A Personal Interest in the Future

Four years ago, Abass Alavi, MD (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA), and former trainee Gerald Mandell, MD (DuPont Institute,Wilmington, DE), recognized the need to encourage younger members of the nuclear medicine profession. At the same time, they hoped to memorialize their own fathers, Mohsen Alavi and Samuel Mandell, who had been interested in medicine but because of difficult circumstances were unable to pursue higher education in a medically related field. "We decided to honor both of these highly talented individuals by helping young men and women in the early stages of their careers to work toward prominent positions in academic life," says Alavi. "We wanted to do this by recognizing contributions to the field from young authors published in *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine* [*JNM*]."

Both Alavi and Mandell were aware that their plan was consonant with the mission of the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) Education and Research Foundation (ERF): to improve health care through the support of education and research in the medical uses of radioisotopes. "The awards and scholarships we present are a part of our efforts to encourage talented people by recognizing their contributions and worth," says Kenneth McKusick, MD, president of the ERF. "We believe that the future of nuclear medicine rides on the potential of those who are just now entering or are about to enter the profession."

The Alavi-Mandell Awards were presented for the first time at the SNM meeting in 1999. Awardees are selected from among all those in a given year who were trainees at the time their names appeared as first authors of papers in *JNM*.

"This has been one the most rewarding experiences of my academic life as a teacher and as an educator," says Alavi. "Letters from mentors and students who have received the award have been most heartening. Clearly, we need to recognize our young talents by similar acts."

The 2000 Alavi-Mandell Awards were presented to:

François Benard (Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA) for "Clinical Evaluation of Processing Technique for Attenuation Correction with ^{137}Cs in Whole-Body PET" (*JNM* 1999;40:1257–1263) and "The Prognostic Value of FDG-PET Imaging in Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma" (*JNM* 1999;40:1241–1245).

Didier Blocklet (Hopital Universitaire Erasme, Brussels, Belgium) for "Maximum-Likelihood Reconstruction with Ordered Subsets in Bone SPECT" (*JNM* 1999;40:1978–1984).

Eduardo Cwajg (University of Rio de Janeiro, Capes, Brazil) for "Gated Myocardial Perfusion Tomography for the Assessment of Left Ventricular Function and Volumes" (*JNM* 1999;40:1857–1865).

Satomi Fujiwara (Yamagata University School of Medicine, Yamagata, Japan) for "Fatty Acid Imaging with ^{123}I-15 (p-Iodophenyl)-9-R,S-Methylpentadecanoic Acid in Acute Coronary Syndrome" (*JNM* 1999;40:1999–2006).

Roland Hustinx (University Hospital of Liege, Liege, Belgium) for "Potential Applications of PET Imaging in Developing Novel Cancer Therapies" (*JNM* 1999;40:995–1003).

Eui-Hyo Hwang (Fukui Prefectural Hospital, Fukui, Japan) for "Preoperative Assessment of Residual Hepatic Functional Reserve Using ^{99m}Tc-DTPA Galactosyl-Human Serum Albumin Dynamic SPECT" (*JNM* 1999;40:1644–1651).

Hisataka Kobayashi (National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD) for "Methods to Avoid the Adverse Effects of Circulating Antigen on Biodistribution of ^{125}I-Labeled Anti-Tac dsFv" (*JNM* 1999;40:1381–1391).

Myriam Monsieurs (University Hospital of Gent, Gent, Belgium) for "Adaptive Response in Patients Treated with ^{131}I" (*JNM* 2000;41:17–22).

Walter Pirker (University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria) for "Imaging Serotonin and Dopamine Transporters with ^{123}I-β-CIT SPECT" (*JNM* 2000;41:36–44).

The success of this program led Alavi and his wife, Dr. Jane Bradley Alavi, to establish a second honor, the Bradley-Alavi award. This award honors Stanley Bradley, MD, who at his death in 1999 was a professor emeritus of medicine and past chair of the Department of Medicine at the Columbia Presbyterian School of Medicine in New York, NY. Bradley had served as editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Clinical Investigation* and trained hundreds of medical students, residents, and fellows during his long career. This award will be given to the top students selected by the ERF for the annual student fellowship recognition. The first Bradley-Alavi awards will be presented in 2001.

Alavi is passionate about the need for personal involvement by established nuclear medicine practitioners in the recognition of young scientists. "At no time has the future of nuclear medicine looked so bright," he says. "Molecular biology–based imaging, sophisticated therapy approaches, and fantastic instrumentation all combine to make our discipline one of the most exciting specialties in medicine. Yet very few young individuals are adventuring into these untapped fronts. My hope is that by these simple steps that Dr. Mandell and my family have taken, we will help to enhance our image as a discipline worthy of consideration." Alavi encourages his colleagues in nuclear medicine, especially those in academic institutions, to do their best to introduce talented individuals into the specialty. "It is clear," he says, "That the future of a very rapidly changing specialty like nuclear medicine lies in the hands of today's students."