

Japan stem cell Nobel laureate to get research boost

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Japan's Nobel prize-winning Shinya Yamanaka will likely get up to 30 billion yen (\$383 million) for his stem cell research over the next decade, an official said Wednesday.

The Japanese science and technology ministry is looking at giving at least 2.7 billion yen of extra money to support Yamanaka's work over the next fiscal year alone, a ministry official said.

"The government plans to continue this programme for the following 10 years, while Dr Yamanaka will also receive other subsidies as well," he said on condition of anonymity, adding the grant was already planned before his Nobel prize was announced.

The total subsidies likely to be given to the scientist are estimated to be worth up to 30 billion yen over the decade.

Yamanaka and Britain's John Gurdon were jointly honoured with the medicine prize for discovering that [adult cells](#) can be transformed back to an infant state called [stem cells](#), the key ingredient in the vision of regenerative medicine.

The Japanese was singled out for his work in the field of so-called induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells.

So-called "nuclear reprogramming" uses a fully-developed adult cell to create an iPS cell—a kind of blank slate that has the potential to become

any other kind of cell in the body.

Scientists say in this way they can generate materials either to experiment on, or to use within the body—perhaps as a means of repairing or even replacing damaged or diseased organs.

Yamanaka had previously called for more [government support](#) for his research, and had run a charity marathon to raise funds last year.

The news came as it was announced US chemists Robert Lefkowitz and Brian Kobilka had won the [Nobel Prize](#) for chemistry for identifying a class of [cell receptor](#), yielding vital insights into how the body works at the molecular level.

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