Kassis Receives Loevinger–Berman Award

Amin I. Kassis, PhD, a professor in the Department of Radiology at Harvard Medical School (Boston, MA), was named the recipient of the 2010 Loevinger–Berman Award for his outstanding contributions to advancement of the understanding of internal dosimetry. The award was presented in June by the SNM Medical Internal Radiation Dose (MIRD) Committee at the 2010 SNM Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. The award is named in honor of Robert Loevinger, PhD, and Mones Berman, PhD, who formulated the MIRD schema for internal dose calculations. The award is given in recognition of excellence pertaining to the field of internal dosimetry as it relates to nuclear medicine through research and/or development, significant publication contributions, or advancement of the understanding of internal dosimetry in relationship to risk and therapeutic efficacy.

Kassis earned his BS and MS degrees from the American University of Beirut (Lebanon) in 1968 and 1971, respectively. He received his PhD in immunology and parasitology from McGill University (Montreal, Canada), followed by postdoctoral training at Case Western Reserve (Cleveland, OH) and Harvard Medical School (Boston, MA). In 1985, Kassis was appointed as an assistant professor of nuclear medicine at Harvard Medical School and thereafter ascended through the ranks to his current rank of professor. He currently serves as director of the Radiation Biology and Experimental Radionuclide Therapy sections at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Kassis's research has been directed toward understanding the biophysical relationship between intracellular localization of Auger electron–emitting radionuclides and the biologic consequences of resulting microscopic distribution of energy. This is of great importance to the field of nuclear medicine, given that Auger electrons are emitted by most diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals. His work has also made substantial strides in assessing the dosimetric implications of inhomogeneous deposition of radiopharmaceuticals and in developing radionuclide carrier systems suitable for the specific delivery of diagnostic and therapeutic radioactive moieties to cancerous cells. Several publications arising from these studies had major impacts on scientific direction taken by the MIRD Committee. Most recently, Kassis and colleagues have also been developing novel blood assays for the noninvasive blood-based detection of occult tumors. Using their patented assays, they have been able to detect with remarkable accuracy cancer-specific signatures in tumor-bearing mice and in cancer patients. These and his other research endeavors have led to publication of more than 150 articles in peer-reviewed journals. More information on these publications and his research program can be found at http://www.hms.harvard.edu/kassislab/

MIRD Committee Chair George Sgouros, MD (left), presents Loevinger Berman award to Kassis.

Roger W. Howell, PhD
George Sgouros, PhD
On behalf of the SNM MIRD Committee