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## **Existence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) was rejected by his peers**

Dr. Luc Montagnier is the Nobel laureate whose real-life story is going to be discussed in this issue. He discovered the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in the year 1983 and as a recognition of this great contribution in making the life of human better, he along with two other collaborators, were awarded with Nobel in Physiology and Medicine in the year 2008.

Luc Montagnier was born on 18<sup>th</sup> August/1932 in Chabris, France. His father was an accountant, and his mother was a home maker. His childhood was affected by the World War-II and it left a very bad scar in his memory. In his biography, Luc Montagnier mentioned that during the 4 years of German occupation of France in the World War-II, he was too malnourished to gain even a gram in his body weight. It was during this time that he lost his grandfather to cancer without proper treatment. Luc Montagnier admitted that his grandfather's battle with cancer promoted him to pursue research in disease biology in his later life.

The war ended in the year 1945 but Luc Montagnier, like thousands of other children in the war-torn region, had a mixed feeling. He mentioned, the feelings of liberation of France were good but he was deeply saddened by the terrible experience of sufferings of the recent past. He was also annoyed by the memories of near and dear ones who could not make it through the war.

After the war was over, things started changing and life slowly started to move back to normalcy. Luc Montagnier started his high school in the post war Chabris. He was very good as a student and was ahead of his classmates. He liked other subjects except Mathematics and was inclined to Biology due to his childhood motivation to become a researcher of human disease biology. Luc completed his graduation from the university of Poitiers at the age of 21. Thereafter, he joined the Faculty of Sciences at Sorbonne University as an assistant and continued his higher studies along with the job to finally obtain a PhD from this university.

In the year 1960, Luc moved to Carshalton in UK as a postdoctoral fellow and worked in the Virology Unit of Medical Research Council, UK. After working there for 3 years, he moved to the Institute of Virology in Glasgow. He became the Laboratory Chief at the Curie Institute at Paris in France and continued working on virology for another 2 years before leaving for Pasture Institute in the same city of France. Luc Montagnier gained valuable experience by working with different renown virologists in different institutes. His work on HIV started in 1982. At that time, the virus was yet to be named and was known to be responsible for immunosuppression and lymph node pathology in human. Luc Montagnier recalled, in September 1983, he presented a piece of his ongoing work on HIV at a conference in the Cold Spring Harbour, but his explanation of HIV-AIDS was rejected by the majority, and nobody believed the existence of a retrovirus as an aetiology of the then unexplained disease (now called HIV-AIDS). This could not douse down his spirit and he continued working till his lab along with two other collaborators could convince the world regarding HIV as the cause of AIDS in human. Their contribution to mankind was duly acknowledged and was awarded with the Nobel Prize in 2008.

Dr. Luc Montagnier was scientifically active and was associated with many professional bodies till his death in February this year. We pay respectful homage to this great scientist of our time.