Who was Ottorino Rossi?

Ottorino Rossi was born on 17 January, 1877, in Solbiate Comasco, a tiny Italian village near Como. In 1895 he enrolled at the medical faculty of the University of Pavia as a student of the Ghislieri College and during his undergraduate years he was an intern pupil of the Institute of General Pathology and Histology, which was headed by Camillo Golgi. In 1901 Rossi obtained his medical doctor degree with the highest grades and a distinction.

In October 1902 he went on to the Clinica Neuropatologica (Hospital for Nervous and Mental Diseases) directed by Casimiro Mondino to learn clinical neurology. In his spare time Rossi continued to frequent the Golgi Institute which was the leading Italian centre for biological research. Having completed his clinical preparation in Florence with Eugenio Tassi, and in Munich at the Institute directed by Emil Kraepelin, he taught at the Universities of Siena, Sassari and Pavia. In Pavia he was made Rector of the University and was instrumental in getting the buildings of the new San Matteo Polyclinic completed.

Ottorino Rossi made important contributions to many fields of clinical neurology, neurophysiopathology and neuroanatomy. These include: the identification of glucose as the reducing agent of cerebrospinal fluid, the demonstration that fibres from the spinal ganglia pass into the dorsal branch of the spinal roots, and the description of the cerebellar symptom which he termed “the primary asymmetries of positions”. Moreover, he conducted important studies on the immunopathology of the nervous system, the serodiagnosis of neurosyphilis and the regeneration of the nervous system. He was the author of major scientific works including an extensive investigation of arteriosclerosis in the brain, giving a new interpretation of the development of lesions of vascular origin.

He died in 1936 at the age of 59, having named the Ghislieri College as his heir. Ottorino Rossi was one of Camillo Golgi’s most illustrious pupils as well as one of the most eminent descendants of Pavia’s medico-biological tradition.

The Ottorino Rossi Award: previous winners

Since 1990, the IRCCS C. Mondino National Institute of Neurology Foundation has held an annual Ottorino Rossi Award Conference at which the award is presented to a scientist who has made an important contribution to research in the field of the neurosciences.

In previous years the Ottorino Rossi Award has been conferred upon: Vittorio Erspamer, Rome, Italy (1990); Paolo Pinelli, Milan, Italy (1991); Giovanni Di Chiro, Bethesda, USA (1992); Clarence J. Gibbs Jr, Bethesda, USA (1993); David S. Zee, Baltimore, USA (1994); Elio Lugaresi, Bologna, Italy (1995); Michel Fardeau, Paris, France (1996); Salvador Moncada, London, UK (1997); Alain Berthoz, Paris, France (1998); Ottar Sjaastad, Trondheim, Norway (1999); J. Timothy Greenamyre, Atlanta, USA (2000); Salvatore DiMauro, New York, USA (2001); Elio Raviola, Boston, USA (2002); Kenneth Michael A. Welch, Chicago, USA (2003); François Boller, Paris, France (2004); Jes Olesen, Copenhagen, Denmark (2005); Stanley Finger, St Louis, USA (2006); Michael A. Moskowitz, Charlestown, MA, USA (2007), Patricia Smith Churchland, San Diego, USA (2008); Stephen P. Hunt, London, UK (2009).

Ottorino Rossi Award: New Series: The Founders of Neurology

Two decades after its creation, the Ottorino Rossi Award took a new direction. Indeed, the 2010 award was the first in a new series devoted to scientists who have been instrumental in the birth of the different schools of neurology in the world. In particular, the XXI, XXII and XXIII editions of the Ottorino Rossi Award will see the prize awarded to the founders of the most important Italian schools of neurology.

XXI AWARD (2010)

The XXI award (2010) was conferred on Vincenzo Bonavita, Emeritus Professor of Neurology at the “Federico II” University of Naples.

XXII AWARD (2011)

In 2011, the C. Mondino National Institute of Neurology Foundation, IRCCS, conferred the XXII Ottorino Rossi Award,
the second in the new series, on Cesare Fieschi, Professor Emeritus of Neurology at the Sapienza University of Rome. The awarding committee was composed of: Umberto Balottin (Pavia), Agostino Baruzzi (Bologna), Giorgio Bono (Varese), Nereo Bresolin (Milan), Carlo Caltagirone (Rome), Antonio Carolei (L’Aquila), Giancarlo Comi (Milan), Vittorio Cosi (Pavia), Giorgio Cruccu (Rome), Antonio Dal Canton (Pavia), Elisa Fazzi (Brescia), Antonio Federico (Siena), Antonio Fiaschi (Verona), Carlo Gandolfo (Genoa), Gianluigi Lenzi (Rome), Velio Macellari (Rome), Gianluigi Mancardi (Genoa), Giuseppe Micieli (Pavia) – secretory, Arrigo Moglia (Pavia), Giuseppe Nappi (Pavia), Alessandro Padovani (Brescia), Giorgio Sandrini (Pavia), Giovanni Scapagnini (Campobasso), Roberto Sterzi (Milan), Angiolino Stella, President of the C. Mondino Foundation and Rector of the University of Pavia.

The XXII Ottorino Rossi Award was presented at the University of Pavia (Aula Foscolo) on 21 June, 2011.

Academic profile and scientific achievements of the winner

Cesare Fieschi is Professor Emeritus of Neurology at the Sapienza University of Rome. He is a past president of the Italian Society of Neurology (SIN) and the International Society of Cerebral Blood Flow and Metabolism. He has also been a visiting professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and a visiting scientist at the Laboratory of Cerebral Metabolism, NIMH. He is an invited member of various international societies of cerebrovascular disorders and stroke and several national neurological associations.

In April 2005, he was awarded the Italian Gold Medal for Public Health for his significant contribution to the healthcare sector (cerebrovascular diseases, multiple sclerosis).

Prof. Fieschi is a leading expert in cerebrovascular diseases, which is his main area of interest, both in the research and the clinical spheres, and one in which he has promoted numerous initiatives, cultural, scientific and organisational, geared at improving the care of acute stroke patients. He created Italy’s first dedicated unit for the diagnosis and treatment of cerebrovascular diseases (Unità di Trattamento Neurovascolare) at Rome General Hospital (Policlinico di Roma). Cesare Fieschi has also had an active interest in demyelinating diseases, epilepsy and neurodegenerative diseases (Parkinson’s disease, neuropsychiatric disorders of aging and dementia).

Prof. Fieschi continues to enrich the research and healthcare sectors with his unique blend of knowledge, teaching and ideas, stimulating new generations of neurologists, in particular vascular neurologists. His approach continues to generate currents of thought on healthcare and research that are in line with the changing times.