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Rita Levi- Montalcini (1909-2012)

*"Above all, don't fear difficult moments. The
best come from them."*
- Rita Levi-Montalcini

Childhood Experiences

"At 20, I realized that I could not possibly adjust to a feminine role as conceived by my father and asked him permission to engage in a professional career."

- Rita Levi-Montalcini



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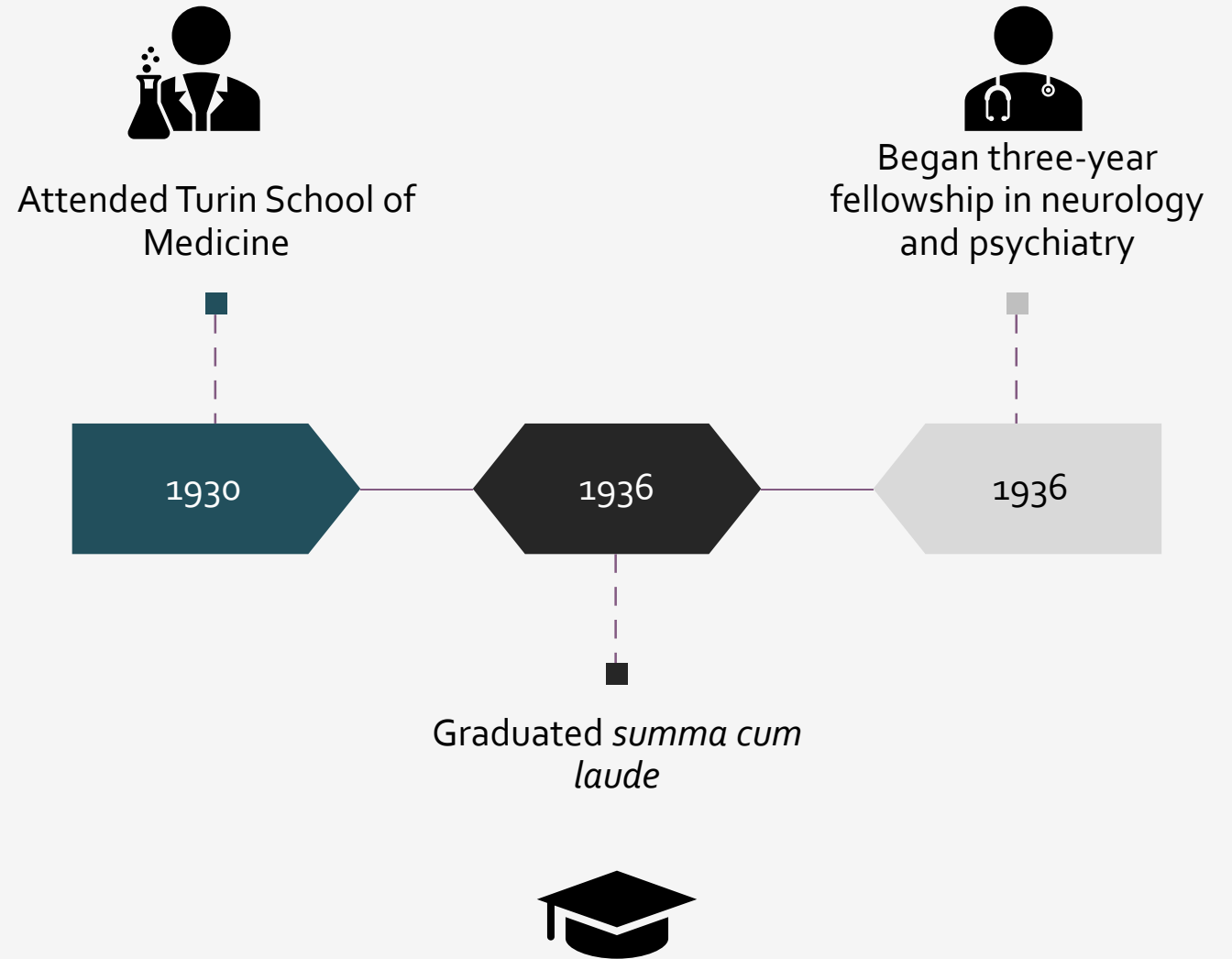


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Education

"He objected that it was a long and difficult course of study, unsuitable for a woman. Since I had finished school three years previously, it would not be easy to take it up again. I assured him that I was not afraid of that."

- Rita Levi-Montalcini



Influences

"I should thank Mussolini for having declared me to be an inferior race. This led me to the joy of working, not nay more unfortunately in university institutes, but in a bedroom."

- Rita Levi-Montalcini

1

Giuseppe Levi



Photo from [here](#).

2

Viktor Hamburger



Photo from [here](#).

3

Benito Mussolini
and Adolf Hitler



Photo from [here](#).

1st *Discovery*

"There is no great a thrill then the moment of discovery."

- Rita Levi-Montalcini



Dissected chick embryos to study motor neuron development



Neuronal cell death was natural



Published in foreign journals

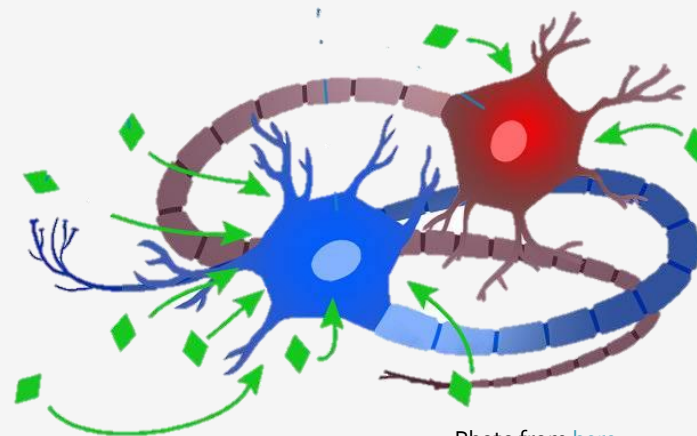


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Aftermath of 1st Discovery



Conflicted
Hamburger's
original findings



Full Time Professor
at Washington
University

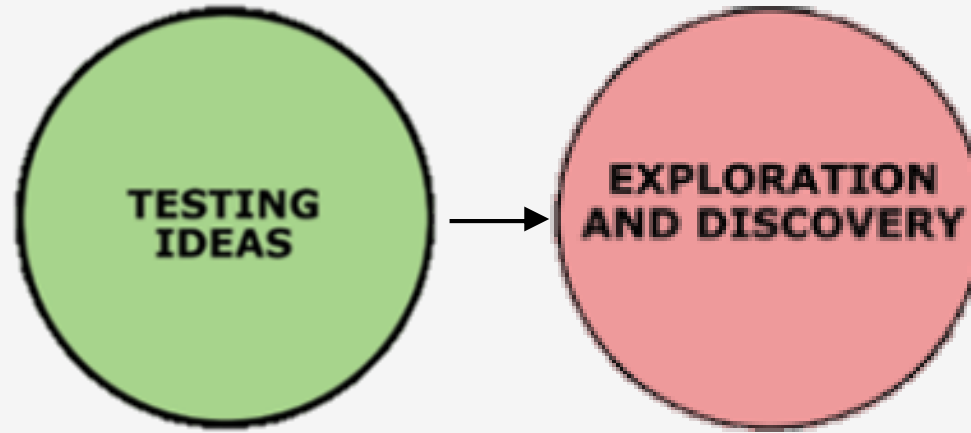


Observed mouse
tumor contained
growth factor



Both photos from [here](#).

2nd *Discovery*



Identify unknown factor

Mouse submaxillary glands/venom contains factor – Nerve Growth Factor (NGF)



Photo from [here](#).

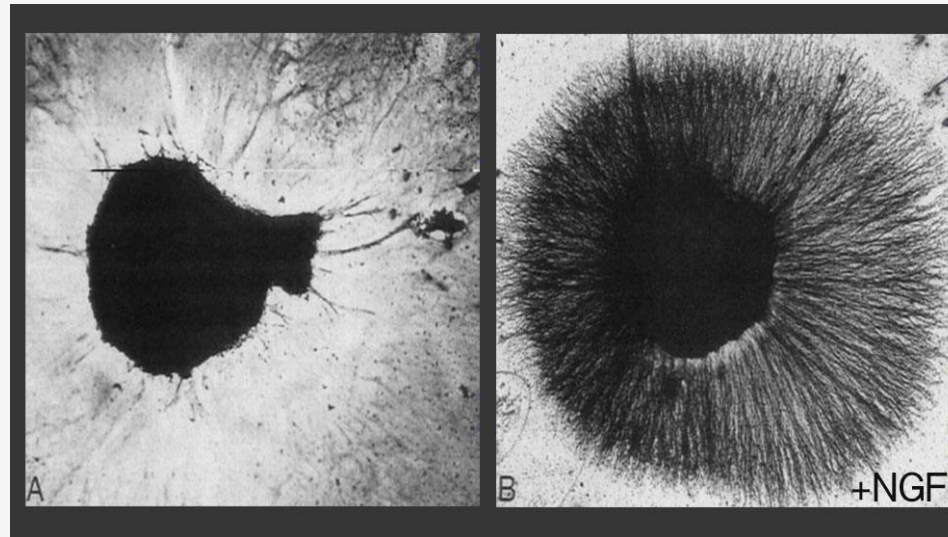
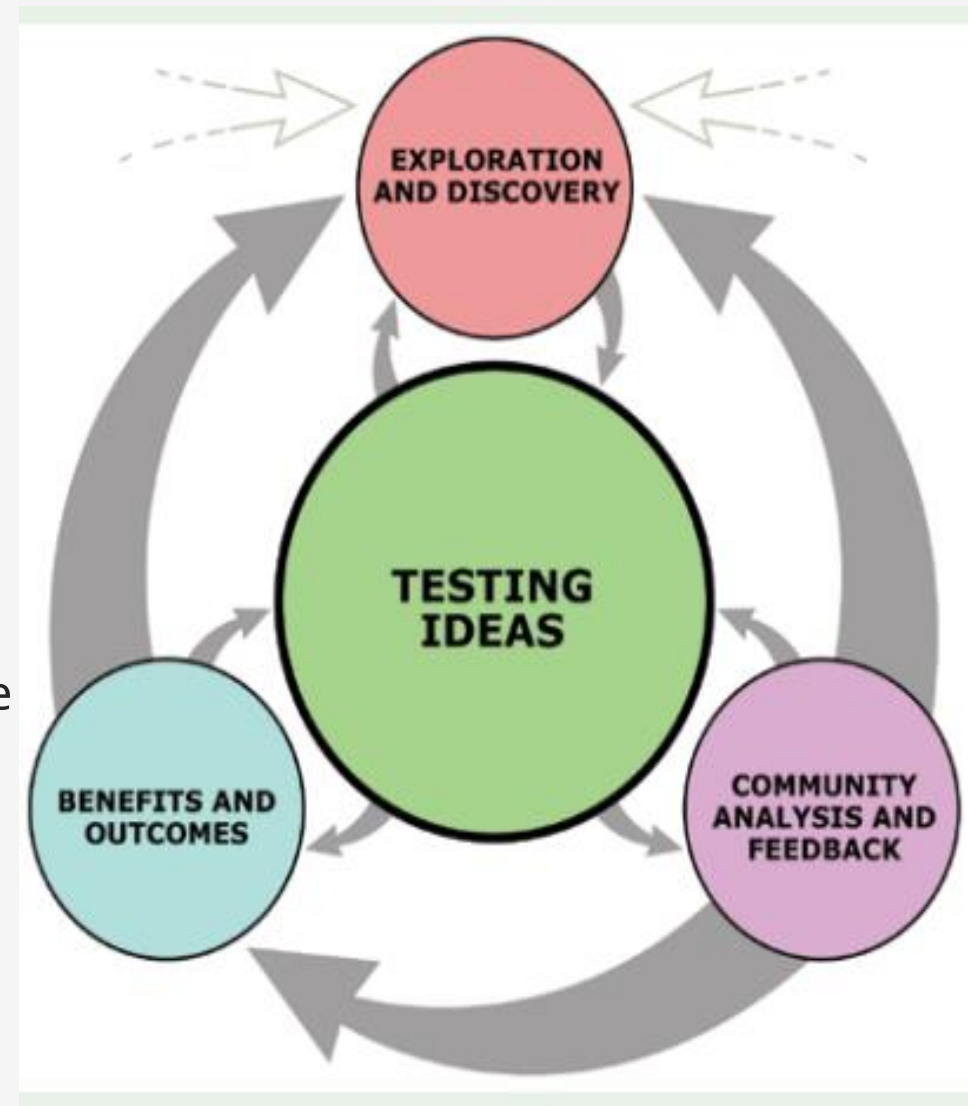


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Impacts

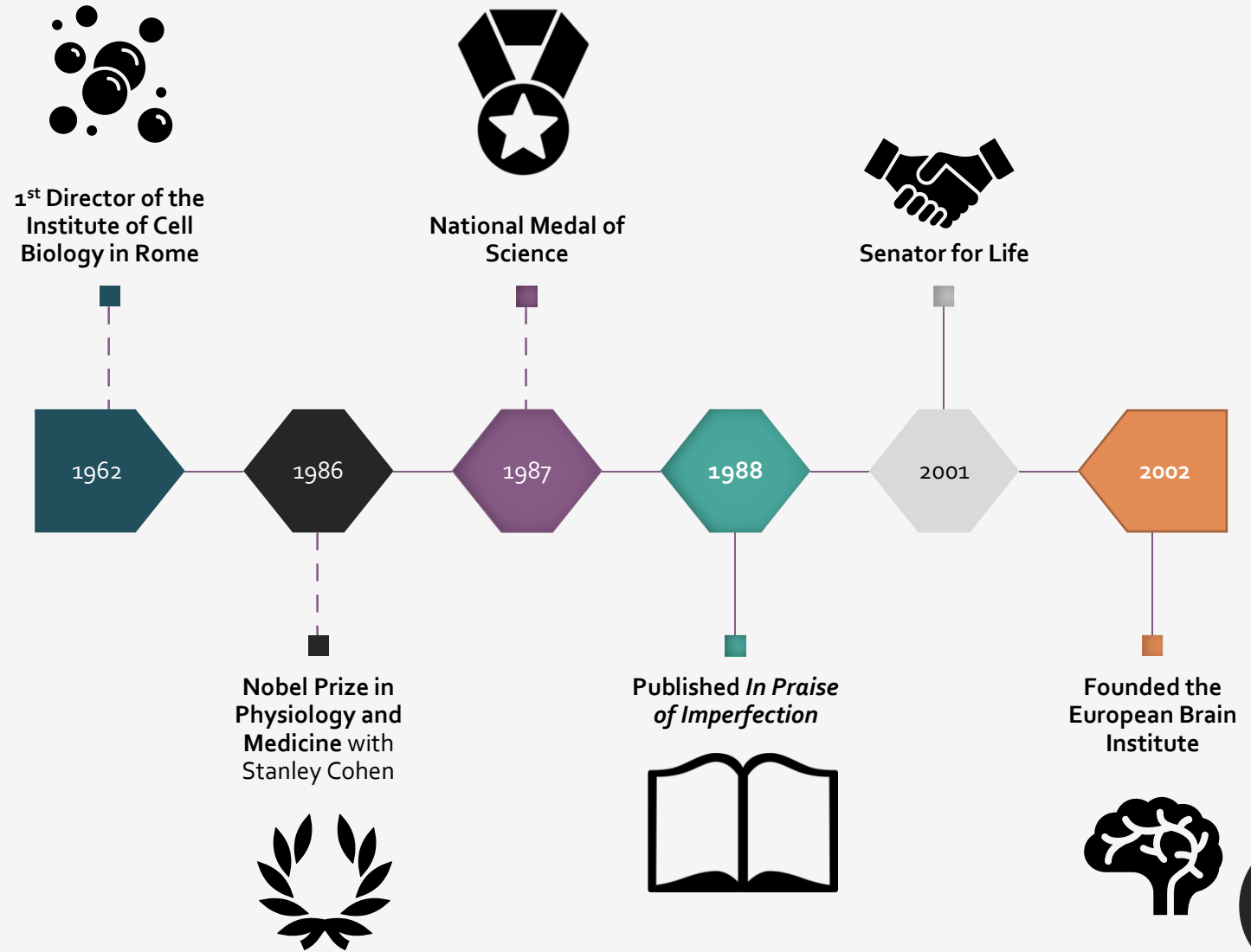
- Discovery of other growth factors
- Mechanism for observing neural development
- Neurodegenerative diseases
- Cancer, MS, and other psychiatric disorders



Accomplishments

"It was a great honor. Still, there is no great thrill as the moment of discovery."

- Rita Levi-Montalcini



Legacy

*"It's not enough what I did in the past –
there is also the future."*

- Rita Levi-Montalcini



1992: Established Rita-Levi-Montalcini Foundation to support education for women in children in Africa



Both photos from [here](#).

2001: Used Senate Position to protect and advocate for science funding

Diversity Today

"Progress depends on our brain. The most important part of our brain, that which is neocortical, must be used to help others and not just to make discoveries."

- Rita Levi-Montalcini

SOCIETY for
NEUROSCIENCE



CELEBRATING
50 YEARS
1969-2019

- Diversity program for Women (IWin) and Latin Americans (LATP)



Photo from [here](#).

- Economic diversity and early development
- "Building Bridges" via Pipeline programs
 - ENDURE

References

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