

Curriculum Vitae

PD Dr. med. Wolfgang Merkt

University Education

- 2023 Habilitation (*Role of NK cells in the pathogenesis and treatment of rheumatic diseases*)
- 2014 Graduation, MD (Prof. Watzl, Institute of Immunology, University of Heidelberg, *Signaling transduction of CEACAM1 receptor in NK cells*)
- 2004-2010 Medical studies in Heidelberg, Germany, and Lille, France

Scientific Career

- Since 01/2026 Medical and Scientific Director, Rheumazentrum Rheinland-Pfalz
- Since 01/2021 Senior physician, Dept. of Internal Medicine V, University Hospital Heidelberg, Germany (Prof. Hanns-Martin Lorenz)
(since 01/24: 25%, since 01/26: 26% of time)
- 02/2024-10/2025 Senior physician, Dept. of Rheumatology & Hiller Research Center, University Hospital Düsseldorf, Germany (Prof. Jörg Distler)
- Member of the management team
 - Head of the rheumatology ward, experimental therapies (CAR-T cells, bispecific antibodies in rheumatology)
- (75% of time)
- 09/2019-12/2019 Visiting scientist in David Lagares' Lab (Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School, *Targeted apoptosis of myofibroblasts in fibrosis*)
- As of 01/2017 Principal investigator, Physician Scientist
- 02/2011-07/2018 Residency in medicine: Dept. of Internal Medicine V, University Hospital Heidelberg (Prof. Hanns-Martin Lorenz)
Vincentius-Krankenhaus Heidelberg (Prof. Hanns-Martin Lorenz)
Städtisches Klinikum Ludwigshafen (Prof. Raoul Bergner)
- 08/2015-11/2015 Visiting researcher/post doc at the Leibniz Research Centre (IfADo), TU Dortmund (Prof. Watzl, *NK cells in granulomatosis with polyangiitis*)
- 02/2012-12/2013 Research associate at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) Heidelberg (Innate Immunity Group, Prof. Cerwenka, *NK cells in granulomatosis with polyangiitis*)

Awards and Honors

- 07/2021 Research Prize: John Grube Foundation, 15.000 €, for clinically relevant laboratory research

Citation Record

Total citations: 641; h-index:13

(Research Gate, June 29, 2026)

Top-10 selected Publications

1. Merkt W, ..., Lagares D, Natural killer Cell Immunotherapy Reverses Lung Fibrosis by Eliminating Senescent Fibroblasts. **Science translational medicine. 2026.**
2. Duesing, C#, Györfi H#, Stütz AN#, ..., Merkt W#, Distler J#. Bispecific T cell engagers for the treatment of severe, treatment-refractory autoimmune-mediated connective tissue diseases. **Nat Med. 2026.**
#: contributed equally
3. Freitag M, Kolb P, ..., Lorenz HM, Schett G, Merkt W. Fcγ-receptor-activation by circulating immune complexes in systemic autoimmune diseases and its reduction by CD19-CAR T-cell therapy. *Rheumatology (Oxford)*. 2025
4. Stütz AN, Lahu LM, Jaschinski S, Düsing C, Güzel N, Schwarz D, Distler JHW, Merkt W. Mosunetuzumab, a CD20xCD3 bispecific T-cell engager, in granulomatosis with polyangiitis. **Ann Rheum Dis**. 2025
5. Stütz AN, Kvacskay P, Heußel CP, Teichert N, Lorenz HM, Distler JHW, Mucke J, Merkt W. Efficacy of obinutuzumab in two rituximab refractory cases of idiopathic inflammatory myopathies with severe interstitial lung disease. **Ann Rheum Dis**. 2025
6. Merkt W, Röhrich M, Mavriopoulou E, Stütz AN, Distler JHW, Schmitt A, Polke M, Heußel CP, Schmitt M, Lorenz HM. Persisting CD19.CAR-T cells in combination with nintedanib: clinical response in a patient with systemic sclerosis-associated pulmonary fibrosis after 2 years. **Lancet Respir Med**. 2025
7. Claus M, Freitag M, Ewald M, Rodon L, Deicher F, Watzl C, Kolb P, Lorenz HM, Schmitt M, Merkt W. Immunological effects of CD19.CAR-T cell therapy in systemic sclerosis: an extended case study. *Arthritis Res Ther*. 2024
8. Merkt W, Lorenz HM, Schmitt M. CAR T-Cell Therapy in Autoimmune Disease. **N Engl J Med**. 2024
9. Merkt W, Freitag M, Claus M, Kolb P, Falcone V, Röhrich M, Rodon L, Deicher F, Andreeva I, Tretter T, Tykocinski LO, Blank N, Watzl C, Schmitt A, Sauer T, Müller-Tidow C, Polke M, Heußel CP, Dreger P, Lorenz HM, Schmitt M. Third-generation CD19.CAR-T cell-containing combination therapy in Scl70+ systemic sclerosis. **Ann Rheum Dis**. 2024
10. Zhao S, Grieshaber-Bouyer R, Rao DA, Kolb P, Chen H, Andreeva I, Tretter T, Lorenz HM, Watzl C, Wabnitz G, Tykocinski LO, Merkt W. Effect of JAK Inhibition on the Induction of Proinflammatory HLA-DR+CD90+ Rheumatoid Arthritis Synovial Fibroblasts by Interferon-γ. **Arthritis Rheumatol**. 2022