Richard Wahl Receives Tetalman Award For Monoclonal Antibody Research

Richard L. Wahl, MD, assistant professor of internal medicine and codirector of nuclear imaging at the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor, received the Sixth Tetalman Memorial Award this past June at The Society of Nuclear Medicine's (SNM) 33rd Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

Established Investigator

"Dr. Wahl is an established investigator whose research is acknowledged to be superior by rigorous peer review. His already extensive bibliography adds further testament to his spectacular success in research. Thus, Dr. Wahl has already had a substantial impact on both visual and practical nuclear medicine; his progress promises much more," stated James C. Sisson, MD, professor of internal medicine at the University of Michigan.

Richard L. Wahl, MD, said that one of his incentives for researching antibodies is the future possibility of treating the cancers he diagnoses.

Dr. Wahl has published 27 papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals and six more have been accepted for publication.

Antibody Fragments

"His paper 'Improved Tumor Imaging and Localization with Monoclonal F(ab')2,' attracted my attention because it was the first demonstration that antibody fragments, especially the F(ab')2, had superior imaging characteristics as compared with intact monoclonal antibodies," said William H. Beierwaltes, MD, who recently retired as chief of the Nuclear Medicine Division at the University of Michigan (*1*).

Born in Iowa in 1952, Dr. Wahl earned his MD from Washington University in St. Louis where he became interested in radiology. During his residency and fellowship at the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology in St. Louis, he focused on radiolabeled antibodies.

A "Less Practical" Subject

"Although I was initially advised that I should 'do something practical, like quantitate ultrasound images,' I elected to work on the less practical subject of radiolabeled monoclonal antibodies," said Dr. Wahl.

Joining the faculty of the University of Michigan in July of 1983, Dr. Wahl worked under Dr. Beierwaltes, who had done key early work in the area of tumor imaging and therapy with labeled antibodies. The support, advice, and encouragement from Dr. Beierwaltes was instrumental in enabling Dr. Wahl to perform feasibility studies which resulted in his receiving major grants from the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society.

"Through this support my laboratory has been able to complete several projects related to antibody localization. Most significant of these (achieved through collaborations with multiple individuals and the help of excellent technologists) are: developing a relatively new and simple means of screening for monoclonal antibodies (dot radioimmunobinding assay); developing a new cinematic means of displaying monoclonal antibody scintigrams; determining the kinetics of antibodies administered subcutaneously and intraperitoneally; demonstrating a means to improve regional delivery of monoclonal antibodies to the peritoneal cavity (by using unlabeled antimouse antibody systemically); demonstrating that radiolabeled anti-T cell antibodies can detect transplant rejection; successfully imaging squamous cell carcinoma xenografts in the nude mouse; demonstrating in patient studies the ability of a monoclonal antibody to detect occult choriocarcinoma; helping one of our medical students at Michigan develop and implement a new means of antibody labeling; and developing several interesting antibodies reactive with tumors such as ovarian cancer ," said Dr. Wahl.

The Tetalman Award is given annually to an investigator 35 years of age or younger who is pursuing a career in nuclear medicine. Marc Tetalman, MD, a promising investigator, was murdered at the age of 35 during a robbery attempt at the SNM Annual Meeting in 1979.

"Having had the opportunity to

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In Memoriam

Daniel R. Biello, MD, 1947-1986

Daniel R. Biello, MD

Daniel R. Biello, MD, died June 4, 1986, after a 12-year struggle with Hodgkin's disease. Dr. Biello was born February 26, 1947, in Cleveland, OH. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan University *cum laude* in 1969 and from Case-Western Reserve School of Medicine with honors in 1973, he came to the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology at Washington University School of Medicine, where he completed his internship and residency training in diagnostic radiology, and a fellowship in nuclear medicine.

During his fourth year of training, he served as the chief resident in diagnostic radiology at the Institute. In 1978, he joined the faculty of the Institute's Division of Nuclear Medicine as assistant professor of radiology, and the medical staffs of Barnes Hospital and St. Louis Children's Hospital. At the time of his death, Dr. Biello was professor of radiology and associate director of the Division of Nuclear Medicine.

During his all-too-brief academic career, Dr. Biello was highly productive as a scientist, having over 50 journal articles and chapters to his credit, including two papers in *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine* and two in the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology*. He delighted in the search for new knowledge and new approaches to common clinical problems, and was particularly interested in cardiovascular nuclear medicine and in pulmonary embolism.

Through a series of studies, performed in collaboration with investigators at several different institutions, he developed new criteria for the interpretation of ventilation-perfusion scintigrams (the "Biello criteria," as they are now usually labeled in the literature). His approach has been adopted into general use by the nuclear medicine community.

Dr. Biello was a master diagnostic radiologist and nuclear physician who found great satisfaction in solving complex clinical problems. He was never satisfied doing an adequate job, but always sought to do the best he could for each and every patient. His empathy and compassion for patients were unparalleled. He loved teaching, and scores of residents benefitted from his wisdom and learned the art of nuclear medicine from his example.

Dan was a gentle, unpretentious human being. Virtually everyone who knew him considered him a friend. No matter how busy or preoccupied with his own problems, he always found time to help others deal with their problems. His sound advice and calming influence will be particularly missed. The optimism and courage with which he faced his long illness inspired his friends and coworkers, and the physicians who cared for him.

The Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology has established the Daniel R. Biello Memorial Lectureship to serve as a lasting testimonial of our love and respect for this unique man. He is survived by: his wife, Elizabeth; his sons, David and Timothy; his parents, Dante and Jeane Biello; and his sister, Nancy Biello.

[Contributions are being accepted to fund the lectureship, and may be sent to the Daniel R. Biello Memorial Lectureship Fund, Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology, 510 S. Kingshighway, St. Louis, MO 63110.]

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speak with Dr. Tetalman's colleagues, it is obvious that he would have contributed significantly to the discipline of nuclear medicine had his career not been so abruptly terminated. I hope that the contributions I may make to the field of nuclear medicine, particularly through the aid of this award, may reflect on the legacy of Dr. Tetalman," commented Dr. Wahl.

Jillian E. Frohman

Reference

1. Wahl RL, Parker CW, Philpott GW: Improved radioimaging and tumor localization with monoclonal F(ab')2. *J Nucl Med* 24:316-325, 1983