Sometimes - this might sound odd - the best thing is when an experiment actually works (laughter), when your hypothesis turns out to be true. I like the moment when you find out you were right and can now prove it. Sometimes, even in a beautiful way and ideally using different methods. Everybody knows how difficult this is. It's not that I don't believe in my hypotheses, but it is always good when everybody's hard work comes together, when everyone's expertise and patience pays off.

What will be the big milestones in neuroscience research in the future?
A big milestone will be when our basic research results in better therapies for different diseases. There are diseases that are difficult for us to tackle - especially neurological disorders, for example, have proven to be very resistant to the approaches taken by pharmaceutical industry so far. Society grants us space and time for intensifying our research into unraveling underlying causes. We should take the increasing demand seriously to translate our findings more immediately and, I really believe, society will benefit from it. This is one of the reasons I find NeuroCure exciting. We're on the edge of realizing a lot of important applications of basic research could become success stories in providing new avenues for treatments.

What other passions do you follow besides neuroscience?
I've played the violin and viola since I was a child. In London, I played in a band called Beskydy (check it out: http://www.beskydy.net/) - playing Eastern European music. There are so many good musicians from Eastern Europe in Berlin, so it would seem odd for me to do this here. Now, I would like to play in a classical quartet or in other chamber music ensembles. I've started playing in a trio (with Christoph Harms), but if there are any other musicians out there... I'd be open to playing with them, too.

What would your message be to aspiring neuroscience students today?
Trust your instincts and follow your ideas. It's difficult to make the jump from dependence to independence, from being told what to do to deciding on one's own actions. In the driving seat of your own project you have to deal with the results, to decide whether your findings are real, to ask: is it interesting? In this position, you have to consider the big picture and not just the small entity that is part of your studies. When it comes to choosing where to do a PhD or to deciding on the next step in your academic career, you need to choose the environment you want to work in very carefully, to think about whether it is supportive and responsive and if you can develop in that particular environment.

What do you consider as your greatest achievements so far?
One of our achievements was the realization that major signaling pathways involved in tumour formation and growth are important also in controlling nervous system development. We have been, for example, working specifically on the function of the tumour suppressor PTEN in the nervous system for almost 10 years now. Taking a step back from the way this question focuses on just me, I think it's great when a study works out. That really makes me feel proud. But one of the best things is when you realize the results are not only your own achievements. I'm happy when I have a great team. Part of my achievement is that I managed to get good people to work with me. You have to form a good team that likes to work together and that has fun.

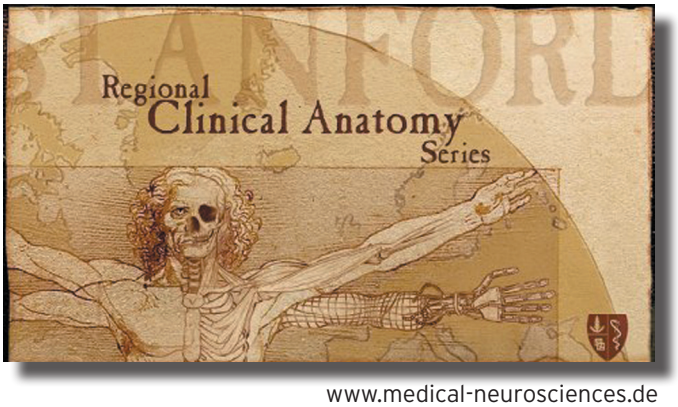
Who are the researchers (dead or alive) to whom you look up to as role models?
I always admire colleagues with integrity and determination, who are interested, persuasive, creative, and show initiative. I have many colleagues that I admire because they pay continuous attention to detail, not only in the lab but also in the review process of papers and grants.

Thank you very much, Britta. ***(mz)***

Online Anatomy Class

By Nikolas Karalis, MSc Student Medical Neurosciences

Starting in 2012, Stanford University will offer some of the school's most popular classes for free online, using an experimental online education system. This new project is aimed at a global audience and provides open access to a high-quality education. Among other classes, clinical anatomy will be taught by Dr. Sakti Srivastava, Division Chief of Clinical Anatomy. This course will cover the region of the upper limb (other body regions will be covered in subsequent courses) and it will make extensive use of interactive multimedia resources (e.g. a virtual dissection table). Students are expected to read the course material, complete assignments and take quizzes as well as an exam. The course can be completed in a self-paced manner.
Classes start on March 5th and you can enroll online at the website of the class. For a full list of the online classes offered please refer to www.anatomy-class.org



www.medical-neurosciences.de