

## Milestones

A new neurological institute opened at the **Mater Hospital**, in Dublin, Ireland. The facility should double the hospital's capacity for neurological cases, which currently stands at up to 3500 per year.

The University of Utah (Salt Lake City, UT, USA) opened the **University Health Care Clinical Neuroscience Center**, which will house all its neurological facilities, including an outpatient clinic, an education centre, four operating rooms, a stroke centre, and a neurosurgery research department.

The **University of Pennsylvania** (Philadelphia, PA, USA) announced US\$50 million to endow five new professorships in neuroscience and to support interdisciplinary neuroscience initiatives.

The UK National Institute for Health Research awarded £17.4 million to **Nottinghamshire Healthcare** and the **University of Nottingham** (Nottingham, UK) to establish a new health-care research centre; one of its research priorities will be the treatment of stroke.

The US National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences will dedicate US\$21.5 million to **Gary Miller**, **Marie-Françoise Chesselet**, and **Stuart Lipton** to investigate environmental causes of Parkinson's disease.

The Boston Biomedical Research Institute (Boston, MA, USA) will launch the first **Wellstone Center** for health and research professionals studying facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy. The initiative was awarded US\$9 million by the US National Institutes of Health and will be headed by **Charles Emerson**.

£1.9 million from the UK Medical Research Council will enable **Stuart Pickering-Brown and colleagues** at the University of Manchester's School of Translational Medicine (Manchester, UK) to investigate the causes of frontotemporal lobar degeneration.

**Sepideh Amin-Hanjani**, at the University of Illinois (Chicago, IL, USA), was awarded a US\$2.1 million grant from the US National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to lead a five-site study on cerebral blood flow after stroke.

The **Worcester Polytechnic Institute** (Worcester, MA, USA) will receive US\$1 million from the US Army's Military Amputee Research Program to continue its development of neuroprosthetics.

The US National Institutes of Health revealed the recipients of their prestigious New Innovator Awards: **Ronald Cohn**, **Xiangfeng Duan**, **Seth Field**, **Aaron Gitler**, **Shelli Kesler**, **Yuriy Kirichok**, **Chay Kuo**, **Karin Pfenning**, and **Erik Shapiro** will research original strategies to decipher mechanisms of neurodegeneration.

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## Lifeline

**Steven Laureys** graduated as a medical doctor from the University of Brussels, Belgium, where he also obtained an MSc in pharmaceutical medicine. He obtained a PhD at the University of Liège, Belgium, where he is now a clinical professor of neurology. Currently, he leads the Coma Science Group at the Liège Cyclotron Research Center. His team searches for behavioural and neural correlates of consciousness in patients with severe brain damage.

### What has been the greatest achievement of your career?

I always hope the best is yet to come. Our studies of residual pain perception in non-communicative vegetative and minimally conscious patients are important to me because of their medical, therapeutic, and ethical consequences. The diagnosis that made the biggest difference to me was that of my father's presumed eye infection as Horner's syndrome, caused by a pancoast tumour. His current 4-year survival of malignant mesothelioma is atypical and his early diagnosis is my biggest personal medical achievement.

### What do you think is the most over-hyped field of science or medicine at the moment?

Consciousness has become sexy, maybe even over-hyped, but all is cyclical and so we should ride the wave while it lasts.

### Who was your most influential teacher, and why?

I advise students not to have a single teacher but to take the best from each. If forced to pick one, mine would be my PhD supervisor Pierre Maquet, who taught me the scientific method and functional neuroimaging—the latter is a never-ending process.

### What would be your advice to a newly qualified doctor?

Be empathic. Respect patients' autonomy. *Primum non nocere*. Strive to be happy with what you do: it is an exceptional job.

### What is your greatest regret?

Having missed a neurological diagnosis in a loved one.

### What was your first experiment as a child?

As a teenager, while making a robot, I tried to solder a lithium battery and the heat made it explode in my face.

### What is the most memorable comment from your school reports?

In my primary school, a teacher once asked what we wanted to be as adults. I answered a medical doctor. His reply that none of us would go to university was a bit distressing for the 10-year-old me. Adults, never shatter a child's dream.

### What items do you always carry with you?

Underwear and a mobile phone.

### Which would you choose, money or power?

They are not orthogonal vectors. You have one, you have the other.

### What is the naughtiest thing you have ever done?

My wife said I should not tell you.



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