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Press release

Yehezkel Ben-Ari, winner of the 2009 Inserm Grand Prix.

Every year since 2000, Inserm has affirmed its commitment to paying tribute to outstanding work performed in its laboratories and departments. By honouring talents, Inserm intends to demonstrate the diversity and wealth of activities involved in today's biological, medical and health research, and the creativity and passion of the men and women who carry out and drive this research each day. The Inserm 2009 prize-giving ceremony will take place on **17 December**.

► Inserm Grand Prix

This prize pays tribute to French scientific researchers whose work has enabled outstanding progress to be made in our knowledge of human physiology, therapeutics and more widely, the field of health.



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This year, it has been awarded to **Yehezkel Ben-Ari**, founder and honorary director of Inserm Mediterranean Institute of Neurobiology (Inmed) in Marseilles. Born in Cairo in 1943, Yehezkel Ben-Ari was educated in Israel, before settling in France in 1966. Throughout his career, he has worked in different French laboratories with a few periods abroad (England, Norway, Canada). From 1986, he directed unit 29 "Neurobiology and physiopathology of development", at Cochin-Port-Royal hospital. In 1999, he moved with all his unit's researchers, engineers and administrative staff to build and set up, with the assistance of Inserm, Inmed on the Marseilles-Luminy site.

This institute comprises a neurology company incubator, a summer school for house physicians (Hippocrates school), an art gallery and the "All researchers" association militantly in favour of an experimental approach to sciences.

A member of many scientific bodies and learned societies, Yehezkel Ben-Ari, with his employees, has made numerous important discoveries in many fields, in particular brain maturation, epilepsy and stroke. He has already received the American Epilepsy Society Award for his work in 2000. Today, we pay tribute to his whole career by awarding him the 2009 Inserm Grand Prix.

► The Prix d'Honneur and International Prize

These pay tribute to the career and work of particularly eminent scientists working with INSERM and in the international community.



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The 2009 winner of the **Prix d'Honneur**, **Nicole Le Douarin**, has been a member of the Academy of Science since 1982. Agrégé in natural sciences, she began her professional life as a high school teacher. At the age of 28, the future College de France professor (she was elected in 1988) decided to take up her studies again and prepare a PhD. She subsequently devoted the rest of her career to embryology research. Today aged 79, Nicole Le Douarin continues her research in the “Development, evolution, plasticity of the nervous system” laboratory at Gif-sur-Yvette.



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The 2009 winner of the **International Prize**, **Nora D. Volkow** has directed the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) in the USA since 2003. Pioneer in the use of the brain imaging to study the toxic effects of drugs and their addictives properties, she has spent most of here career in the Energy Department at Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), Upton, New York. She is one of the world's leading specialists in the brain mechanisms of addiction. This great granddaughter of Leon Trotsky “militates” for a change in society's attitude to the victims of addictions and encourages research on the treatment of addiction.

► Research prizes

These prizes are awarded to researchers, teacher/researchers and clinician/ researchers whose work has particularly marked the field of fundamental, clinical and therapeutic research, and research into public health.

2009 prize-winners: **Pierre Brousset** and **Stanislas Lyonnet**

- **Pierre Brousset** is a hospital physician and researcher in the “Oncogenesis, signalling and therapeutic innovation” department of Inserm unit 563, at Purpan Hospital in Toulouse.
- **Stanislas Lyonnet** is hospital physician and researcher in Inserm unit 781 “Genetics and epigenetic of metabolic, neurosensory and developmental diseases”, at Necker-Children's' Hospital in Paris.

► Innovation prizes

These awards are given to engineers, administrative and technical staff for original achievements performed in support of research work.

2009 prize-winners: **Brigitte Bazin** and **Jean-Marie Garnier**.

- **Brigitte Bazin** is Inserm physician with a secondary posting as head of the “Research in developing countries” department of the French AIDS and viral hepatitis research Agency (ANRS).
- **Jean-Marie Garnier** is Inserm research engineer in unit 964, at the Institute of genetics and molecular and cell biology (IGBMC).

These individual distinctions also acknowledge the know-how, involvement and tenacity of whole teams. Through the traces left by researchers and engineers, they too play a part in the history of knowledge. These prizes are emblematic of Inserm's excellence and demonstrate the Institute's significant contribution to advances in the understanding of life and research into practical means for the screening, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of all human diseases. They provide proof that each year these illnesses are receding and individual quality of life and population health are improving.

For further information, photographs or to contact the prize-winners, please contact Inserm press department:

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