

# Alim-Louis Benabid

Scribonius Largus, the court physician for the Roman emperor Claudius, used an electrical torpedo fish in 50 A.D. to treat headaches and gout. More than 1000 years elapsed before the idea of therapeutic brain stimulation was rekindled. In 1786, Luigi Galvani demonstrated that he could conduct electricity through the nerves in a frog's leg. Later, Alessandro Volta conducted electrical current through wires and built crude but effective battery sources. Yet none of these experimenters could have predicted the usefulness of their technology in treating human disease by applying an electrical current within the human brain. This year's Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award, announced September 8, recognizes the contributions of two pioneers in deep-brain stimulation (DBS): Alim-Louis Benabid, a neurosurgeon, and Mahlon DeLong, a neurologist. Their research and its translation into clinical practice have improved the lives of more than 100,000 people with [Parkinson's disease](#) or other neurologic or neuropsychiatric disorders.

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