

Parkinson's, cancer findings earn medical prizes

8 September 2014, by Malcolm Ritter



This combination of undated photos provided by the The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation shows Dr. Alim Louis Benabid, of Joseph Fourier University in Grenoble, France, left, and Dr. Mahlon DeLong of Emory University in Atlanta. The pair will share the Lasker award for clinical medical research for developing a surgical treatment for Parkinson's disease, the foundation announced Monday, Sept. 8, 2014. (AP Photo/Lasker Foundation)

Key discoveries about breast cancer, Parkinson's disease and the body's handling of defective proteins have earned prestigious medical awards for five scientists.

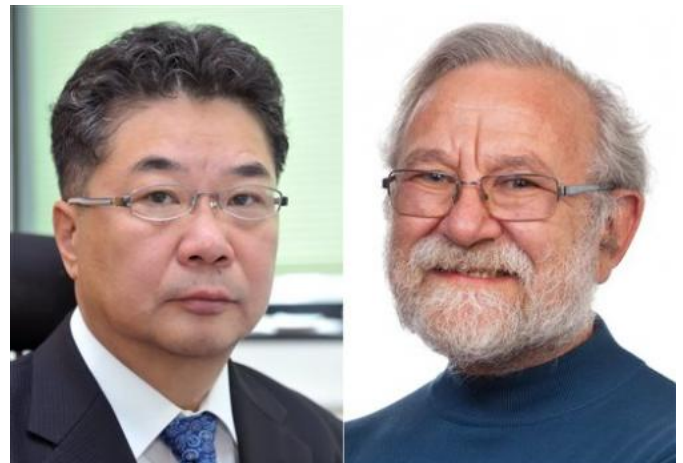
The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation announced the winners Monday. Each prize includes a \$250,000 honorarium. The awards will be presented Sept. 19 in New York.

The Lasker award for clinical medical research will be shared by Drs. Mahlon DeLong of Emory University in Atlanta and Alim Louis Benabid of Joseph Fourier University in Grenoble, France, for developing a surgical treatment for Parkinson's disease. In work that began in the late 1960s, DeLong traced Parkinson symptoms to overactivity

in a specific part of the brain. Benabid, following up on that research independently, showed in 1995 that stimulating this area with a surgically implanted electrode could ease some Parkinson symptoms.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved that approach for treating advanced Parkinson's disease in 2002. More than 100,000 people worldwide have received the therapy, the Lasker foundation said.

The award for special achievement in medical science will go to Mary-Claire King of the University of Washington in Seattle. In 1990, King identified a region of human DNA that contains the BRCA1 gene, which gives a heightened risk of developing breast cancer if mutated. That led to the isolation of the gene itself, paving the way for identifying women who've inherited a mutated version so they can be monitored and counseled.



This combination of undated photos provided by the The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation shows Kazutoshi Mori of Kyoto University in Japan, left, and Peter Walter of the University of California. The pair will share the Lasker award for basic medical research, the foundation announced Monday, Sept. 8, 2014. They made key discoveries about how cells detect and deal with their proteins that have not been folded correctly, which can

make them harmful. (AP Photo/Lasker Foundation)

King also came up with a way to screen women for a number of other genes that predispose women to breast or ovarian cancer, or both. She also used her genetic expertise to help find children in Argentina who'd been kidnapped as infants or born while their mothers were in prison during the military regime of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Her work has also been used to help identify victims of mass disasters and soldiers who were missing in action.

The Lasker award for basic medical research will be shared by Peter Walter of the University of California, San Francisco, and Kazutoshi Mori of Kyoto University in Japan. They made key discoveries about how cells detect and manage their proteins that have not been folded correctly, which can make them harmful. The research has shed light on certain inherited diseases, including cystic fibrosis, the foundation said.

The Lasker foundation was established in 1942. Albert Lasker was an advertising executive who died in 1952. His wife Mary was a longtime champion of medical research before her death in 1994.



This undated photo provided by the The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation shows Mary-Claire King of the University of Washington in Seattle. King has been awarded for special achievement in medical science, the foundation announced Monday, Sept. 8, 2014. (AP Photo/Lasker Foundation)

More information: Lasker Foundation:
www.laskerfoundation.org

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APA citation: Parkinson's, cancer findings earn medical prizes (2014, September 8) retrieved 23 October 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-09-parkinson-cancer-medical-prizes.html>

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