

PRESS RELEASE

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Honda Foundation Announces Honda Prize 2007 Goes to French Private Surgeon Dr. Philippe Mouret, the Performer of the World-First Practical Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy Who Marked the Beginning of Rapid Spread of Endoscopic Surgery and Its Related Technologic Innovations in Modern Medicine

The Honda Foundation, co-founded by Soichiro and his younger brother Benjiro Honda, and headed by Hiromori Kawashima, is pleased to announce the Honda Prize for the year 2007 will be awarded to the French surgeon Philippe Mouret, M.D.. Dr. Mouret will be the 28th laureate of the prize.

Historically, surgeons relied primarily on open surgery to remove tumors in the abdomen and the chest. However Dr. Mouret of Lyon successfully removed the gallbladder by using a procedure for the video-assisted laparoscopic cholecystectomy in 1987.

The significance of this event is that Dr. Mouret was the first person who applied the laparoscopic techniques, then the gynecologist's tool, to an area of general surgery. He developed his own technique based on the procedures invented by the German gynecologist Dr. Kurt Semm. Although the German surgeon Dr. Eric Mühe performed a similar procedure just prior to Dr. Mouret, it is fair to say Dr. Mouret did perform the laparoscopic cholecystectomy according to the technique still used today, which proved for the first time an endoscopic procedure could be used safely, long perceived otherwise, in general surgery. With strong support from the two compatriots Dr. François Dubois and Dr. Jacques Périssat, Dr. Mouret's success became the cornerstone for the development of endoscopic surgery, and its rapid spread revolutionized surgical thinking and practice.

Dr. Mouret developed his laparoscopic techniques based on the philosophy that a surgeon should treat their patients as minimally invasive as possible. Dr. Mouret chose laparoscopy because he believed it would drastically reduce postoperative pain and shorten hospital stay with fewer postoperative complications. With its socioeconomic consequences, including less hospitalization expenses, less medical resources required, and quicker return to work of patients, laparoscopic treatment rapidly spread out from France into the United States, and then to Japan and the rest of the world.

Endoscopic surgery requires very skilled hands of surgeons and sophisticated surgical instruments, but the rapid evolution of operative techniques and associated medical technologies, especially in terms of electronics and computing, has further expanded endoscopic applications into the treatment of diseases such as lung cancer and stomach cancer. It has also led to the realization of robotic surgery in which computer-controlled robots provide delicate intraoperative assistance to surgeons.

The Honda Foundation recognizes Dr. Mouret for all these significant contributions to modern medicine in consistency with his philosophy of “taking pains” to reduce those of patients. They undoubtedly deserve the Honda Prize as one of the best examples of ecotechnology※ available today.

The 28th award ceremony for the Honda Prize will be held at the Imperial Hotel Tokyo on Monday, November 19th this year. In addition to a diploma and medal, Dr. Mouret will receive a money prize of 10 million yen.

※ Ecotechnology:

Honda Foundation’s guiding principle since 1979, which was coined from ecology and technology. This new technologic concept calls for harmonious development and use of technology with human beings and their environment.

For more details:

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