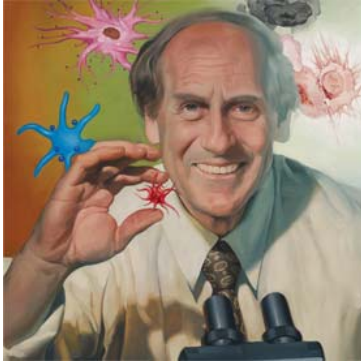


2011 Nobel Laureate Ralph Steinman Explains Discovery of Cells Used for Cancer Treatment [Video]

By [Katherine Harmon](#) | December 6, 2011

Announced as a prize winner just after his death from pancreatic cancer, Steinman conducted research on dendritic cells that formed the foundation of his own personalized therapies



In the quest to cure [cancer](#), many researchers have started looking beyond toxic chemicals and harsh radiation and instead are trying to harness the body's immune system.

Ralph Steinman made a landmark discovery about the immune system in the 1970s when he first described dendritic cells with the help of his mentor Zanjil Cohn at Rockefeller University. More than 30 years later, when Steinman was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, these cells served as the basis of his experimental treatments.

He won the 2011 Nobel Prize for Medicine or Physiology for his early-career discovery but died just three days before the official announcement. In the January 2012 issue (to be released online December 20, 2011), *Scientific American* chronicles Steinman's early find and how the cells became an integral part of his unconventional battle with pancreatic cancer.

In the following video, filmed when he won the 2007 Albert Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research, Steinman recounts his discovery of biology—and of the amazing cells that likely helped to keep him alive years longer than expected.