

## **PROFESSOR PHILIPPE J. SANSONETTI, WINNER OF THE SECOND EDITION OF 'ABARCA PRIZE'**

- Sansonetti is considered one of the founders of cellular microbiology and a pioneer in scientific publications in this area, thanks to his revolutionary research on shigellosis, a disease that causes the pathogen that causes bacillary dysentery, a diarrheal disease responsible for more than 700,000 deaths annually.
- Shigellosis causes more than 80 million cases a year and affects 164.7 million people worldwide, 163.2 million in developing countries and 1.5 million in industrialized countries.
- The laureate has also developed translational research programs aimed at improving child health in the most impoverished areas of the planet.
- He works at the Pasteur Institute and the Collège de France (Paris), is a member of the US National Academy of Sciences, an elected member of the Swedish Academy of Biotechnology and an elected member of the French Academy of Sciences.
- The official award ceremony will take place next Wednesday, October 26 and can be followed by streaming.

**Madrid, October 25, 2022.-** Professor Philippe J. Sansonetti, microbiologist, professor and director of the Microbial Molecular Pathogenesis Unit of the renowned French research centre Pasteur Institute and with a brilliant professional career of more than 40 years, has been chosen winner of the II Edition of "ABARCA PRIZE", the International Award of Medical Sciences Doctor Juan Abarca.

The international jury of this award, composed of Jean-Laurent Casanova, winner of the First Edition of "ABARCA PRIZE"; Silvia G. Priori, Italian cardiologist and researcher; the Spanish professor, scientist and palaeontologist Juan Luis Arsuaga and Professor Federico de Montalvo, doctor in Law and former president of the Bioethics Committee of Spain since 2019, and chaired by Professor Alberto Muñoz, has deliberated on the outstanding finalist candidacies in each of the areas, based on the impact, depth and transcendence of the research communicated.

As a result of these deliberations, Professor Alberto Muñoz, on behalf of the entire jury, has proceeded to the drafting and reading of the minutes in which the French researcher Philippe J. Sansonetti is recognized as the winner of the award, of whom the relevance of his work is highlighted in terms of the magnitude of his research focused

on the understanding of various aspects of the pathogenesis of *Shigella* bacteria, the pathogen that causes bacillary

dysentery, a diarrheal disease responsible for more than 80 million cases and 700,000 deaths a year worldwide, especially in developing countries and particularly in young children. Professor Sansonetti has developed several translational research programs aimed at improving the health of these children in the most impoverished areas of the planet, in line with the Hippocratic and humanitarian vision and action of the "ABARCA PRIZE".

['ABARCA PRIZE' II Edition - Statement from the Jury](#)

Endowed with €100,000 and a diploma, "ABARCA PRIZE" recognizes personalities in the field of research and science anywhere in the world whose work has made a major contribution to improving the health of individuals and populations. The award ceremony will take place on 26 October at the Mandarin Oriental Ritz Hotel (Madrid).

**Professor Philippe Sansonetti**

The line of research carried out by Philippe Sansonetti focuses on understanding the different aspects of the pathogenesis of *shigella*, an enteric pathogen responsible for severe diarrheal forms. His work crosses multiple areas ranging from biology to medicine, from molecular genetics to cell biology, from immunology to the possible development of vaccines against dysentery. The laureate has also carried out important studies aimed at identifying a set of agents or structures of the shigella involved in the control of both the innate immune response and the adaptive response. Shigellosis affects 164.7 million people worldwide, 163.2 million in developing countries and 1.5 million in industrialized countries.

Professor Sansonetti has also completed an ambitious study on the pathogenesis of childhood stunting and pediatric environmental enteropathy (PEE) associated with sub-Saharan Africa. It is the first etiology of malnutrition in low-income infants and responds to the overgrowth of the small intestine of a dysbiotic microbiota, responsible for chronic low-grade intestinal inflammation and nutrient malabsorption.

Currently, Philippe Sansonetti is actively involved in research for the development of candidate vaccines against the main *shigellae* that cause dysentery in developing countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) has given priority to programs to develop effective vaccines against this disease, since the implementation of hygienic-sanitary prevention measures presents a great difficulty and, on the other hand, there is a high prevalence of multidrug-resistant strains.

Professor Sansonetti is the author of more than 300 publications in scientific journals and for several years has been editor of numerous professional publications. His prestige in the field of sciences has been recognized with numerous awards, among which stand out Knight of the National Order of the Legion of Honor and officer of the National Order of Merit. Member of: EMBO (European Molecular Biology Organisation),

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Academy of Sciences Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher, Leopoldina American Association for the Advancement of Science, Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

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#### **About 'ABARCA PRIZE'**

The International Award for Medical Sciences *Doctor Juan Abarca*, '**ABARCA PRIZE**', was born in 2021 with the purpose of highlighting to international society the impact of medical and scientific advances and innovations. To this end, this award is given to a person from the world of research and science from anywhere in the world, whose work has contributed in a transcendental way to the improvement of the health of people and populations.

'**ABARCA PRIZE**' is inspired by the foundations of the permanent commitment to the progress and health of people, intrinsic values of *Dr. Juan Abarca* throughout his professional career.

#### **For further information:**

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