

PROFESSOR ADRIANO AGUZZI RECEIVES THE BAILLET LATOUR HEALTH PRIZE 2017 FOR HIS FUNDAMENTAL DISCOVERIES IN THE FIELD OF NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES

The Baillet Latour Fund has awarded its 2017 Health Prize to Professor Adriano Aguzzi, Professor and Director of the Institute of Neuropathology at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. This prize is the most important international scientific Prize granted in Belgium. Professor Aguzzi is honoured for his ground breaking molecular studies of the basic biology of neurological diseases caused by prions. In the past 25 years, Professor Aguzzi's team has tried to understand the intricacies of prion neuro-invasion. This term defines the process by which infectious prions (the causative agents of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or BSE and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease), that have entered the body of a victim from an extra-cerebral site, transmigrate into the brain and finally induce disease within the central nervous system.

■ BELGIAN'S MOST IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC PRIZE: 250.000 €

The Baillet Latour Fund was established to promote outstanding achievements in the area of science, academy or art. Since 1979, this Fund awards the **Baillet Latour Health Prize** to a scientist for his or her contribution in the field of medical research. The Prize, worth € 250,000, has been awarded annually since 2000. This Prize is intended to promote not only fundamental research, but also its applications to human health.

The Prize rewards medical research in one of the following areas: Neurological diseases (2017), Cancer (2018), Cardiovascular diseases (2019), Metabolic disorders (2020), Infectious diseases (2021). It is managed by a Scientific Committee which sets up annually an international jury of seven members who are experts in the field.

■ PROFESSOR ADRIANO AGUZZI, RECIPIENT OF THE 2017 BAILLET LATOUR HEALTH PRIZE



Professor Adriano Aguzzi obtained in 1986 a medical degree from the University of Freiburg, Germany. After his medical training he practised as a neuropathologist at the University Hospital of Zurich. His promotional dissertation reported on his work on "Transgenic models of neurological cancers and neurodegenerative diseases". Since 1997 Professor Aguzzi is director of the Institute of Neuropathology at the University of Zurich. He is the founder and director of the Swiss National Reference Centre for Prion Diseases and advised the British, Italian, and Swiss government on Mad Cow Disease. He serves on the editorial board of the journal "Science", as well as on the scientific advisory boards of philanthropic foundations and biomedical companies. Among other honours, Professor Aguzzi has won the Ernst-Jung Prize, the Robert Koch Prize, and the medal of the European Molecular Biology Organization, and has held two ERC Advanced Grants.

The primary mission of Adriano Aguzzi's research is to understand the basis of human disease. While he has mostly focused on prion diseases, he also studies further neurological and, occasionally, other diseases if his discoveries take him there. His work mostly focuses on the molecular triggers of organ dysfunction. His discovery of pervasive colonization of the immune system by prions has convinced most of the world's governments to undertake efforts to limit the exposure of humans to prions derived from farm animals. Furthermore, Professor Aguzzi's discovery that chronic inflammation controls the organ tropism of prion diseases has explained how scrapie transmits horizontally within sheep flocks. The realization that prion excretion results from coincident inflammation and prion infection is paving the way to the eradication of prion diseases from ruminants. Professor Aguzzi's discovery that the removal of microglia, a type of cells found in the nervous system, accelerates prion disease has a fundamental impact on therapeutic strategies against aggregation proteinopathies such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. Professor Aguzzi's recent work, published in Science Translational Medicine in 2015, has established the feasibility of structure-based drug design against prions, and may find rapid and successful translation into clinical applications.



THE JURY OF THE 2017 BAILLET LATOUR HEALTH PRIZE

Prof. Richard FRACKOWIAK (President): Ordinary Professor ad hominem, University of Lausanne and CHUV, Paris, France

Prof. Dr. med. Claudio L.A. BASSETTI: Chairman and Head Neurology Department Inselspital - Bern University Hospital, Bern, Switzerland

Prof. Marie-Germaine BOUSSER: Neurology Department - Hospital Lariboisière, Paris, France

Prof. Alexis BRICE: General Director at the Institute for Brain and Spinal Cord - ICM, Paris, France

Prof. John J. FOXE: Professor of Neuroscience, Director of The Ernest J. Del Monte Institute for Neuroscience and Chair at the Department of Neuroscience - University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, United States of America

Prof. Kjell FUXE: Head of Division of Cellular and Molecular Neurochemistry - Department of Neuroscience, Stockholm, Sweden

Prof Angela VINCENT: Emeritus Professor - Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences University of Oxford, John Radcliffe Hospital, United Kingdom

■ FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Baillet Latour Fund - Alain De Waele, Secretary General

Tel: +32 (0) 16 27 61 59

GSM: + 32 (0) 473 80 84 73

E-mail: alain.dewaele@iblf.be

Interel - Ellen De Wilde

Tel: +32 (0) 2 213 13 09

E-mail: ellen.dewilde@interelgroup.com

Professor Aguzzi Adriano

Tel: +41 79 32 01 516

E-mail : adriano.aguzzi@usz.ch

Websites

Baillet Latour Fonds: www.fondsbailletlatour.com

F.R.S.-FNRS: www.frs-fnrs.be

FWO: www.fwo.be



Fund Fonds
Fonds Baillet Latour



Excellence on the move

The Baillet Latour Foundation was established in 1974, on the initiative of Count Alfred de Baillet Latour. Its aim? To promote, encourage and reward excellence, principally in Belgium, by focussing **its work on people.**

■ Building a better future

For over 40 years, the Foundation has sought to support initiatives that are remarkable for their influence, the excellence they inspire or their innovative approach to meeting the challenges faced by tomorrow's society.

Its support generates concrete spin-offs with specific future benefits in four areas: **health, education, culture and sport.**

■ Making a difference

The Health Prize, the Grant for Medical Research or the Environmental Prize, university and sports management chairs, the restoration of iconic elements of Belgium's movable heritage, support for high achievement in music and sport or for initiatives in societal development and citizenship education encouraging the involvement of young people in particular... The Foundation contributes on an ongoing basis to the development of **projects that make a difference.**

■ Dynamism and good governance

With its sights set firmly on the future, the Baillet Latour Foundation is keen to maintain natural discretion, while the hundreds of projects that it has supported since its inception make it a widely recognised, indispensable member of civil society. The backdrop to this commitment is a mode of operation that is absolutely rigorous and ensures good governance.

The General Secretary and President jointly manage its day-to-day work – namely the pre-selection, supervision and monitoring of projects. The Board of Directors, supported by experts of international renown, is then responsible for validating its work and **undertakings.**

Go further

Like to know more?

All the projects supported by the Baillet Latour Foundation and the remarkable work it rewards can be found on its website: **www.fondsbailletlatour.com**. Welcome!