

Stem cell researchers awarded \$500K prize in NY

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(AP) -- Three stem cell researchers have been awarded the annual Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research for their pioneering work in human stem cells.

The winners announced Wednesday are Elaine Fuchs of Rockefeller University in New York City; James A. Thomson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health; and Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University in Japan and Gladstone Institute of Cardiovascular Disease in San Francisco.

They will share \$500,000, the largest award in medicine and science in the United States. The prize was established in 2000 by the late Morris "Marty" Silverman.

James Barba, president and CEO of the medical center, said their discoveries move medical researchers closer to new treatments for diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's, spinal cord injury and cancer.

"The solutions to these debilitating diseases and many, many others that plague humans might very well be found through the science of stem cells," Barba said in a statement.

Stem cells are prized for their versatility. They can turn into any cell in the body.

Yamanaka and Thomson are credited with discovering in their separate

labs how to genetically reprogram adult human cells back to an embryonic state. This discovery was reported as a major scientific breakthrough in 2007. The cell lines, now used in laboratories worldwide, promise to speed up [stem cell research](#) by offering an alternative to actual [embryonic stem cells](#).

Fuchs' work has focused on the biology of stem cells. Her discoveries in understanding how stem cells make skin and hair and how they repair wounds have led her laboratory to the genetic bases of human skin disorders, including cancers.

More information: <http://www.amc.edu/Academic/AlbanyPrize>

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