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Tony Hyman wins EMBO Gold Medal

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Cell biologist Anthony Hyman has won this year's [European Molecular Biology Organization \(EMBO\) Gold Medal](#). The prize, which is awarded to biologists under the age of 40, acknowledges Hyman's contributions to understanding of the mechanisms involved in cell division.

"Tony's work has always benefited from his ability to identify, adapt, and adopt new technologies," said Michael Glotzer at the [Research Institute of Molecular Pathology](#) in Vienna. "He has been instrumental in developing new ways to study microtubules and microtubule-dependent processes," Glotzer added. For example, Hyman developed a labeling method to determine the orientation of microtubules in the cell. He was also involved in one of the first attempts to visualize the regulation of microtubule dynamics. In addition, he developed an in vitro assay to study the assembly of the mitotic spindle. More recently, he became one of the first investigators to use RNA interference to search for genes involved in cell division.

Thanks to this pioneering approach to research, Hyman has had a major impact on his field while relatively young. As a PhD student and as a postdoc, he investigated mechanisms that determine the orientation of cell division during the early stages of development.

When Hyman established his first research group at the [European Molecular Biology Laboratory \(EMBL\)](#) in Heidelberg, he met Eric Karsenti, also at the EMBL. "We worked together on the formation of the mitotic spindle in a frog egg system," recalled Karsenti. "Together, we identified a lot of molecules that are involved in the regulation of microtubule dynamics during mitosis."

In 1998, at the age of 36, Hyman became director and group leader at the [Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics](#) in Dresden. He has since devoted much energy to helping to get the new research institute off the ground. Karsenti was sad to see Hyman go - not only because of his scientific input: "He is fantastic fun."

Hyman will receive his award at the [EMBO New Members Workshop](#), "Frontiers of Molecular Biology," in Killarney, Ireland, on October 17.

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