2019 Nobel Prize in Economics

Who: Abhijit Banerjee (MIT), Esther Duflo (MIT), and Michael Kremer (Harvard)

Why: "For their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty"

What: See attached (pages 1-3 in particular)

Discussion questions

By focusing more on the effects of local interventions, do we miss out on the macro-level (e.g., political, institutional, macroeconomic, macro-policy) determinants of poverty and prosperity?

In "Instruments, Randomization, and Learning about Development," (*Journal of Economic Literature,* 2010, 48: 424-455) Nobel laureate Angus Deaton makes the following critique of experimental approaches to development:

> ...*under ideal circumstances*, randomized evaluations of projects are useful for obtaining a convincing estimate of the average effect of a program or project. The price for this success is a focus that is too narrow and too local to tell us 'what works' in development, to design policy, or to advance scientific knowledge about development processes.

He further argues that "...the analysis of projects needs to be refocused toward the investigation of potentially generalizable mechanisms that explain why and in what contexts projects can be expected to work."

Is the focus really "...too narrow and too local..." to design policy?

Can successful micro-level interventions be scaled up to the regional (or national) level in a country (e.g., through changes in education policy, health programs, etc.)?

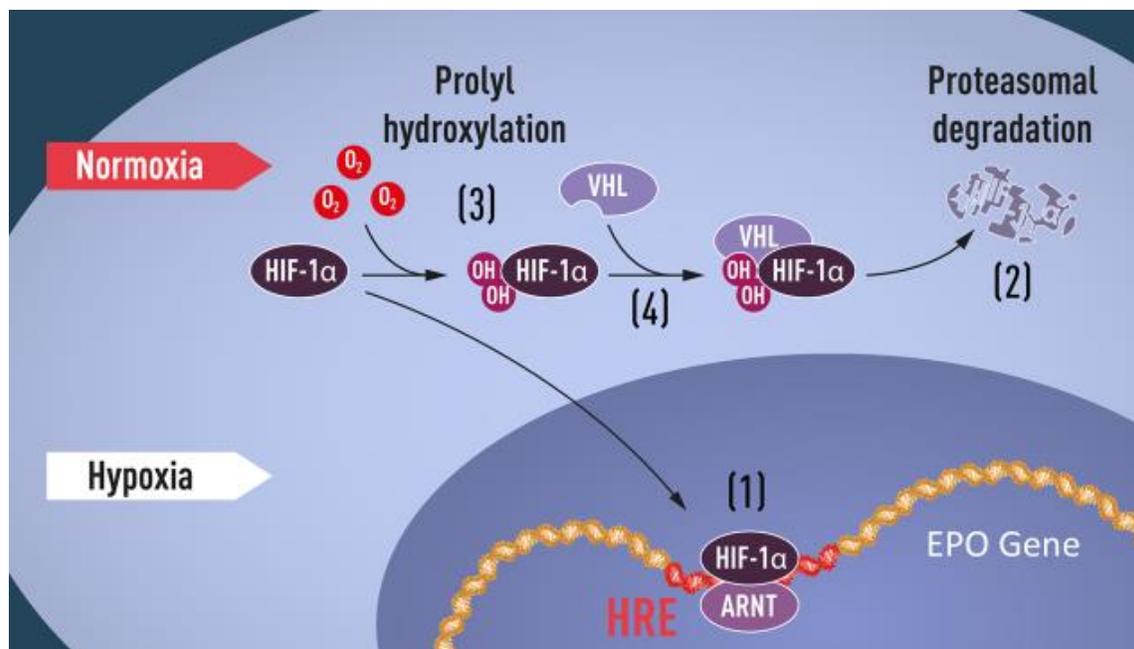# 2019 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine

Who:

William G. Kaelin Jr., Harvard Medical School and Howard Hughes Medical Institute
Sir Peter J. Ratcliffe, University of Oxford and Francis Crick Institute
Gregg L. Semenza, Johns Hopkins University

Why:
"for their discoveries of how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability"

What:

Can you describe the molecular pathway these scientists uncovered?

Normoxia – normal oxygen levels
Hypoxia – low oxygen levels
HRE – HIF-1a Responsive Element, a gene promoter
EPO Gene – the gene for erythropoietin, under the control of a promoter containing an HRE

Based on this pathway, do you expect the genetic response to low oxygen to be fast or slow. Why?

Is this work worthy of a Nobel Prize? What benefit to mankind does this knowledge provide?

2019 Nobel Prize in Peace

Who: Abiy Ahmed Ali, President of Ethiopia

Why:
"for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea"

What:

-   Should The Nobel Committee give out Peace Prizes to encourage progress on peace processes?
    -   What are the benefits? What are the drawbacks?