Symposium in Washington with world-leading scientists

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The Nobel Prize, the correlation between genes and lifestyle, and the ability of the brain to repair itself are three of the topics that will be discussed at an international symposium today at the Swedish embassy, the House of Sweden, in Washington DC. The symposium has been arranged by Karolinska Institutet in collaboration with the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Swedish embassy in Washington.

"The US is the world's leading nation for research. This is why, of course, it has been very productive for us to collaborate with several American universities, colleges and scientists through the years. And Karolinska Institutet has also made significant and valuable contributions", says Professor Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson, President of Karolinska Institutet in her opening speech.

The theme of the symposium is "Medical Research and Public Health". Nobel Prize laureate Professor Jack Szostak is keynote speaker, with a presentation entitled "The Origin of Life".

Another speaker during the symposium is Professor Hans Jörnvall, who will describe the work of selecting the Nobel Prize-winners in physiology or medicine. Professor Hans Jörnvall was previously secretary of the Nobel Committee, which investigates proposed Nobel laureates, and the Nobel Assembly, which selects the winning candidate and consists of 50 professors from Karolinska Institutet.

Professor Nancy Pedersen will describe the unique Swedish Twin Registry, which allows scientists to investigate how heredity and environment influence diseases. Scientists have used the Swedish Twin Registry, for example, to show that environment and lifestyle play greater roles in the development of cancer than heredity plays.

Epidemiology research in Sweden also enjoys unique advantages. Professor Henrik Grönberg will talk about the Swedish system of population registration and how careful use of personal registration and sickness registers has made Sweden the best country in the world for studying the causes and risk factors of disease. Equivalent studies are not possible in, for example, the US, where population statistics are not as accurate or reliable. It is for this reason that the National Institutes of Health fund close to 25 research projects in Sweden.

Results will also be presented during the symposium showing how modern diagnosis and treatment can help patients with brain damage. Professor Torkel Klingberg will describe how the brain can actually be repaired, and Professor Laura Fratiglioni will explain how aging affects the brain.

The symposium is part of the bicentennial celebrations of Karolinska Institutet, and part of the initiative taken by the Swedish embassy during the spring of 2010, "Health and Care". The Swedish embassy in Washington is housed within the House of Sweden, which was designed by architects Gert Wingårdh and Tomas Hansen in the modern Scandinavian style.

SOURCE [1]

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