



**“Our aim was to keep
the schools open!”**

Rolf Kaiser

Virologist and head of the viral
resistance research group in the
Institute of Virology, University of
Cologne



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Interview of the EuCARE partners

Q01

Interviewer: Hi Rolf. Tell us a little about yourself and why is the Institute of Virology, University of Cologne involved in the EuCARE project.

Rolf Kaiser: Hi, thank you for this question. I am **head of the viral resistance research group** and we are a **partner in EuResist since 2005**. I am working as a **virologist in the Institute of Virology, University of Cologne** (<https://www.uk-koeln.de/>) and we take care of **research, teaching and diagnostics** for all the patients in the University and also some requests for practitioners and other hospitals.

We were, as I said, **engaged in diagnostics and new diagnostics**. So, when a new virus comes, like birds' flu, **SARS-CoV-2** or monkeypox, then the **University clinics of Cologne is one of the first places who enables diagnostics** for these questions. In the case of the **"Lolli" method**, it was a **personal relation to parents from kindergartens and schools** who asked us to **perform a child adapted testing for Coronavirus**. That was in the **early summer of 2020**. We **introduced SARS-CoV-2 testing via "Lolli"**, and not by swabs because the children allowed one test with swab and no further. We decided to rather have possibly **less sensitive**, but a **reliable method** than a **sensitive but not reliable method**. This **was and is a safe instrument** that gave very much safety to the people who were involved. After we introduced the **"Lolli" method** the number of **staff people** (educators, teachers, support personnel) on sick leave **decreased dramatically**. So, this was a **very important experience**, at least for me to see this **positive impact** on the whole kindergarten and school. We must realize that we **have now an instrument to monitor safely other respiratory pathogens** like Flu or RSV and also **possibly new infection waves**. This is my outlook, that we have an **instrument** that we can use also for other **upcoming problems**.



Q02

Interviewer: Besides yourself, who else participates in this project from the University of Cologne?

Rolf Kaiser: Here in the Institute of Virology, University of Cologne, **all the team, all the technicians** were **engaged**, and everyone gave input and tried to make the analysis better. So, and of course **Felix Dewald** and **Gibran Horemheb Rubio Quintanares**, who were working here as a **postdocs**, were the **major supporters and developers of the “Lolli” method**. **Felix** was strongly involved in the **region wide Lolli testing in Nordrhein-Westfalen** in which about 750 000 school children were tested. **Gibran demonstrated that the “Lolli” method** can be applied **worldwide** when he **introduced the “Lolli”** testing in the region of **Tabasco in Mexico**.

Also, from the Institute of Virology, **Eva Heger, Elena Knops, Veronica Di, Cristanziano**, and also **the technicians**, especially those **who have children** themselves were very engaged with the method. **Florian Klein**, the **head of the Virology Institute** was strongly **supporting the “Lolli” method**. **Nils Bardeck** joined the team and is now the **project manager of the EuCARE** from the University of Cologne and is responsible for the **quality management**.

Q03

Interviewer: The final question, the EuCARE project is divided into eight workpackages (WP)? In which ones is the University of Cologne involved and what has been done already?

Rolf Kaiser: So, **WP2** and **WP4** is something that we **are involved directly**. In **WP2** together with **Maurizio Zazzi**, we try to **shape** and **control** the right **diagnostic tools** that we have **for SARS-CoV-2**. For **WP4** we **submit data** and apply **quality management** for the **“Lolli” method** and **support Sara Gandini** to **evaluate the data**. We should **explicitly mention** that **EuCARE** is **not only a number of people working** in different subprojects, but **we are partners who work and interact together** very intensively. We are a **successful team**, a pleasure to work with.

Interviewer: Thank you, Rolf.

Rolf Kaiser: Thank you very much!



If you want to know more about the
EuCARE project or our partners

Contact us:

<https://eucareresearch.eu/contact-us/>
