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Nobel Prize medal
Professor Geradin

[2008 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine Linked to Viruses](#)

This year's Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine went to major virus discoverers

The Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine went to the two French researchers who discovered the HIV virus and to a German one for his work in the discovery of the cervical cancer-causing virus. Half of the prize, consisting of \$650,000 (about 367,500 pounds or 468,500 Euros), went to the two French scientists, Luc Montagnier and Françoise Barre-Sinoussi, who had first helped isolate [the virus that caused the AIDS pandemic, HIV](#), while the other 50 percent were given to Harald zur Hausen, the very one who determined that, in most cases, cervical cancer is caused by 2 types of human papilloma viruses. The granting of the award for the AIDS-causing human immunodeficiency virus discovery during the 1980s had to wait for about two decades, until the disputes between the French and the Americans related to who had first found it were put to rest. It seems the [Nobel Awards](#) committee has accepted as valid the results of a 15-year-old investigation which tilted the scales in favor of the French side, attesting that the American variant of the virus had been, in fact, just a contaminant from a French laboratory. The Nobel Assembly's citation for the two experts stressed the importance of the fact that "The combination of prevention and treatment has substantially decreased spread of the disease and dramatically increased life expectancy among treated patients." As for Zur Hausen, his research involving the human papilloma virus proved to be of a crucial importance in the development of new efficient vaccines, among the few that help protect against cancer. One such example is the U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved vaccine "Gardasil" developed in 2006 in order to prevent cervical cancer in girls and women between 9 and 26 years of age. The awards-related ceremonies will be held in Oslo and Stockholm on December 10, coinciding with the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death in 1896.