The Announcement of the Prince Mahidol Award 2011

On 14 December 2011, the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation under the Royal Patronage held a press conference to announce the Prince Mahidol Award for 2011 at the Prince Mahidol Museum, Syamindra Building, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital. The press conference was participated by Clinical Professor Udom Kachintorn (Dean of Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, in the capacity of Vice President of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation), Professor Vicharn Panich (Chairman of the International Award Committee of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation), Clinical Professor Supat Vanichakarn (Secretary-General of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation) and Mr. Thani Thongphakdi (Director-General of Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in capacity of Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Public Relations of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation). Attended at the press conference were also Mr. James Wise (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Commonwealth of Australia) and Mr. Walter Braumohler (First Secretary and Spokesman of the Embassy of the United States of America).

The Board of Trustees of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation, chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, was convened on 11 November 2011 to review the list nominations for the Prince Mahidol Award 2011, comprising 76 nominees from 45 countries. In this connection, the Board of Trustees decided to confer this year's Prince Mahidol Award in the field of Medicine to **Professor Aaron T. Beck,** Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania and Honorary President of the Aaron T. Beck Psychopathology Research Center, Pennsylvania and **Dr. David T. Wong,** Adjunctive Professor, Neurobiology, Department of Psychiatry, Indiana University School of Medicine. In the field of Public Health, the Prince Mahidol Award is conferred to **Dr. Ruth F. Bishop,** Professorial Fellow, Department of Pediatrics, University of Melbourne and Senior Principal Research Fellow, Murdoch Children Research Institute, Australia. Details as follows:

In the field of Medicine:

Professor Aaron T. Beck (U.S.A.) is the first person who has worked on the method of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to use on patients suffering from depression. He developed CBT in the early 1960s when he was a psychiatrist at the University of Pennsylvania. He researched, developed and tested the efficiency of the method used on patients. This method focuses on how thinking affects the way a person feels and acts, and helps to change their thinking, behavior, and emotional responses to become more rational. Later studies show that CBT is the best method for major depression. CBT has been widely used by psychiatrists and psychotherapists for the treatment of depression. This therapy has helped more than 120 million people suffering from major depression and reduced the rate of suicide among more than 1 million people worldwide every year. Professor Beck has become known as the Father of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Dr. David T. Wong (U.S.A.) started his study and research in the 1970s and later found fluoxetine, which was the first selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI). It then took about 15 years before the US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) approved fluoxetine for marketing as an antidepressant drug under the trade name "Prozac" in January 1988. In 1990, fluoxetine or Prozac gained its most prescribed antidepressant because of its sustained effectiveness, low side-effect profile, overdose safety and once-a-day dosing. It has been widely used to help more than 100 million depressed patients around the world. Moreover, fluoxetine has become the basic model in developing many antidepressants.

Both cognitive behaviour therapy and fluoxetine play a major impact on the treatment of major depression, but the combination of the two gives a more effective and satisfactory result.

In the field of Public Health:

Dr. Ruth F. Bishop (Australia) is the first person who discovered that diarrhea in children, which occurs in those younger than 6 years old around the world, is caused by Rotavirus. The virus claims about half a million children's lives every year, especially in low and lower middle income countries in Africa and Asia. In 1973, Dr. Bishop and her team at Royal Children's Hospital examined cells from the intestines of children with gastroenteritis under the electron microscope and found that the virus has a round and wheel-like shape, so they named it as "Rotavirus".

Furthermore, she also discovered the demonstration of protective immunity against severe disease by natural neonatal rotavirus infection. This laid groundwork for

vaccine development against Rotavirus. Since 2007, it was mandated that every Australian child must receive the vaccine against Rotavirus diarrhea. At present, the vaccine has been widely accepted and used in more than 60 countries including Thailand, saving lives and providing health care to millions of children worldwide.

The Prince Mahidol Award Foundation was established to commemorate the centenary of the birth of His Royal Highness Prince Mahidol of Songkla on 1st January 1992. The Foundation is under the Royal Patronage, with Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn as president. The Prince Mahidol Award is conferred annually upon individual(s) or institution(s) demonstrating outstanding and exemplary contribution to the advancement of medical and public health services throughout the world. Each Award consists of a medal, a certificate and a sum of US$ 100,000.

In the past 19 years, 59 individuals, groups of individuals, and institutions have received the Prince Mahidol Award. Among them, two subsequently received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, namely Professor Dr. Barry James Marshall and Professor Dr. Harald zur Hausen. Two Thai had received the Prince Mahidol Award in 1996, they were Professor Prasong Tuchinda and Professor Suchitra Nimmannitya and two more in 2009 were Dr. Wiwat Rojanapithayakorn and Mr. Mechai Viravaidya.

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