

# Nobel winner sees end to Aids spread within years

Achievers to  
be feted at gala  
dinner on  
Wednesday

STOCKHOLM, Monday

A French scientist who shared this year's Nobel prize for medicine says he believed the transmission of Aids could be eliminated within years.

Prof Luc Montagnier, director of the World Foundation for Aids Research and Prevention, told a news conference together with this year's other winners for medicine that halting the transmission of Aids would make it a disease much like others.

"Our job, of course, is to find complementary treatment to eradicate the infection. I think it's not impossible to do it within a few years," Prof Montagnier said at the weekend.

"So I hope to see in my lifetime the eradication of, not the Aids epidemic, but at least the infection," the 76-year-old said. "This could be achieved."

## No cure

Prof Montagnier and Prof Françoise Barre-Sinoussi, of the Institut Pasteur, shared half of the 2008 prize for discovering the virus that has killed 25 million people since the early 1980s. There is no cure for Aids, which infects an estimated 33 million globally, but cocktails of drugs can control the virus and keep patients healthy.

There is no vaccine either, although researchers are trying to find vaccines that either prevent infection or would control the virus so that patients are less likely to transmit it - a so-called therapeutic vaccine.

Prof Montagnier said he hoped such a therapeutic vaccine could be developed within about four to five years, noting

he and colleagues had already been working on this for a decade. German scientist Harald zur Hausen of the University of Duesseldorf won the other half of the 10-million-Swedish-crown (\$1.2 million) award for finding the cause of cervical cancer.

"There's obviously a belief in many of the politicians and some other people ... that you know everything, which of course is nonsense. But in a way indeed I think one cannot ignore this," zur Hausen said.

Prof Barre-Sinoussi, who had come from Senegal following a meeting with the African country's president, agreed.

"Of course I have the same feeling. I think I feel that we have responsibility to try to influence, especially, the politicians."

She feared the global financial crisis could lead some countries to water down their commitment to the fight against diseases such as Aids, tuberculosis or malaria, so it was important Nobel winners tried to use their influence.

The three are in Stockholm for "Nobel Week," when laureates come to the Swedish capital for a barrage of news conferences, interviews and events, culminating with a gala dinner which this year takes place on Wednesday. Prof Montagnier and Prof Barre-Sinoussi expected to use the prize money to further their research. They also said the award was important in that it shed a bright light on the issue of Aids. (Reuters)

Two shared the  
2008 prize for  
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