

The WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has bestowed their 2007 Medal of Honour to Dr. Mariano Barbacid, Director of the Spanish National Cancer Research Centre (CNIO). The prestigious award was presented to the recipient on May 9 at the IARC Headquarters in Lyon (France), as part of the IARC Scientific Day events. Dr. Barbacid was also honoured to deliver the 15th Roger Sohier Lecture, which was entitled *Ras Genes, Ras Oncogenes and Cancer*.

MARIANO BARBACID RECEIVES IARC MEDAL OF HONOUR

Madrid, 18 May 2007- The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has granted their 2007 Medal of Honour to Dr. Mariano Barbacid in acknowledgement of his outstanding contribution to Cancer Research. Dr. Barbacid is the Director of the Spanish National Cancer Research Centre (CNIO, Madrid), where he also leads the Experimental Oncology Group. Dr. Barbacid received the award from the Director of IARC, Dr. Peter Boyle, on May 9th at a ceremony held in Lyon, where the headquarters of the Agency are located, and as part of the celebrations of the IARC Scientific Day. In the same framework Dr. Barbacid was invited to give the 15th annual Roger Sohier Lecture. In his address, entitled "Ras Genes, Ras Oncogenes and Cancer" Dr. Barbacid delivered a historical overview at a timely moment, since this month commemorates the 25 years of the isolation of the first human oncogene carried out in his laboratory, then at the National Cancer Institute in Frederick, Maryland.

Dr. Barbacid has made several relevant contributions to cancer research. When he established his own independent research group in 1978, he decided to explore whether human tumours may carry activated oncogenes similar to those found in transforming retroviruses. This work led to the identification and isolation of the first human oncogene in the spring of 1982 and its subsequent identification as a mutated allele of the *H-Ras* protooncogene. In 1988 Dr. Barbacid took up a position at the *Bristol Myers-Squibb Pharmaceutical*

Research Institute in Princetown (USA) to lead a basic research group that will support drug discovery efforts in other therapeutic areas of the company. During his tenure at Bristol Myers-Squibb his group identified the Trk family of tyrosine protein kinases, a gene family previously discovered in his laboratory at the National Cancer Institute, as the signalling receptors for the NGF family of neurotrophins. This work appeared in a series of papers in the journal *Cell* during 1991. In 1995, Dr. Barbacid took the position of Vice President, Oncology Drug Discovery. In his new role in the company, he pioneered one of the first target-based drug discovery programme to be implemented in the industry while maintaining an active programme on the identification of novel cytotoxics.

The IARC started granting their annual Medals of Honour in 1993. Since 2003 the Agency bestows three medals in the areas of basic research, cancer epidemiology and cancer treatment. This year, along with Dr. Barbacid, the Medal of Honour was also awarded to Prof. Dimitrios Trichopoulos (Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, USA), who also delivered the 4th “Richard Doll Lecture” for his outstanding work on cancer epidemiology, and to Ambassador Nancy G. Brinker, founder of The Komen Foundation, Washington DC, USA, who gave the 3rd “IARC Lecture” for his continuous support to find better treatments against breast cancer.

Former awardees include Sir David Lane (Director of the *Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology* in Singapore), Dr. Joseph F. Fraumeni (Director of the Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics Division of the *National Cancer Institute*-NCI-, EE.UU.), Dr. Umberto Veronesi (Director of the European Institute of Oncology, Milan, Italy), Dr. Jeffrey Soplan (Past-Director of *Center for Disease Control*-CDC-, Atlanta, USA) and Dr. Richard Klausner (former NCI Director).

INTERNATIONAL AGENCY
FOR RESEARCH ON CANCER



IARC MEDAL OF HONOUR
2007

15th Roger Sofrier Lecture

Ras Genes, Ras Oncogenes and Cancer

Mariano Barbacid

9th May 2007
IARC, Lyons, France

