

D-MEM AND BIOMETRA WEBINAR

Wieland B. Huttner

Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics

March 27, 2025 – 4 PM

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WHAT MADE OUR BRAIN SO BIG AND US SMARTER THAN NEANDERTALS?

Wieland Huttner studied medicine in Hamburg and Oxford and obtained his MD from Hamburg University. He was head of a research group at the Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry in Munich and then at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg. He was full professor and head of the Institute for Neurobiology at Heidelberg University. He is one of the Founding Directors of the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics in Dresden and currently he is Director Emeritus. He is Honorary Professor for Neurobiology at the Technische Universität Dresden.

His group studies the molecular and cellular mechanisms of neurogenesis in the developing neocortex in the context of mammalian brain evolution, specifically the various types of cortical stem and progenitor cells, their modes of division, their lineages, and the neuron production resulting therefrom. A particular focus is the development and evolution of the human neocortex and the role of human-specific genes in this context. In addition, in collaboration with Svante Pääbo, he has dissected differences in brain development between modern humans and Neandertals.