Dr. Roger Rosenberg, director of the Alzheimer's Disease Center at UT Southwestern Medical Center, has been awarded the first Medal for Scientific Achievement by the World Federation of Neurology.

The federation established the award and one for service to international neurology in 2008.

"I am honored that my colleagues in the World Federation of Neurology have recognized my efforts to develop the study of molecular genetics in neurological diseases, from Machado-Joseph disease to Alzheimer's disease," Rosenberg said.

"I also want to acknowledge my colleagues at the Alzheimer's Disease Center for their clinical and research efforts, which have facilitated my own research."

The award will be presented at the federation's World Congress of Neurology in Bangkok on Oct. 26. Rosenberg, who has studied the genetic basis of neurological diseases for three decades, is also co-chair of the meeting's scientific program.

In 1975, Rosenberg and his colleagues published the first in a series of papers on the clinical and genetic basis for an inherited disease that causes degeneration in a brain region essential for balance and coordination.

He named the ailment Machado-Joseph disease after two affected families.

He and his colleagues showed that this disease is caused by repeats of a small DNA coding in a single gene. The disease has been eliminated in affected families through detection of the mutation and genetic counseling.

Similar repeats have been found to occur in Huntington's disease and other disorders of coordination.

Rosenberg's current research centers on a vaccine against Alzheimer's disease that uses DNA to create antibodies against beta-amyloid, a small protein that accumulates in the brains of people with Alzheimer's. He recently received a patent for this approach.
The World Federation of Neurology, based in England, is made up of more than 100 neurology associations around the world.