Press release
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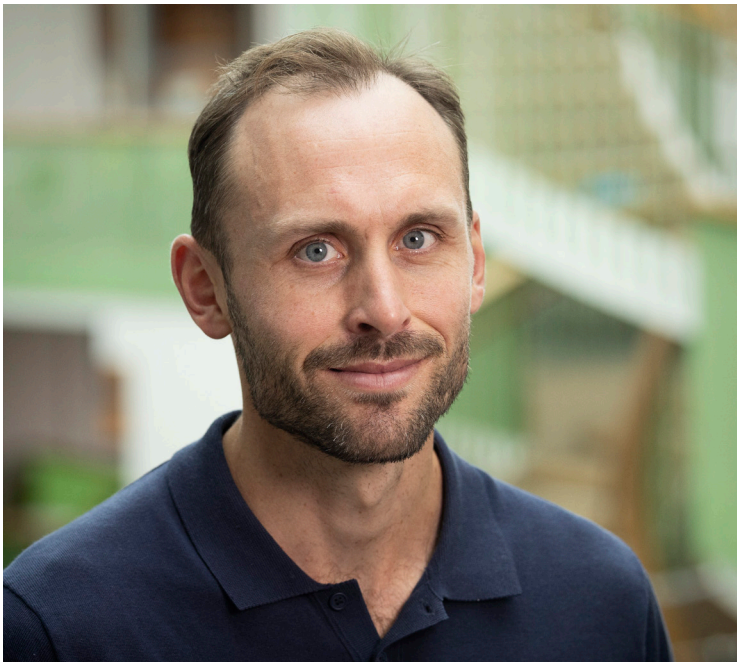
The Svedberg Prize 2026 to Nils Landegren, Uppsala University

Nils Landegren from Uppsala University has been awarded the The Svedberg Prize 2026.

Nils Landegren is a Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor at the Department of Medical Biochemistry and Microbiology; Genetics and Genomics, Uppsala University. His research focuses on autoimmune diseases, aiming to better understand their underlying mechanisms and to improve diagnostics and treatments.


Nils Landegren. Foto: Mikael Wallerstedt

How does it feel to be awarded the Svedberg Prize?
– It is a great honour and quite humbling to be included among the many outstanding scientists who have received the prize in previous years. It feels fantastic to receive this kind of recognition for our group's work and to see that there is real interest in our research.

Can you give a brief summary of your research?
– The immune system is essential for protecting us against invading microbes and keeping cancer cells in check, but it can sometimes turn against us and cause severe disease. Autoimmune disorders can affect many different organ systems and are highly heterogeneous in their presentation. At the same time, there are shared underlying mechanisms. Our group aims to understand these processes at a mechanistic level and to identify the molecular targets of the immune system. We study this across different diseases, which helps us better understand conditions that are still unexplained and also has diagnostic potential. I am also interested in understanding why women have a much higher risk than men of developing autoimmune diseases.

How did you become interested in immunology?
– My interest in immunology began after medical school, when I joined a research group led by an inspiring mentor who sparked my curiosity. Since then, my fascination has only grown. We are increasingly recognizing that autoimmunity plays a role in a much broader range of diseases than previously thought, and it is exciting to be part of that exploration.

Is there anything in your research that you are particularly proud of?
– I particularly enjoy when we can take an original approach to address a long-standing question. One such question is why women have a much higher risk than men of developing autoimmune diseases. These

differences stem from both genetic and hormonal factors, which makes them difficult to disentangle. To address this, we initiated an immunological study of transgender individuals undergoing changes in hormone environment. This has allowed us to pinpoint how sex hormones regulate the immune system and contribute to differences in disease risk between women and men.

What is the next step for you?
– We are now engaging in an international collaboration to study the role of autoimmunity in cancer. This work is inspired by recent findings in infectious diseases, where we have seen that autoantibodies can block key immune pathways and contribute to severe outcomes in COVID-19 and other infections. In this new project, we will explore whether similar mechanisms may interfere with the body's ability to protect against cancer.

Do you have a favorite historical scientist?
– There are many remarkable scientists who inspire me. Modern research increasingly requires a high degree of specialisation, so it is inspiring to look back at figures like Jan Waldenström, who made major contributions across a broad range of medical fields.

As the recipient of the Svedberg Prize, Nils Landegren will give a presentation at the Sweprot conference in Tällberg, Dalarna, from 12 to 15 June 2026. Read more at sweprot.se.

The Svedberg Prize

The prize is awarded to a successful biochemist or molecular biologist who is active in Sweden and who has a doctoral degree not older than 12 years counting from the 1st January of the year when the prize is awarded.

The Svedberg Prize is a scientific recognition awarded annually in connection with the Swedish Conference on Macromolecular Structure and Function (Sweprot). In addition to a medal, the award also includes a prize of SEK 40,000. The Svedberg Prize is awarded by the Swedish National Committee for Molecular Biosciences within the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (KVA) together with the Swedish Society for Biochemistry, Biophysics and Molecular Biology (SFBBM), a division within the Swedish Chemical Society.

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