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The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas 5323 Harry Hines Boulevard Dallas, Texas 75235 (2)4)608-3404 *****Dallas scientist honored with lecture invitation.

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas 5323 Harry Hines Boulevard Dallas, Texas 75235 (214) 668-3404 DALLAS -- A diabetes research scientist, Dr. Roger H. Unger of Dallas, has been chosen to deliver the Claude Bernard Lecture for the European Association for the Study of Diabetes.

The invitation is the highest honor the association can confer, according to association president Prof. P.J. Randle of John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, England.

Unger, who is professor of internal medicine at The University of Texas Health Science r at Dallas, will present the lecture at the annual meeting of the association in Athens, Greece, September, 1980.

The Dallas scientist pioneered research in isolating and delineating the role of the hormone glucagon. Once thought to be of little significance, glucagon is now seen as a major factor, along with insulin in the diabetes disease process. Unger discovered that diabetes is not a "unihormonal" disorder caused by lack of insulin alone, but is actually a two-hormone disease involving an excess of glucagon as well.

Unger explains that diabetics experience ups and downs in their blood sugar levels, which insulin therapy alone does not correct. Glucagon and insulin lowers it. Therefore the diabetic has a compounded problem of blood-sugar irregularity. Both abnormalities, lack of insulin and over-abundance of glucagon, must be corrected in order to completely control the diabetic's blood sugar levels.

The eventual development of a new medication to reduce glucagon levels would give diabetics a more normal blood sugar balance than insulin treatment alone can offer, says Unger. Experiments done by Dr. Unger and others in Dallas and elsewhere have demonstrated that when glucagon levels are suppressed in diabetic patients by a substance called somatostatin, the blood sugar levels drop dramatically. This may lead to a new avenue toward improved treatment of the disin the future.

According to National Institutes of Health statistics, diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S. and diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness. There are approximately one million Americans with the most severe form of the disease, "juvenile onset" diabetes, and about 9 million more have milder forms of the disease.

Unger has received worldwide recognition for his work in diabetes research including the prestigious Banting Medal of the American Diabetes Association, the David Rumbough Jr. Memorial Award for Scientific Achievement of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, the Veterans Administration's Middleton Award and the Gold Medal of the University of Liege, Belgium. He also has been awarded an honorary Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Geneva, the Lilly Award and the Tinsley R. Harrison Award of the Southern Section of the American Federation for Clinical Research.