

## American Association for Cancer Research Scientific Awards 2001 Award Winners



### AACR-Pezcoller Foundation International Award for Cancer Research

Elizabeth H. Blackburn, Ph.D.

This award recognizes a scientist from anywhere in the world who has made a major scientific discovery in basic or translational cancer research. Dr. Blackburn is honored for her contributions to the discovery of telomerase and its role in maintaining the telomere, an essential feature of all chromosomes. Her fundamental work uncovered the universality of telomerase, demonstrated its universality in the eukaryotic world, and characterized its distinctive mechanism of action. The maintenance and stability of the chromosomal telomere is believed to govern the life span of cells. These structures serve a protective function by preventing chromosome misassociation and are believed to serve a counting function by acting as a molecular clock to control cell life span. Inappropriate expression or misregulation of telomerase is linked to cancer. Therefore, telomerase has become a prime target for novel cancer therapeutic intervention. Dr. Blackburn's seminal work on this enzyme has demonstrated its universality in the eukaryotic world and has characterized its distinctive mechanism of action.

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