



RNAi Pioneer Craig Mello Named Inaugural Winner of the Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Biomedical Research

New Award Honors Dr. Paul Janssen, One of the 20th Century's Most Innovative and Inspiring Pharmaceutical Researchers

BEERSE, Belgium, Sept 12, 2006 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Johnson & Johnson today announced that Craig C. Mello, Ph. D., a professor of Molecular Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA, and an investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, has been named the inaugural recipient of The Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Biomedical Research. Dr. Mello was selected for his role in the discovery of RNA interference (RNAi) and the elucidation of its biological functions. The Award will be presented to Dr. Mello today at The Dr. Paul Janssen Biomedical Research Scientific Symposium and Award Program in Beerse, Belgium, which also commemorates the 80th anniversary of Dr. Janssen's birth.

The Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Biomedical Research was established by Johnson & Johnson to honor Dr. Paul Janssen. The Award recipients are chosen by a preeminent and independent selection committee composed of world-leading scientists and clinicians. Intending to acknowledge a scientist whose work has the potential to make a significant, transformational contribution toward the improvement of human health, the Award includes a \$100,000 prize and will be given every two years. Dr. Janssen, who was known to his colleagues as Dr. Paul, was one of the 20th century's most gifted and passionate scientists. At the time of his death in 2003, Dr. Paul, who was the founder of Janssen Pharmaceutica, had contributed to the discovery and development of more than 80 medicines that have helped save millions of lives.

"I am very grateful to receive this Award, which aims to extend the legacy of Dr. Paul Janssen, one of the greatest scientific innovators of our time," said Dr. Mello. "I am also very thankful to the Selection Committee for giving me this Award and to be considered alongside so many great scientists."

RNA interference is a biological process where double-stranded RNA inhibits gene expression in a highly specific fashion. Since its discovery in 1998, RNA interference has emerged as a powerful "gene-silencing" technique used in laboratories around the world to determine which genes are important in various diseases and conditions. RNAi also has promise as the basis of gene-silencing therapies. The new field of RNAi-based genomics is a fundamental paradigm shift for biomedical research and has the potential to start a revolution in the development of modern therapeutics.

"Johnson & Johnson is very pleased to award The Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Biomedical Research to Dr. Mello," said William C. Weldon, Chairman, Board of Directors, and Chief Executive Officer of Johnson & Johnson. "His work and research have the potential to help millions of people, and this epitomizes the passion, leadership and innovation that defined Dr. Janssen."

Among Mello's other honors, he has received the 2006 Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize; the Dr. Lewis S. Rosenstiel Award for Distinguished Work in Basic Medical Science; the Gairdner Foundation International Award; the National Academy of Sciences Award in Molecular Biology; the Wiley Prize in Biomedical Sciences; the Warren Triennial Prize, Massachusetts General Hospital; and the Massry Prize.

"Now more than ever, scientific innovation comes at a premium," says Sir Richard Sykes, a member of the Award's international Selection Committee. "Discoveries such as those by Dr. Mello have the potential to open a treasure chest of untold medical innovations that can ultimately help patients on a worldwide basis."

About The Selection Committee

The Award's independent, international Selection Committee included:

- * Dr. Arvid Carlsson (Sweden), University of Gothenburg, Sweden, 2000 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine
- * Dr. Jean Marie Lehn (France), professor, College de France, 1987 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry
- * Dr. Hartmut Michel (Germany), director, department of Molecular Membrane Biology, University of Frankfurt, 1988 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry
- * Dr. Edward Scolnick (United States), former president of Merck Research Laboratories, Merck and Company, now director of the Psychiatry Initiative at the Broad Institute, member of the National Academy of

Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Institute of Medicine

- * Dr. Solomon Snyder (United States), distinguished service professor of neuroscience, pharmacology and psychiatry at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, 1978 co-winner of the Albert Lasker Award, 2003 winner of the National Medal of Science
- * Sir Richard Sykes (United Kingdom), former chief executive officer of GlaxoWellcome, now Rector of Imperial College, London, Fellow of the Royal Society, Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, and a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences

"Dr. Mello is a very deserving recipient of this auspicious award," said Dr. Snyder. "The Committee was faced with a very difficult challenge to select the inaugural recipient for this award. We feel that Dr. Mello's innovative work opens up new pathways to understanding basic biology and will have a true impact on human health."

For more information about the Award, please go to <http://www.pauljanssenaward.com/>.

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