



In memoriam: Professor Adi F. Gazdar, a pre-eminent pathologist and devoted man

Nico van Zandwijk¹, Michele Carbone²; Translational Lung Cancer Research Editorial Office³

¹Asbestos Diseases Research Institute, University of Sydney Bernie Banton Centre, Concord, NSW, Australia; ²University of Hawaii Cancer Center, Honolulu, HI 96813, USA; ³AME Publishing Company, Hong Kong, China

Correspondence to: Translational Lung Cancer Research Editorial Office, AME Publishing Company, Hong Kong, China. Email: editor@tlcr.org.

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On the last day of December 2018, we were grieved to hear the sad news that Professor Adi F. Gazdar had passed away on Dec 29, 2018. We will never forget his generous support as a distinguished editorial board member of our journal *Translational Lung Cancer Research (TLCR)*.

A year ago, our team was still working closely with Prof. Gazdar organizing the focused issue “Lung Cancer in Never Smokers” (*Figure 1*). Searching back the mail records with Prof. Gazdar, all we felt were warmth and gratefulness. Devoted, reliable, scientific, upright...all these words seem too weak to precisely describe the noble personality of Prof. Gazdar.

Prof. Gazdar was such a generous person that he never felt bothered by helping us. Under his kind suggestion, a new focused issue “Mesothelioma: What We know and What We Do Not Know in 2020” guest-edited by Prof. Michele Carbone is undergoing. We are determined to publish it in the early 2020 in memory of Prof. Gazdar.

Prof. Gazdar was also a dedicated person that he worked till his last days with his cordiality to contribute unreservedly to the scientific field and patients. It's a pity that we were unable to finish a special interview with him, which we started in Dec 2018. In spite of this, Prof. Gazdar's outstanding contribution as a pioneering pathologist to the medical science has been inscribed in the human history, which will never be washed away.

Here on behalf of the editorial office of *TLCR* and AME Publishing Company, we are paying our deep tribute to Professor Adi F. Gazdar and sincere condolence to his dear family.

Almost two years ago, we first became acquainted with Prof. Gazdar thanks to the kind introduction from Prof.

Nico van Zandwijk. Therefore, as the person who kicked off our story with Prof. Gazdar, we were grateful to invite Prof. Nico van Zandwijk to write a short memoriam for Prof. Gazdar as below:

“The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) announced the passing away of Dr. Adi Gazdar away on December 29, 2018. Dr. Gazdar, a pre-eminent pathologist, was one of the first to focus on the molecular pathology of lung cancer. His pioneering work brought ground-breaking contributions to the identification of lung cancer subtypes, including further characterisation of small cell lung cancer and exploring the mutated epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) gene as a therapeutic target in lung cancer. Apart from a most dedicated researcher, Dr. Gazdar was also an inspiring mentor. He authored more than 500 research publications including 3 textbooks, thereby joining the list of the world's most cited authors. During his five-decade career, Dr. Gazdar served 23 years with the National Cancer Institute before transferring to UT Southwestern Medical Centre in Dallas. Dr. Gazdar inspired the ‘lung cancer community’ and made an important contribution to improved outcomes of many lung cancer patients. An in memoriam video—remembering Dr. Adi Gazdar—can be watched on the IASLC website (<https://www.iaslc.org/remembering-dr-adi-gazdar>).”

Also, we have received the words from Prof. Michele Carbone:

“Adi Gazdar, my friend, and one of the scientists I respect the most died. As of today, he has >125,000 citations and an H-index of 170. Adi was the “father” of what it is now known as molecular pathology. Trained as a classic pathologist at Harvard, he applied molecular biology to pathology and elucidated the genetic alterations of lung cancer. In other words, he



Figure 1 The focused issue guest-edited by Adi F. Gazdar “Lung Cancer in Never Smokers” (published in Aug 2018: <http://tldr.amegroups.com/issue/view/326>).

revolutionized the world of pathology using molecular biology. He established many cell lines, one of them was the ONLY cell line in which retrovirus grew: it was used to discover first HTLV1, and later to isolate and grow HIV. Adi told me: without my cell line, NCI would have closed Bob Gallo lab! I met him at a meeting where I presented my discovery that SV40 DNA was present in some human mesotheliomas. He told me: I do not believe your data; I will test your hypothesis in my lab and disprove your findings. Yes, he spoke his mind, very directly! I was scared, he was quite famous, I was just a "kid". He called me a few months later, he said remember me? Sure, Dr. Gazdar, so? So, you were right! I laser microdissected mesothelioma and nearby normal tissue and found SV40 only in tumor cells. Since then he showed this slide when discussing the presence of SV40 in mesothelioma. And we became best friends!"

The life and work of Prof. Adi F. Gazdar

Adi Gazdar was born in India, went to Medical School at the University of London (Guys Hospital), did his residency at the Brigham in Boston and then worked at the National Cancer Institute Bethesda, MD as a senior scientist/Section head for 23 years. In 1991 he joined his long-time colleague John Minna at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX where he serves at the Simmons Cancer Center and Department of Pathology as the W. Ray Wallace Distinguished Chair in Molecular Oncology Research. He is known primarily for the following:

- (I) Elucidating the molecular pathogenesis of cancers, primarily lung cancer, both NSCLC and SCLC. His many discoveries and interests include studying the demographics of EGFR mutations, PIK3CA mutations and copy number changes in human

cancers, lung cancer in never smokers and the neuroendocrine properties and heterogeneity of SCLC;

- (II) Establishment and characterization of over 400 human tumor cell lines, perhaps more than anyone else. The focus has been on lung cancer of all types, but include breast, colon, ovary and T cell lymphomas, etc. These have been distributed to many 100s of researchers worldwide and over 18,000 citations have utilized the lines;
- (III) During his long career, Adi Gazdar has published about 800 articles, book chapters, commentaries, etc., and been cited over 110,000 times, ranking him among the top 1% of active scientists in the biomedical field. He has been a long standing and enthusiastic supporter of cancer research and scientific collaboration.

Acknowledgments

None.

Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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