

## **PRESS RELEASE**

September 29, 2009

### **Australian Dr. Ian Frazer to Receive Honda Prize 2009 for his Achievement in Developing World's First Cervical Cancer Vaccine**

The Honda Foundation, co-founded by Soichiro Honda and his younger brother Benjiro Honda, and currently headed by Hiromori Kawashima, is pleased to announce the Honda Prize for the year 2009 will be awarded to Dr. Ian Frazer, Director, Diamantina Institute for Cancer, Immunology and Metabolic Medicine, the University of Queensland, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Australia for his contribution to the development of the world's first cervical cancer vaccines. Dr. Frazer will be the 30th laureate of the prize.

Fatalities from cervical cancer are second only to breast cancer with 500,000 women developing the disease and 270,000 losing their lives each year. 80 percent of deaths occur in developing countries where regular health checks are not systematically available.

The cervical cancer prevention vaccines developed using Dr. Frazer's technology are now approved in more than 100 countries across the world, with government sponsored immunization programs for young women in place in the USA and Australia since 2007. Dr. Frazer's achievement is said to be the first case of a cancer being prevented through human intervention.

The cause of cervical cancer is the "Human Papilloma Virus" (HPV). HPV has a number of strains, each displaying a range of risk factors that may trigger cancer growth. There are currently about fifteen known high risk strains connected with the genesis of cervical cancer.

HPV type16 and type18 have been detected from about 70 percent of the cervical cancers that develop in the world. In 1983 a team lead by Professor Harald zur Hausen (winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Physiology & Medicine) at the German Cancer Research Centre extracted HPV type16 genes and proved this to be a cause of cervical cancer. Researchers from around the world have worked on the development of a vaccine since then. The vaccines developed using technology developed by Dr. Frazer trigger the immune system to make antibodies to fight type16 and type18 HPV .

An original method invented by Dr. Frazer, along with his colleague the late Dr. Jian Zhou, enabled creation of the capsid or outer shell of the virus using recombinant DNA technology as a harmless protein mimic of the real virus. When injected, this capsid or hull of HPV type16 and type18 is recognized by the immune system and antibodies are produced and stored for future use.

The empty capsids are harmless with no side effects on the human body.

Merck & Co., Inc., N.J. USA and GlaxoSmithKline, UK adopted Dr. Frazer's basic technique and now produce the vaccines on a large scale. Many governments across the world have introduced public education and awareness programs to encourage the immunization of young women.

Wide application of the vaccines developed with Dr. Frazer's technology will prevent tens of thousands of cases of cervical cancer each year. By any measure, this is a massive contribution towards the health and well being of women across the world, both now and for future generations.

Dr. Frazer developed the vaccine technology through his ingenuity, skill and determination. He used state-of-the-art science and engineering technology as key supporting elements in his research endeavor. Dr. Frazer has contributed to the preservation of the seed of the human race. For us, it is an outstanding example of Ecotechnology \* realization, and thus suitable for the Honda Prize.

The 30th award ceremony for the Honda Prize will be held at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo on November 17th 2009. In addition to the prize diploma and medal, 10 million yen (approximately AUD125,000) will be awarded to the laureate. Dr. Frazer intends to contribute the money to the research team at his University.

**\* Ecotechnology**

Honda Foundation's guiding principle since 1979 coined from ecology and technology, where ecology connotes the entire global system including human civilization. This technologic concept calls for harmonious development and use of technology with human beings and their environment.

**For more details:**

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