

Stem cell pioneer sues Nobel assembly in US

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A pioneer of stem cell research is suing the assembly that awards the Nobel medicine prize, in a first such lawsuit, over claims it made about this year's winners, a spokeswoman said Thursday.

Rongxiang Xu, who describes himself as the founder of "human body regenerative restoration science" claims he made a key discovery credited to the Nobel winners a decade before they did.

He filed a lawsuit in California this week against the Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institutet, which awarded this year's prize to Shinya Yamanaka of Japan and John Gurdon of Britain.

The two scientists won the prize in October for work in [cell programming](#), a research area that has nourished dreams of replacement tissue for people crippled by disease.

Specifically, they found that [adult cells](#) can be transformed back to an infant state called [stem cells](#), the key ingredient in the vision of regenerative medicine.

In awarding the prize, the Nobel jury said: "Their findings have revolutionised our understanding of how cells and organisms develop," and "created new opportunities to study diseases and develop methods for diagnosis and therapy."

Describing his lawsuit as a first against the Nobel assembly, Xu said he discovered "regenerative" cells in 1984 while studying treatments that

have benefited 20 million burn victims in 73 countries.

Alleging libel and unfair competition in the suit filed in Orange County, southern California, the Los Angeles-based scientist claims his good reputation was defamed by the Nobel Assembly.

Xu claims the Nobel assembly's statement "is false, as he was the scientist who made the discovery a decade earlier, therefore defaming his exemplary reputation," said a statement announcing the lawsuit.

"My main priority for filing this suit was to clarify the Academy's mistaken and misleading statements for the preservation of humanity and future generations," he was cited as saying.

There was no immediate comment to emailed requests for reaction from the Sweden-based Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institutet or British Nobel laureate Gurdon.

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