

Japan Nobel winner vows to continue research to 'save more patients than ever'

October 1 2018



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The Japanese scientist who Monday [won the Nobel Prize](#) for medicine vowed to continue his cancer treatment work to help as many sufferers as possible, saying treating patients gave him more pleasure than any award.

"I want to continue my research ... so that this immune therapy will save more cancer patients than ever," Tasuku Honjo told reporters at Kyoto University where he is based.

He described his feelings of "immense joy" when people told him they had recovered from severe illnesses due to his work.

He said a member of his golf club, whom he did not know well, came up to him one day and thanked him, saying: "Thanks to your medicine. I had lung cancer and I thought I was playing my last round of golf, but now I am able to play golf again."

"When you hear things like that, there is no greater happiness. I have never been happier than that. Honestly, no award can replace that. I felt it was enough," said Honjo.

"On top of that, I am receiving such an award. I really feel I am a fortunate person."

Honjo said he heard the news of his award while he was discussing academic papers with colleagues and it came "completely out of the blue."

"Of course, I was very happy, delighted at the same time, but shocked."

During the press conference, Honjo took a call from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who congratulated the scientist, saying he was "so proud as a fellow Japanese."

Abe said someone he knew was saved by treatment resulting from the professor's research.

"The professor's achievement has given rays of hope to many cancer

patients," said Abe.

Honjo won the prize, along with US scientist James Allison, for research into how the body's natural defences can fight cancer.

But he said he also has ambitions to go round the golf course in the same number of shots at his age.

"I am 76 now. My biggest goal is to hit 76 in golf."

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Citation: Japan Nobel winner vows to continue research to 'save more patients than ever' (2018, October 1) retrieved 17 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-10-japan-nobel-winner-vows-patients.html>

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