

Researchers Raúl Zamora and Salvador Aznar win the 2nd edition of the Research Prizes of the Jesús Serra Foundation for their extensive research in the fields of nutrition, diet and health

Researcher **Raúl Zamora Ros**, from the private foundation of the Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBELL) and the Catalan Institute of Oncology, and teacher and researcher **Salvador Aznar Benitah**, of the Catalan Institute of Research and Advanced Studies (ICREA) and the Biomedical Research Institute of Barcelona (IRB Barcelona), have been chosen by the jury for the research prizes of the Jesús Serra Foundation as the winners in the clinical and basic research categories, respectively. This award is presented to scientists up to the age of 45 who specialise in nutrition, diet and health.

Researcher Raúl Zamora Ros is part of the team of researchers of the private foundation of the Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBELL). He received this award for his research work in the field of clinical research, and especially for his research work "*Dietary polyphenols and their effects on obesity markers*", which assesses the association between exposure to polyphenols and obesity markers, as well as their effect on health parameters and weight loss during a slimming treatment.

According to the scientific director of the Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute, Josep Manuel Menchón, "Raúl Zamora is one of the most renowned researchers internationally in the field of study of polyphenols. His project has great quality, an enormous translational value and major significance, since we still do not have sufficient knowledge to make dietary recommendations to the general population on the potential effect of polyphenols". For the researcher, receiving this prize entails "an excellent opportunity to achieve more resources and recognition for our research. The study of polyphenols still has a long way to go and this recognition provides significant support that will help us to achieve our goals".

As for **researcher Salvador Aznar Benitah**, from the Catalan Institute of Research and Advanced Studies (ICREA) and the Biomedical Research Institute of Barcelona (IRB Barcelona), he was chosen for his research work in the field of basic research, and in particular for his research on the "*Impact of dietary fatty acids on metastasis-initiating cells*". This project aims to delve into recent discoveries on metastasis-initiating cells with high levels of the fatty acid receptor CD36. The research team hopes to obtain essential information on the mechanisms of metastasis and how they are influenced by diet. This point is important since Western diets have a large intake of fatty acids and metastasis is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths.

About Fundación Jesús Serra

Fundación Jesús Serra is a non-profit organization created in memory of Jesús Serra Santamans, a well-known businessman and sponsor and founder of Grupo Catalana Occidente. The foundation develops and supports projects in the areas of research, education, business, social action, sports, and promotion of the arts, with a common goal: responsible compromise with society.

Francesc Posas, director of the IRB, notes that "Salvador Aznar is an outstanding scientist. His discoveries, which relate the impact of our diet on the biology of stem cells during aging and cancer, and their potential therapeutic implications, are deserving of these prizes". Salvador Aznar has pointed out that this recognition provides "significant support to research in Spain and recognises the work of many professionals who are trying to prevent and treat many of the health problems that affect today's society. This prize will make it possible for us to continue our research on metastasis-initiating cells and will help to raise public awareness of the importance of a healthy diet"

The jury for the 2nd edition of the Research Prizes of the Jesús Serra Foundation, chaired by **Dr María Blasco**, director of the National Centre for Cancer Research (CNIO), was composed of **Dr Mercedes Rincón**, professor in the Medicine Department at the Immunology Division of the University of Vermont, **Professor Lina Badimon**, director of the Catalan Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences (ICCC) and professor of research at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), **Dr Carlos Macaya**, director of the Cardiology Unit at Madrid's San Carlos Clinical Hospital and chairman of the Spanish Heart Foundation (FEC), **Dr Pedro Mata**, chairman and founder of the Spanish Familial Hypercholesterolaemia Foundation, and the two winners of the first edition of the Jesús Sierra Foundation research prizes: **Dr Guadalupe Sabio**, doctor of the Medical Research Council and director of a research group in the CNIC; and **Dr Pablo Pérez**, specialist in internal medicine and lead researcher at the Maimónides Institute of Biomedical Research. The jury considered both recipients' research track record and the important contribution of their work to both clinical and basic research.

The award presentation ceremony will be held on Wednesday 22 May in the Rafael del Pino Auditorium in Madrid, and will be attended by the Hon. Ms Ángeles Heras Caballero, Secretary of State for Universities, Research, Development and Innovation; and by Ms Marta Natividad García Pérez, Executive Director of the Spanish Agency for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety and Nutrition. The event will be hosted by journalist Sonsoles Ónega.

For **Federico Halpern**, President of the Jesús Serra Foundation: "It is necessary to support young scientists and to encourage all kinds of research in Spain involving health and nutrition, since by improving our diet habits we can find solutions and improvements that will have a direct effect on our bodies".

The goal of the research prizes of the Jesús Serra Foundation, which are worth €30,000 in each category, is to encourage research in a field that has been shown to be of fundamental importance: the relationship between nutrition, diet and health. This link has been consolidated such that many studies and research works indicate that lifestyles and eating habits are capable of preventing and improving the clinical situation of some diseases, such as coronary heart disease, high cholesterol, diabetes, cancer and obesity, among others.

For the latest news, you can follow the Research Prizes of the Jesús Serra Foundation on social media using the hashtag: **#PremiosInvestigaciónFJS**.

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