Editorial

Council Honorees and the Nobel Prize
Our Continued Anniversary Celebration

In the continuing celebration of the 20th anniversary of Hypertension, we are once again pleased to salute those special honorees and lecturers of the Council for High Blood Pressure Research (CHBPR) who later received the Nobel Prize for their seminal research. Each of these individuals either had been selected as a recipient of the Stouffer, Ciba, or Novartis Award or was a featured speaker invited to present the Corcoran or other important special lectures. Sometime after being acknowledged by the Council, they were selected to receive the Nobel Prize in Medicine for their outstanding work.

In this month’s issue, we honor Sir James W. Black. It was in 1976 that Sir James Black (then head of biological research at Smith Kline & French Laboratories) received the Ciba Award at the Council for High Blood Pressure Research meeting. Dr Raymond P. Ahlquisht, PhD, also received the Ciba Award that year for his exposition of the concept of alpha- and beta-adrenergic receptor sites; and, Sir James Black was recognized for the development of beta-adrenergic receptor antagonists. It was later, in 1988, that Sir James Black and Doctors Gertrude B. Elion and George H. Hitchings were jointly honored with the Nobel Prize for their annunciation of the fundamental concept of the physiological receptor site, leading to the development of specific receptor-blocking pharmacological agents that inhibit those naturally occurring physiological receptor sites. Sir James Black, now at the King’s College Hospital Medical School in London, developed two important drugs at that time: propanolol, the first widely used beta-adrenergic receptor inhibitor; and cimetidine, a histamine receptor inhibitor. These pharmaceutical discoveries arose from his systematic research on the interaction between these very specific cellular receptors and the very specific naturally occurring chemical agents that attach to them and thereby initiate their intracellular actions. The beta-adrenergic receptor blocking agents were first used in the early 1960s for the treatment of hypertension and angina pectoris, and they continue to be recommended by many national and World Health Organization guidelines for initial antihypertensive therapy to this day. Doctors Elion and Hitchings, working together for nearly 40 years at the Burroughs Wellcome Laboratories, designed a variety of other receptor-blocking agents that have been found effective against leukemia, autoimmune disorders, and other diseases. This month, Hypertension is delighted to highlight these accomplishments.

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