifeScienceXplained | Sartorius Prize for New Communication. With her scientifically sound and entertaining science slam “[How light becomes stronger: the superpower of tiny particles](#)” she convinced the jury.

In just three minutes, Weitzel explains how nanoparticles made of rare earths enable light energy conversion. Her memorable metaphor: like a piggy bank, these tiny particles collect weak energy from infrared light until it matches that of blue or UV light and then release the energy in a concentrated form. In the future, this principle could help to destroy cancer cells in a more targeted manner while sparing surrounding tissue. Weitzel calls the particles’ superpower “gentle on the body, strong against cancer.” Last year’s LSX awardee and jury member Dr. Franca Parianen praised the winner: “Naomi Weitzel’s article vividly and concisely explains the astonishing phenomenon of how low-energy light can be converted into high-energy light. The compactness and clarity with which she presents this complex topic are impressive.”

With a total of 99 entries from Germany and abroad, the LSX – awarded since 2021 – set a new participation record this year. Prof. Dr. Viola Priesemann, spokesperson for the jury, said: “In its fifth edition, we have once again received exciting and even broader submissions for the LifeScienceXplained Award. Naomi Weitzel is the deserving winner of this year’s competition because she explains the fundamental principles of physics and their potential benefits for medicine in a very clear way. By building this bridge, she highlights the special value and great strength of interdisciplinary research.”

The LifeScienceXplained Award ceremony took place today, Thursday, in front of around 250 invited guests as part of the Göttingen Literature Festival on the Sartorius Campus. The finalists also included Dr. Eva Schäffer with her science slam “[Prevention and Parkinson’s](#)” and Bent Freiwald from ACB Stories with the podcast episode “[Alzheimer’s – Dangerous Slime in the Brain](#)”.

At the event, Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) also awarded the NDR Non-fiction Book Prize, also worth 15,000 euros, for the best non-fiction book written in German language that addresses issues relevant to

the future. This year's award goes to Eva Biringer for her book "Unversehrt. Frauen und Schmerz" (Unharmed: Women and Pain), in which the author describes how female pain is systematically underestimated in medicine and society.

Further information is available at www.sartorius.de/lxs.

About the LifeScienceXplained | Sartorius Prize for New Communication

Since 2021, the LifeScienceXplained Prize, worth 15,000 euros, has been awarded to science communicators who use creative formats to make complex life science topics understandable to a broad audience. The goal is to promote exchange between science and society on current life science topics. An independent jury of science and communication professionals decides on the finalists and winners. In 2025, committee consisted of: health entrepreneur Inga Bergen, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Brück, Chairman of the Board of University Medical Center Göttingen, NDR science journalist Anja Martini, science writer and last year's winner Dr. Franca Parianen, Co-CEO and Co-Founder of myotwin Dr.-Ing. Jan Patrick Pietras, and professor and researcher Prof. Dr. Viola Priesemann from the Max Planck Institute and the University of Göttingen.

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