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Press release

Pier-Vincenzo Piazza receives the Inserm Grand Prix 2015

On 8 December next, at Collège de France, the Inserm Prizes for 2015 will be awarded to eight outstanding researchers and research engineers. The Inserm Grand Prix 2015 will be awarded to **Pier-Vincenzo Piazza**, in recognition for his body of work on the physiopathology of psychiatric illnesses, in the presence of **Marisol Touraine**, Minister of Social Affairs and Health, **Thierry Mandon**, Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research, **Professor Yves Lévy**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Inserm, and **Jean-Yves Le Déaut**, Member of Parliament and President of the Parliamentary Office for Scientific and Technological Assessment (Opecst).



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Pier-Vincenzo Piazza, Inserm Grand Prix

The **Inserm Grand Prix** is awarded to **Pier-Vincenzo Piazza**, Inserm Research Director and Director of Inserm Unit 862, "Neurocentre Magendie," for his body of research on the physiopathology of psychiatric illnesses.

Both a physician and psychiatrist, Pier-Vincenzo Piazza has devoted himself to experimental psychiatric research in order to develop new treatments for mental disorders. He was the first to demonstrate the existence of individual vulnerability to addiction, thus proposing the basis for the physiopathology of addiction.

He recently identified a mechanism that can naturally protect the brain from the harmful effects of cannabis in animals, something that has enabled him and his team to reveal a new class of pharmacological agents and to select the first candidate drug, AEF0117. This drug, which will be tested in clinical trials in 2016, is able to inhibit the behavioural effects of THC. This discovery paves the way for potential treatments for cannabis addiction.

Peter Piot, International Prize

The **International Prize** is awarded to **Peter Piot**, a physician specialising in microbiology and former Director of Onusida, in recognition for his body of research on deadly viruses. He jointly discovered Ebola virus in 1976, and has actively worked to combat HIV. As Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, he is currently



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involved in researching a vaccine for Ebola virus.



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Étienne-Émile Baulieu, Honorary Prize

The **Honorary Prize** distinguishes Professor **Étienne-Émile Baulieu**, researcher at Inserm Unit “Steroids, Neuroprotection and Neuroregeneration” (Inserm Unit 1195), for his work on steroid hormones. Recognised throughout the world for having discovered DHEA secretion by the adrenal glands and for having invented the abortion pill, he is currently working on an approach to Alzheimer’s disease.

The **Opecst-Inserm Prize** is awarded to **José-Alain Sahel**, ophthalmologist, founder and Director of The Vision Institute (Inserm Unit 968), a pioneer of artificial retina research and regenerative eye treatments.



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The **Research Prizes** are awarded to **Caroline Robert**, physician and Codirector of the Melanoma Research Team at Inserm Unit 981, for her work on melanoma, and to **Archana Singh-Manoux**, Inserm Research Director at the “Center for Research in Epidemiology and Population Health” (Inserm Unit 1018), in recognition for her studies on cognitive ageing.

This year, **Innovation Prizes** honour **René Ferrera**, an Inserm research engineer at the CarMeN Laboratory (Inserm Unit 1060), whose achievements include the development of new techniques for the protection and evaluation of myocardial viability, and **Claire Lissalde**, a research engineer and head of Inserm’s audiovisual service (Department of Scientific Information and Communication), for her original work in science outreach.

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