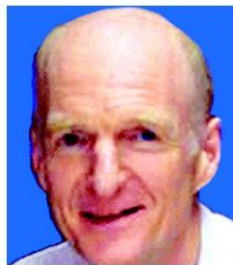


HEALTH

Five scientists win prestigious 2010 Prince Mahidol awards

**White: Advanced malaria treatment****Marsh: Pioneer in malarial studies****Prasad: Discovered importance of zinc****Brown: Devoted to improving health****Black: Fostered zinc cures in children****THANIDA TANSUBHAPOL**

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn will represent His Majesty the King next week in presenting the Prince Mahidol Award for 2010 to five laureates.

The five winners, from Britain and the US, have been recognised for their work in the fields of medicine and public health.

They are Nicholas J White and Kevin Marsh, of Britain, who won the award in the field of medicine, and Ananda S Prasad, Kenneth H Brown and Robert E Black, of the US, who won in the field of public health.

There were 72 candidates from 31 countries competing for the award, Prince Mahidol Award foundation secretary-general Suphat Wanichkarn said yesterday.

Prof White is a world leader in the treatment of malaria, especially in the use of artemisinin-based combination therapies. He spent 25 years studying malaria and its drug-resistant forms.

Prof White advocates a combination of artemisinin with other drugs in order to increase the treatment's effectiveness and to avoid further drug resistance.

This approach is now widely accepted by the World Health Organisation. Artemisinin-based combination therapy has become the recommended treatment for malaria worldwide, both in uncomplicated and severe cases, Dr Suphat said.

Prof Marsh pioneered studies in immune epidemiology of malaria. He is

based mainly in Africa and his early studies show the importance of strain-specific immunity in malaria.

Prof Marsh and his colleagues carried out immunological and clinical studies on several aspects of malaria in young African children which led to the present understanding of the disease process and the effects of treatment.

His work provides a basis for the development of vaccines for malaria that cover strain variations.

In the field of public health, Prof Prasad discovered the importance of zinc to the health of humans. His studies have encouraged the scientific and public health communities to further study this trace element.

His discovery forms the basis that led to zinc supplementation to improve the health condition of people around the world — 20% of the world population are at risk of zinc deficiency.

Prof Brown has devoted most of his career generating information and developing programmes to improve nutritional and health status, especially in controlling and preventing zinc deficiency.

His studies show that additional zinc supplementation helps decrease the incidence and severity of diarrhoea and pneumonia, especially in children in developing countries.

Prof Black is recognised for his work on the importance of childhood nutrition which has contributed significantly to the wide application of zinc supplementation.

His early studies in Bangladesh and India demonstrate that daily zinc sup-

plements during diarrhoeal episodes significantly reduces the severity of diarrhoea and pneumonia cases.

The World Health Organisation and Unicef recommend that all childhood diarrhoea cases be treated with zinc supplements as well as oral rehydration.

The Prince Mahidol laureates will receive their awards next Wednesday at the Chakri Throne Hall.

The awardees will receive a medal, certificate and cash awards of US\$50,000 (1.5 million baht) each.