



Press release

**The 10th Endocrine Regulation Prize of the *Fondation Ipsen*
is awarded to Paolo Sassone-Corsi
(*University of California, Irvine, United States*)**

Paris (France), May 11, 2012 – The international jury under the presidency of Professor Iain Robinson (*National Institute for Medical Research, London, UK*) awarded on May 7th, 2012, the 10th Endocrine Regulation Prize of the *Fondation Ipsen* (20.000€) to Dr. Paolo Sassone-Corsi (*University of California, Irvine, United States*) during the congress of the ICE / ECE (International Congress of Endocrinology and European Congress of Endocrinology) in Florence (Italy), for his outstanding contribution to the understanding of clock genes and endocrine rhythms.

Circadian rhythms govern a number of fundamental physiological functions in almost all organisms, from prokaryotes to humans. The circadian clocks are intrinsic time-tracking systems with which organisms can anticipate environmental changes and adapt to the appropriate time of day. Disruption of these rhythms can have a profound influence to human health and has been linked to depression, insomnia, jet lag, coronary heart disease, neurodegenerative disorders and cancer. At the heart of circadian regulatory pathways is the clock machinery, a remarkably coordinated transcription-translation system that utilizes also dynamic changes in chromatin transitions and epigenetic control. Recent findings indicate that regulation goes also the other way, since specific elements of the clock are able to sense changes in the cellular metabolism. Understanding in full detail the intimate links between cellular metabolism and the circadian clock machinery will provide not only critical insights into system physiology and endocrinology, but also novel avenues for pharmacological intervention towards metabolic disorders.

Paolo Sassone-Corsi was born in Italy. He studied biology and received his PhD in genetics from the University of Naples in 1979. He pursued a postdoctoral fellowship at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Strasbourg until 1983. He remained there, first as an assistant research fellow and later as an associate research fellow until 1985. After four years at the Salk Institute, he returned to the CNRS in Strasbourg in 1990 as director of research. Since 2006 he is a Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics in the department of Pharmacology at the University of California. Paolo Sassone-Corsi was elected to the American Society for Photobiology, the Endocrine Society (USA), the European Cellular Biology Organization and the European Molecular Biology Organization in 1990. Amongst his many academic distinctions are the EMBO Gold Medal (1994), the Rosen Prize (Fondation de la Recherche Médicale, France, 1996), the Grand Prix Liliane Bettencourt pour la Recherche (France, 1997), the Grand Prix Charles-Léopold Mayer de l'Académie des Sciences (France 2003) and the CNRS Silver Medal (2004). Paolo Sassone-Corsi's major interest is concentrated on the mechanisms of signal transduction, that are able to modulate nuclear functions and, in particular, gene expression, chromatin remodeling and epigenetic control. These events have important consequences for the understanding of cellular proliferation, oncogenesis and differentiation. The stimulation of intracellular pathways and the activation of specific protein kinases lead to transcriptional regulation by changes in the phosphorylation state of nuclear factors. These act as final targets of different pathways and modulate expression from specific regulatory sites. The strength of these



studies is particularly evident within physiological settings which have been investigated by his lab, the molecular control of circadian rhythms and the differentiation of male germ cells.

The Endocrine Regulation Prize

Created in 2002, this Prize of the *Fondation Ipsen* has been awarded to the renowned specialists Wylie VALE (2002), Robert LEFKOWITZ (2003), Pierre CHAMBON (2004), Thomas HÖKFELT (2005), Roger CONE (2006), William CROWLEY (2007), Ronald EVANS (2008), Gilbert VASSART (2009) and Shlomo MELMED (2010). The members of the jury are: Iain ROBINSON (*National Institute for Medical Research, London, UK*), President, Xavier BERTAGNA (*Hôpital Cochin, Paris, France*), Felipe CASANUEVA (*University of Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain*), Michael CONN (*ORPC, Beaverton, USA*), Alain ENJALBERT (*UMR 6231 CNRS-Universités Aix Marseille II et III, Marseille, France*), Rolf GAILLARD (*Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois, Lausanne, Switzerland*), Ezio GHIGO (*Ospedale Molinette, Turin, Italy*), Ilpo HUHTANIEMI (*Imperial College Faculty of Medicine, London, UK*), Paul KELLY (*Faculté de Médecine Necker Enfants Malades, Paris, France*), Steven LAMBERTS (*Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands*), Stafford LIGHTMAN (*University of Bristol, Bristol, UK*) and Günter STALLA (*Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry, München, Germany*).

About the *Fondation Ipsen*

Established in 1983 under the aegis of the Fondation de France, the mission of the Fondation Ipsen is to contribute to the development and dissemination of scientific knowledge. The long-standing action of the Fondation Ipsen aims at fostering the interaction between researchers and clinical practitioners, which is indispensable due to the extreme specialisation of these professions. The ambition of the Fondation Ipsen is to initiate a reflection about the major scientific issues of the forthcoming years. It has developed an important international network of scientific experts who meet regularly at meetings known as Colloques Médecine et Recherche, dedicated to six main themes: Alzheimer's disease, neurosciences, longevity, endocrinology, the vascular system and cancer science. Moreover the Fondation Ipsen has started since 2007 several meetings in partnership with the Salk Institute, the Karolinska Institutet, the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Days of Molecular Medicine Global Foundation as well as with the science journals Nature, Cell and Science. The Fondation Ipsen produced several hundreds publications; more than 250 scientists and biomedical researchers have been awarded prizes and research grants.

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