



# ข่าวสารนิเทศ • Press Release

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No. 203/2020

## Announcement of the Prince Mahidol Award 2020 Laureates

Director-General of the Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, as the Chair of the PMAF Public Relations Sub-Committee, joined the press conference to announce the Prince Mahidol Award 2020 Laureates. This year, the Prince Mahidol Award 2020 in the field of Medicine is awarded to Professor Dr. Valentin Fuster from the United States, and in the field of Public Health, is awarded to Dr. Bernard Pécoul from France.

On 12 November 2020, the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation under the Royal Patronage (PMAF) held a joint press conference at Siriraj Hospital, Bangkok, to announce the Prince Mahidol Award 2020 Laureates in the field of Medicine and Public Health. At the said press conference, Mr. Tanee Sangrat, Director-General of the Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, in the capacity as the Chair of the PMAF Public Relations Sub-Committee, together with Professor Dr. Prasith Wattanapa, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, in the capacity of Vice President of the PMAF, Professor Supat Vanichyakarn, Secretary-General of the PMAF, Professor Vicharn Panich, Chair of the International Awards Committee, Dr. John R. MacArthur, Director of Thailand Ministry of Public Health - United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Collaboration, representative of the Ambassador of the United States of America to Thailand, and Dr. Taraneh Shojaei, Regional Counsellor in Global Health, South-East Asia, the French Embassy, representative of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the French Embassy, were also present.

This year, the Prince Mahidol Award **in the field of Medicine** is awarded to **Professor Dr. Valentin Fuster from the United States.**

Professor Dr. Valentin Fuster's prominent work is on the research of the role of platelets in the development of coronary thrombosis and the benefits of antiplatelet agents in preventing coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) occlusion after coronary bypass operation. His research findings have greatly reduced the morbidity and mortality rates and helped improve the care for patients with atherosclerotic coronary disease.

Professor Fuster's effort in translating his findings from basic research into clinical discoveries used for treating patients with coronary artery disease, especially the benefit of antiplatelets in the prevention of graft occlusion, has saved the lives of millions of people with coronary artery disease worldwide.

The Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Public Health is awarded to **Dr. Bernard Pécoul from France.**

Dr. Bernard Pécoul established the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) in 2003 as a non-profit research and development organisation, with the aim to develop a safer, effective and affordable treatment for patients with neglected diseases. DNDi has developed 8 effective treatments for neglected diseases, namely malaria, sleeping sickness, visceral leishmaniasis and chagas disease which were later prequalified by WHO as first medicine for neglected tropical diseases in many countries. Prior to his involvement with DNDi, he was Executive Director of the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), an international humanitarian and non-governmental organisation engaged in overcoming barriers to access to essential medicines in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

Dr. Pécoul's contribution has played an important role in reducing mortality rate and improving the quality of life of millions of people around the world, especially those in developing or low-income countries with neglected diseases.

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12 November 2020



**Prince Mahidol Award Foundation**  
**Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital and Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
**Press Conference**  
**Announcement of the Prince Mahidol Award 2020**

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On 12 November 2020, **Professor Dr. Prasit Watanapa**, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, in the capacity of Vice President of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation; **Mr. Tanee Sangrat**, Director-General of the Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, in the capacity of the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Public Relations of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation; and **Professor Vicharn Panich**, Chairman of the International Award Committee of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation, held a joint press conference to announce the 29<sup>th</sup> Prince Mahidol Award for 2020 at the Prince Mahidol Memorial Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Syamindra Building, Siriraj Hospital.

This year, the Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Medicine is awarded to **Valentin Fuster, MD, PhD**.

The Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Public Health is awarded to **Bernard Pécoul, MD, MPH**. *(Please find the attachment)*.

There were 44 nominations from 18 countries. The Scientific Advisory Committee carefully screened all candidates from the year 2018 – 2020 and subsequently submitted a short list of candidates to the International Award Committee who made a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn presided over the meeting of the Board of Trustees held on 20 October 2020 during which the final decision on the Prince Mahidol Award 2020 was made.

In the past 28 years, the Prince Mahidol Award has been conferred to 85 individuals, groups of individuals, and institutions. Among them, 4 were Award recipients of Thai nationality, namely (1) Professor Dr. Prasong Tuchinda and (2) Dr. Suchitra Nimmannitya who received the Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Medicine in 1996, and (3) Dr. Wiwat Rojanapithayakorn and (4) Mr. Mechai Viravaidya who received the Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Public Health in 2009.

Among the Awardees of the Prince Mahidol Award, 5 subsequently received the Nobel Prize:

(1) Professor Barry J. Marshall from Australia was conferred the Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Public Health in 2001 for the discovery of the new bacterium identified as *Helicobacter pylori* that caused severe gastritis and its sensitivity to particular antibacterial drugs. He received the Nobel Prize in the field of Medicine in 2005 for the same discovery.

(2) Professor Harald Zur Hausen from Germany was conferred the Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Medicine in 2005 for the discovery of the human papilloma virus HPV16 and HPV18 from the cancer tissue and elucidated how the viruses turn normal cells into cancer cells. He received the Nobel Prize in the field of Medicine in 2008 for the same discovery.

(3) Professor Dr. Satoshi Omura was conferred the Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Medicine in 1997. He is known for the discovery and development of various pharmaceuticals originally occurring in microorganisms. His research group isolated a strain of *Streptomyces Avermitilis* that produce the anti-parasitical compound avermectin which contributed to the development of the drug ivermectin that is currently used against river blindness, lymphatic filariasis, and other parasitic infections. He received the Nobel Prize in the field of Medicine in 2015 for the same discovery.

(4) Professor Tu You You, a member of the China Cooperative Research Group on Qinghaosu and its Derivatives as Antimalarials, was conferred the Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Medicine in 2003 in an organisational category for the discovery of Qinghaosu as a new drug for treatment of the *P.falciparum* malaria. He received the Nobel Prize in the field of Medicine in 2015 for the same discovery.

(5) Sir Gregory Paul Winter was conferred the Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Medicine in 2016. He was a pioneer in the field of antibody engineering and modification technology. He invented techniques to humanise antibodies for therapeutic uses, which later led to the creation of cutting-edge therapeutic drugs. He received the Nobel Prize in the field of Chemistry in 2018 for the same discovery.

The Prince Mahidol Award Foundation under the Royal Patronage was established on 1 January 1992 in commemoration of the centenary of the birth of His Royal Highness Prince Mahidol of Songkla. The Foundation is under the Royal Patronage, with Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn as President. The Foundation annually confers two Prince Mahidol Awards upon individual(s) or institution(s), who have demonstrated outstanding and exemplary contributions to the advancement of the world's medical and public health services. Each Award consists of a medal, a certificate and a prize to the sum of US \$100,000.

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**Tentative Programme**  
**The Announcement of the Prince Mahidol Award 2020**  
**12 November 2020, at 13.30 hrs.**  
**At the Prince Mahidol Memorial Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor,**  
**Syamindra Building, Siriraj Hospital**

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- 13.00 hrs.        -     Distinguished guests and media arrive at the Prince Mahidol Memorial Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Syamindra Building, Siriraj Hospital
- Snacks and beverages
- 13.30 hrs.        -     Press Conference hosted by **Clinical Professor Supat Vanichakarn**, Secretary-General of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation under the Royal Patronage
- Introduction of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation by **Professor Dr. Prasit Watanapa**, Dean of Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, in the capacity of Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation
- Announcement of the Prince Mahidol Laureates 2020 by **Mr. Tanee Sangrat**, Director-General of the Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Public Relations of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation
- Explanation on the decision to confer the Prince Mahidol Award 2020 conducted by **Professor Vicharn Panich**, Chairman of the International Award Committee of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation
- Short remarks by Ambassadors or representatives from the Embassies of the countries of which the 2020 Prince Mahidol Award Laureates are citizens

**Dr. John R. MacArthur**, Director, Thailand  
MOPH-U.S. CDC Collaboration  
representative of the Ambassador of the United States  
of America to Thailand

**Dr. Taraneh Shojaei**, Regional Counsellor  
in Global Health, South-East Asia  
representative of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the French  
Embassy

Clinical Professor Supat Vanichakarn  
Secretary-General  
Prince Mahidol Award Foundation  
12 November 2020

**Prince Mahidol Award Laureate 2020  
in the Field of Medicine**



**Professor Dr. Valentin Fuster  
Director of Mount Sinai Heart and Physician-in-Chief  
of the Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, USA**

Professor Dr. Valentin Fuster received his Doctor of Medicine from University of Barcelona, Spain, and Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Edinburgh, the United Kingdom.

Since 1970, Professor Fuster has been researching the role of platelets in the development of coronary thrombosis and the benefits of antiplatelet agents in preventing artery bypass grafting (CABG) occlusion after coronary bypass operation. The research was initially done in animals and later translated into clinical trials. He was the first to demonstrate the benefits of antiplatelet in prevention of graft occlusion. His discoveries have led to the development of drug-eluting stents (DES) concept for the percutaneous coronary interventions in acute myocardial infarction patients. Professor Fuster's research findings have greatly reduced the morbidity and mortality rates and helped improve the care for patients with atherosclerotic coronary disease.

Professor Fuster's effort in translating his findings from basic research into clinical discoveries used for treating patients with coronary artery disease, especially the benefit of antiplatelets in the prevention of graft occlusion, has saved the lives of millions of people with coronary artery disease worldwide.

**Prince Mahidol Award Laureate 2020  
in the Field of Public Health**



**Doctor Bernard Pécoul  
Executive Director of Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative, DNDi**

Doctor Bernard Pécoul received his Doctor of Medicine from Clermont-Ferrand University, France, and Master of Public Health from Tulane University, the United States.

Prior to his involvement with the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), Dr. Pécoul was Executive Director of the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), an international humanitarian and non-governmental organisation engaged in overcoming barriers to access to essential medicines in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

While working in Uganda, Dr. Pécoul found that Melarsoprol, an arsenic derivative, was used for treating patients with African trypanosomiasis or sleeping sickness, and that 1 out of 20 patients treated with it had died. With this lack of effective treatment and severe side effects, Dr. Pécoul decided to establish the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) in 2003 with the aim to develop a safer, effective and affordable treatment for patients with neglected diseases.

Under Dr. Pécoul's guidance, DNDi has expanded into a non-profit research and development organisation with numerous partners from public and private sectors such as the Bill Gates Foundation, Wellcome Trust, and several European agencies and pharmaceutical companies, which, to date, has developed 8 effective treatments for neglected diseases, namely malaria, sleeping sickness, visceral leishmaniasis and chagas disease.

These medicines were later prequalified by WHO as first medicine for neglected tropical diseases in many countries. DNDi is currently working on more than 20 chemical entities and running over 20 clinical trials.

As the Executive Director, Dr. Pécoul has coordinated research and development, and initiated and managed research projects made up of teams and scientists working on projects in different parts of the world, especially in Africa and Latin America with the aim to deliver 16 to 18 new treatments for neglected patients by 2023. Now, DNDi has delivered 8 new treatments that have saved countless lives.

Dr. Pécoul's contribution has played an important role in reducing mortality rate and improving the quality of life of millions of people around the world, especially those in developing or low-income countries with neglected diseases.