



Nobel Prize 2016: Autophagy, a Field of Excellence in the US and France

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The 2016 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine has just been awarded to **Japanese scientist Yoshinori Ohsumi for his discovery of the ATG genes which control autophagy**, a mechanism which regulates the recycling of cellular components, the alteration of which is now known to be implicated in numerous diseases such as cancer and certain neurodegenerative and metabolic diseases.

In the United States as well, autophagy is an expert topic developed by top institutions. A number of universities are eminently implicated in this topic: Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, Washington University, University of Michigan, University of New Mexico, UC San Diego, UC San Francisco... At the heart of UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, professor Beth Levine has notably created an interdisciplinary institute dedicated entirely to the topic: the "Center for Autophagy Research." Furthermore, a standout journal in this field, *Autophagy*, has Californian Daniel J Klionsky, professor at the University of Michigan, as its editor-in-chief.

Autophagy is a markedly international theme in research. It has on multiple occasions amalgamated numerous specialists, as it was the theme of a number of Gordon Research Conferences. In fact, the Chair position of the 2016 edition was held by Patrice Codogno, a French Inserm scientist from the "Institut Necker Enfants Malades, Paris."

Autophagy, a well-researched topic in France as well, has garnered numerous collaborations between French and American researchers which have culminated in highly regarded publications - namely, the synergy between Dr. Codogno's laboratory in partnership with that of Dr. Beth Levine (*J Clin Invest* 2015) and Dr. Ana Maria Cuervo of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York (*Nature* 2013); Dr. Guido Kroemer's team ("Centre de recherche des Cordeliers, Paris") and Beth Levine (*Cancer Cell* 2016), and Sylviane Muller of the Institute of Molecular and Cellular Biology in Strasbourg with Ana Maria Cuervo (*Autophagy* 2015).

These collaborations encourage French post-doctorals to sojourn in the US, with many coming back to France to a successful academic career. The announcement platform of the dynamic **francophone autophagy club**, the "CFATG," is in this regard a useful tool for the attractivity of French labs.

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