



Nobel Prize for Physiology/Medicine, 2021

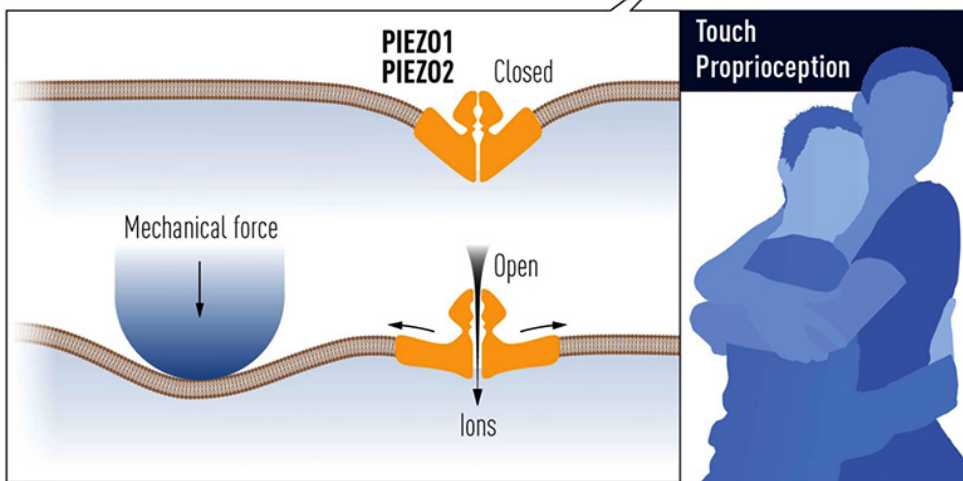
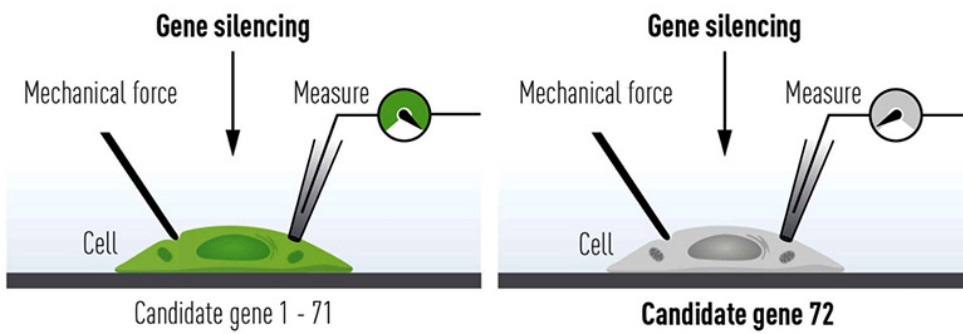
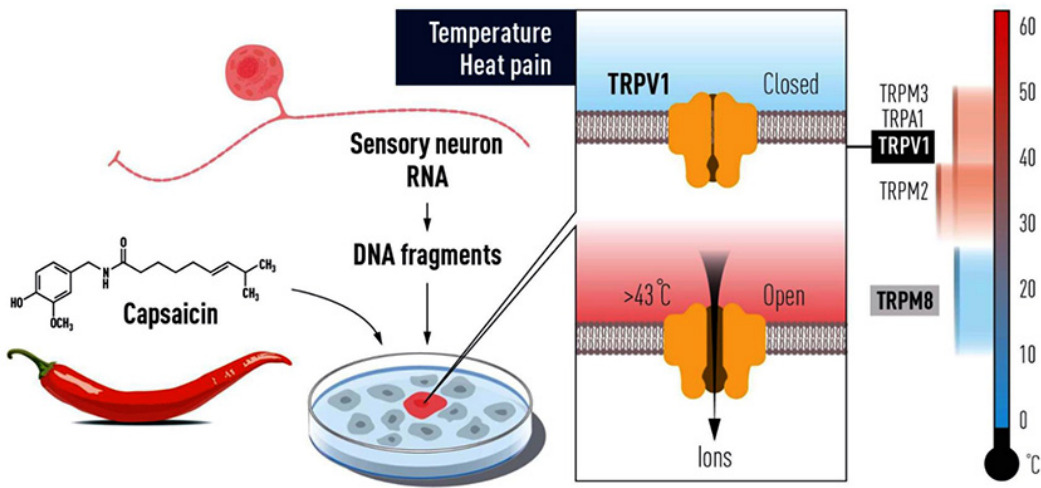
Why in News

Recently, two United States-based scientists, **David Julius** and **Ardem Patapoutian**, have been awarded the **2021 Nobel Prize for Physiology/Medicine** for their **discoveries of receptors for temperature and touch**.

- They have focused their work on the **field of somatosensation**, that is the ability of specialised organs such as eyes, ears and skin to see, hear and feel.

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Key Points

▪ About the Discoveries:

◦ David Julius:

- He discovered **TRPV1**, a **heat-sensing receptor**.
- His findings on the **skin's sense of temperature** was based on how certain cells react to **capsaicin**, the molecule that makes chili peppers spicy, by simulating a false sensation of heat.

◦ Ardem Patapoutian:

- He discovered two **mechanosensitive ion channels** known as the **Piezo channels**.

- The **Piezo1** is named after the Greek word for **pressure**, 'πίεσι'.
- He is credited for finding the **cellular mechanism** and the **underlying gene** that **translates a mechanical force on our skin into an electric nerve signal**.

▪ **Significance of Discoveries:**

- The findings have allowed us to **understand how heat, cold and mechanical force can initiate the nerve impulses** that allow us to perceive and adapt to the world around us.
- This knowledge is being **used to develop treatments for a wide range of disease conditions**, including chronic pain.

Note

- **Somatosensation** is a collective term for the sensations of touch, temperature, body position, and pain recognized through neural receptors in the skin and certain internal organs.
 - It includes processes such as” mechanoreception, thermoreception, proprioception.
- **Mechanosensitive channels** are fascinating proteins, being able to serve both as sensors and effectors.
 - Embedded in membranes, they convert mechanical stimuli such as in-plane membrane tension and curvature into electrical or biochemical signals, leading to regulation of a wide repertoire of cellular processes allowing adaptive response.

About Nobel Prizes

- The will of the **Swedish scientist Alfred Nobel** established the five **Nobel prizes** in 1895.
- The Nobel Prizes are a set of recognition given to fields of **Chemistry, Literature, Peace, Physics, and Physiology or Medicine** by The Nobel Foundation.
 - The Nobel Foundation is a private institution established in 1900, has ultimate responsibility for fulfilling the intentions in Alfred Nobel’s will.
- The prizes in Chemistry, Literature, Peace, Physics, and Physiology or Medicine were first awarded in 1901.
- In 1968, **Sveriges Riksbank** established the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in **Economic Sciences** in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

[Source: DTE](#)

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