

2014 FEBS | EMBO Women in Science Award Honours Pascale Cossart



EMBO and the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS) announce Pascale Cossart, a world renowned bacteriologist and Professor at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, France, as the winner of the 2014 FEBS | EMBO Women in Science Award.

Professor Cossart receives the award for her outstanding contributions to the study of how bacteria infect human and other cells, her active role in encouraging cooperation between different disciplines in the life sciences, and her support and mentoring of young scientists. The FEBS | EMBO Women in Science Award recognises the outstanding achievements of a female researcher in molecular biology over the previous five years. Winners of the award are role models who inspire future generations of women in science.

Cossart has studied in detail how the infectious bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*, a deadly food-borne pathogen, infects cells and leads to disease (such as encephalitis, bacteremia, and gastroenteritis). Cossart and colleagues were the first to work out how *Listeria monocytogenes* enters and takes over cells that it infects. Her work has helped to build up a comprehensive picture of the genetic and biochemical processes that make this organism so effective and lethal.

"Her work has provided an incredible foundation for the study of how microorganisms infect cells and disrupt the essential processes needed in a healthy cell," said Julian Davies, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of British Columbia.

Upon hearing of her distinction, the award winner said: "I am really happy. This prize is very different from any other award. It comes from EMBO and FEBS, which means a lot. It not only recognises scientific achievements but also social behaviour and engagement in the scientific community. I truly feel honoured and encouraged to go ahead."

The French scientist has been an inspiring mentor and supporter of younger scientists, including women, throughout her career. "Science has become increasingly competitive over the years and it is important to encourage young scientists to pursue their efforts to have a productive and also happy scientific career," said Cossart. She is also highly engaged with the international community of microbiologists. Cossart has published more than 300 papers and has served or serves on numerous committees and editorial boards. She was a member of the editorial board of *FEBS Letters* from 2002 to 2008 and a member of the advisory editorial board of *The EMBO Journal* from 1996 to 2008.

"Her unflinching ability to pursue important biological problems and, at the same time, support her colleagues mark her out as one of the best scientists of her generation," stated her colleague Carmen Buchrieser, Head of the Unité Biologie des Bactéries Intracellulaires at the Institut Pasteur.

The FEBS | EMBO Women in Science Award of 10,000 euros will be presented to Pascale Cossart on 2 September at the FEBS-EMBO Anniversary Meeting in Paris, France, where she will give a special lecture..

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