

# China, Medicine Prize winner not at Nobel dinner: foundation

December 3 2010

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China's ambassador to Sweden and this year's laureate of the Nobel Prize in Medicine will not attend the December 10 Nobel Prize ceremony, the head of the Nobel Foundation told reporters Friday.

British doctor Robert Edwards, who won this year's medicine prize for his pioneering of in-vitro fertilisation (IVF), will not travel to Stockholm because of health reasons, [Nobel Foundation](#) executive director Michael Sohlman said.

The 85-year-old, whose work led to the birth of the first test-tube baby in 1978, was also too weak to give interviews when it was announced in October that he had won the prize .

His wife Ruth will travel to Stockholm to collect the prize on his behalf.

Sohlman also said that unlike last year, China's ambassador to Sweden Chen Mingming has not accepted the invitation to the traditional banquet given at Stockholm's City Hall in honour of the Nobel laureates.

He said he did not know if it was related to China's opposition to this year's Nobel Peace Prize laureate, jailed dissident Liu Xiaobo.

The Nobel Peace Prize is also handed out on December 10, but at a separate ceremony in Oslo.

Six countries -- China, Cuba, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Morocco and Russia --

are so far known to have declined the invitation to attend the Oslo ceremony.

China said Thursday it was "difficult to maintain friendly relations" with Norway, following the decision to award this year's Peace Prize to Liu.

Sohlman on Friday also defended his decision not to invite to the ceremony Jimmie Aakesson, the head of Sweden's far-right, anti-immigrant Sweden Democrat party, elected to parliament for the first time in September.

All leaders of the Swedish parliamentary parties are traditionally invited to the sumptuous gala, at which royal family members are also regular attendees.

"The reasons are very obvious. They are working at 180 degrees against us, or rather (against) the values we stand for," he said.

"If you go on their website, the Sweden Democrats have a sort of pragmatic programme ... where it's stated that their ideal is ethnically and culturally homogeneous people," Sohlman said, whereas Alfred Nobel wanted his prizes to be "cosmopolitan, international" awards.

The far-right party "clashes head on with the philosophy of this institution," he said.

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