

Two US scientists awarded Balzan Prize for cancer research

September 11 2017, by Colleen Barry



Salvatore Veca attends a press conference to present a 2017 Balzan's prize edition, in Milan, Italy, Monday, Sept. 11, 2017. James Allison of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Robert Schreiber of the Washington School of Medicine were announced Monday as winners of the 750,000 Swiss franc (660,000 euro, \$790,000) prize. They were cited for work that has helped use antibody treatments that has increased the survival of patients with metastatic melanoma. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni)

Two U.S. scientists whose work has contributed to creating

immunological treatments for cancer are among the winners of this year's Balzan Prizes, announced Monday, recognizing scholarly and scientific achievements.

James Allison of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Robert Schreiber of the Washington University School of Medicine were cited for their work on antibody treatments that has increased the survival of patients with metastatic melanoma.

The Balzan Foundation awards two prizes in the sciences and two in the humanities each year, rotating specialties to highlight new or emerging areas of research and sustain fields that might be overlooked elsewhere. Recipients receive 750,000 Swiss francs (\$790,000), half of which must be used for research, preferably by young scholars or scientists.

Nobel Prize-winner Jules Hoffman, a presenter of the awards, said the work focusing on using the immune system to fight cancer, expanding from the traditional treatments of removal, radiation and chemotherapy, has already had success in 25 to 30 percent of melanoma patients in a study who had previously gone through the traditional battery of treatments. It is now being developed for small cell lung cancer and rectal cancer.

Other winners are:

—Belgian astrophysicist Michael Gillon for his work that has helped map new solar systems from the comfort of planet Earth, using robotic telescopes instead of much more costly satellites.



Thomas Maissen speaks to journalists during a press conference to present a 2017 Balzan's prize edition, in Milan, Italy, Monday, Sept. 11, 2017. James Allison of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Robert Schreiber of the Washington School of Medicine were announced Monday as winners of the 750,000 Swiss franc (660,000 euro, \$790,000) prize. They were cited for work that has helped use antibody treatments that has increased the survival of patients with metastatic melanoma. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni)

—Germans Aleida and Jan Assmann, a married couple recognized for their work presenting collective memory "as a requirement for the formation of the identity of religious and political communities."

—Indian economist Bina Agarwal, a professor at the University of Manchester, recognized in the gender studies category for her "heroic" work studying women's contributions to agriculture in India.

—This year, the Balzan Foundation also awarded a fifth prize, in international relations, which was deferred from last year after the

committee failed to reach agreement on a winner. It went to Robert O. Keohane of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, best known for his influential 1984 book "After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy."

Prizes will be awarded in Bern, Switzerland, on Nov. 17.

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