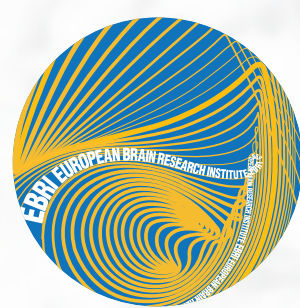


**EBRI**European Brain Research Institute
Rita Levi-Montalcini

Rita Levi-Montalcini Lecture

Randy Schekman

Tackling Parkinson's Disease with Basic Science

20 January 2026, 11am

Sapienza Università di Roma

Sala Calasso, Facoltà di Giurisprudenza
(CU002-Piazzale Aldo Moro 5)

Welcome Address

Antonella Polimeni,
Rector Sapienza Università
di Roma

Opening Remarks

Antonino Cattaneo,
President, European Brain
Research Institute
'Rita Levi-Montalcini'

2025 Rita Levi-Montalcini Lecture

Randy Schekman

Nobel Laureate in Physiology
or Medicine
Department of Molecular
and Cell Biology
Howard Hughes Medical
Institute
University of California,
Berkeley

Discussion/ Questions & Answers

ABSTRACT

With advances in medicine and public health, our average life span has increased but at the same time, diseases of aging have become more prevalent. Great strides have been made to extend the lives of those afflicted with cancer and heart disease. Nonetheless, we now face a crisis in health care with the inexorable rise in neurodegenerative diseases for which nothing of enduring value has yet been achieved. Among these diseases, Parkinson's Disease is increasing at an alarming rate with consequences that challenge our health care systems. For personal and professional reasons, I have taken a leadership role in organizing an international collaborative research network, Aligning Science Across Parkinson's Disease (ASAP), to probe the molecular, cellular and systems basis of the origins and progression of PD. In collaboration with the Michael J. Fox Foundation and the Sergey Brin Family Foundation, teams of laboratories around the world have probed the genes and proteins in known familial forms of the disease. Our teams have probed the role of the body and brain immune systems in the initiation and progression of brain lesions and the role of the dopaminergic neurons in the substantia nigra and their complex connection to cells in the striatum of the basal ganglia. Of particular interest is the basis of some unusual precursor symptoms that often lead to the movement disorder characteristic of PD.

One likely source of pathology in PD is the accumulation and spread of alpha-synuclein, an unstructured neuronal protein that aggregates in the brains of patients representing most genetic and sporadic forms of the disease. My lab has investigated how alpha-synuclein is unconventionally secreted from nerve cells in culture. The means by which alpha-synuclein secretion occurs and spreads among nerve cells may yield important clues and targets for therapeutic intervention.

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