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Hepatitis C virus discovery gets Nobel Prize 2020 in Medicine

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The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine to Harvey J. Alter, Michael Houghton and Charles M. Rice



The Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institutet has decided to award the 2020 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine jointly to Harvey J. Alter, Michael Houghton and Charles M. Rice for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus.

This year's Nobel Prize is awarded to three scientists who have made a decisive contribution to the fight against blood-borne hepatitis, a major global health problem that causes cirrhosis and liver cancer in people around the world.

Harvey J. Alter, Michael Houghton and Charles M. Rice made seminal discoveries that led to the identification of a novel virus, Hepatitis C virus. Prior to their work, the discovery of the Hepatitis A and B viruses had been critical steps forward, but the majority of blood-borne hepatitis cases remained unexplained.

The discovery of Hepatitis C virus revealed the cause of the remaining cases of chronic hepatitis and made possible blood tests and new medicines that have saved millions of lives.

The Nobel Assembly, consisting of 50 professors at Karolinska Institutet, awards the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Its Nobel Committee evaluates the nominations. Since 1901 the Nobel Prize has been awarded to scientists who have made the most important discoveries for the benefit of mankind.