

Ell Receives de Hevesy Nuclear Pioneer Award

On June 15, at the 55th Annual Meeting of the SNM in New Orleans, LA, Peter J. Ell, MD, director of the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and chair of nuclear medicine at University College London (UK), was awarded the 2008 Georg Charles de Hevesy Nuclear Pioneer Award for his contributions to the nuclear medicine profession. “With this award, SNM recognizes Dr. Ell’s pioneering efforts in laying the foundations of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging in Europe,” said Alexander J. McEwan, MD, 2007–2008 SNM president. “For more than 30 years, he has practiced and taught nuclear medicine and served as editor-in-chief of Europe’s premier nuclear medicine journal. He has blazed a trail in nuclear medicine and created the climate for research and development that exists in Europe today.” Ell was also recognized for his efforts in advancing molecular imaging and developing clinical applications of SPECT. He pioneered the use of hexamethylpropylamine oxime in assessing regional cerebral blood flow. Along with other researchers, Ell initiated the use of radiolabeled immunoglobulin G and iodobenzamide.

SNM has given the de Hevesy Award every year since 1960 to honor groundbreaking scientific work. de Hevesy received the 1943 Nobel Prize in chemistry for his work in determining the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination of radioactive compounds in the human body. His research led to the foundation of nuclear medicine as a tool for diagnosis and therapy. “The list of previous recipients of this award is impressive and includes numerous Nobel laureates—such as Ernest Lawrence, who built the world’s first cyclotron for the production of radionuclides, and Glenn Seaborg, who discovered more than half a dozen

new elements,” said McEwan. “Ell joins a select group of scientists whose research is deemed to have had a significant impact on medicine.”

“It is an overwhelming delight and honor to receive this most prestigious award,” said Ell. “Taking part in SNM annual meetings since 1971 has provided me with a strong sense of purpose, invaluable opportunities for networking, and a constant source of inspiration for innovation. A sentiment of excitement is ever present, reinforcing the motivation to maintain and develop momentum in the application of tracer methodology in health and disease. It invigorates my desire to advance knowledge and promote better patient care across the broad spectrum of diseases.”

Ell is a founding member of the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM). In addition to serving as its first secretary, he was elected as EANM president in 1994 and served in this capacity for 3 y. Under his leadership, EANM’s executive committee established the European School of Nuclear Medicine. For 13 y, he was also editor-in-chief of the *European Journal of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging*, transforming it into a widely influential publication. He has written articles on and taught in areas as diverse as neurology, hepatology, skeletal pathology, oncology, and psychiatry.

A fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Radiology, and the Academy of Medical Sciences, Ell received his medical degree in 1969 from the University of Lisbon (Portugal) and doctorate in 1981 from the University of Bern (Switzerland). He is a corresponding member of the Finnish, Swiss, and German nuclear medicine societies. He has been invited to speak at numerous medical conferences around the world, delivering the EANM and World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology Highlights Lectures, as well as presenting the SNM Henry N. Wagner Lecture in 2003.

Ell has published more than 600 peer-reviewed articles and more than 600 scientific abstracts. He has authored 26 book chapters and 12 textbooks and edited another 10 volumes. “Developing and applying technologies with practical utility for patient care has always been a major aim of my activity in nuclear medicine,” he said. “Over the course of my career, I have been privileged to be a part of a number of spectacular events. It was gratifying, for example, to be part of a small team of investigators that developed the first tomographic images of brain blood flow and implemented the easy and effective technologies of sentinel lymph node biopsy and use of PET/CT in oncology.”

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McEwan (left) presents de Hevesy award to Ell, joined by Ignaci Carrio, MD, and Frederic H. Fahey, DSc (right)