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Leading diabetes and cancer researcher brings »EMBO Gold« to Scotland



Professor Dario Alessi
Winner of the 2005
EMBO Gold Medal

Professor **Dario Alessi** of the MRC (Medical Research Council) Protein Phosphorylation Unit at the University of Dundee, Scotland is the 2005 winner of the EMBO Gold Medal. Alessi receives the award in recognition of his landmark work in cell signalling. The young scientist's pioneering research on enzymes called "kinases" and their role in inherited disease has provided exciting new insights into conditions such as diabetes, cancer and hypertension.

The EMBO Gold Medal is presented annually to a young European researcher for outstanding contributions to life sciences research. Recipients are also honoured as role models for other young scientists in Europe. Dario Alessi fulfils these criteria on every level. Just 14 years after completing his PhD, he is a leading light in the world of cell signalling. His discovery and characterisation of the PDK1 and LKB1 kinases has had a major impact on understanding of signal transduction. These breakthroughs and Alessi's continued research in this area also hold great promise for the clinical treatment of inherited diseases.

EMBO Executive Director, Frank Gannon, commented:

»Dario is an exemplary role model for young researchers, having achieved so much in his still young research career. His work has had a tremendous international impact and this is all the more remarkable when you consider his publication approach, which steers away from high impact journals. To do this and still achieve such an impact on biomedical research is the mark of a truly exceptional scientist.«

The true extent of this impact was demonstrated recently in data published by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). The ISI Essential Science Indicators placed Alessi as the world's 13th most cited scientist in the fields of biology and biochemistry from January 1995 to August 2005 – a remarkable achievement for such a young researcher.

On hearing the news of his award, Dario Alessi said:

»It's an enormous honour to be selected by EMBO for this award and to be the first researcher in Scotland to receive this accolade. The European aspect of the award is very special to me. With Scottish and Italian parents, a Spanish wife and a childhood spent in France and Belgium, I have a strong European sense of identity. To gain the recognition of such an esteemed group of European scientists is also a great privilege.«

The EMBO Gold Medal and a bursary of 10,000 Euro will be presented to Dario Alessi on October 16, 2005 at the EMBO Frontiers of Molecular Biology meeting in Warsaw, Poland.



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