

Impressive scientific study by Prof. Leondios Kostrikis
for the development of vaccine
for the prevention and transmission of HIV/AIDS

It is with great pleasure that we have read recently in The Phileleftheros newspaper an article about the scientific work of Prof. Leondios Kostrikis' on HIV/AIDS. Leondios has devoted his career to the study of HIV/AIDS. His professional achievements to date make us proud to have him as a newly appointed member of the Board of Directors of Takis & Louki Nemitsas Foundation.

Prof. Kostrikis is a Professor of Biotechnology and Virology at University of Cyprus, Head of Laboratory of Biotechnology and Molecular Virology and Vice-Chairperson of the Department of Biological Sciences. He received his *B.Sc.* (1987), *M.Sc.* (1989), *M.Ph.* (1990) and *Ph.D.* (1993) degrees from New York University (NYU), United States. This was followed by post-doctoral research at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center of Rockefeller University (New York) on the molecular virology of human immunodeficiency virus. He joined the faculty of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center as a staff investigator in 1998 and the Rockefeller University as an Assistant Professor in 1999. He moved to Cyprus in 2003, joining the University of Cyprus.

He was a Fulbright Scholar for his undergraduate studies at NYU (1983-1987) and has held fellowship awards from the Elizabeth Glazer Pediatric AIDS Foundation, the Aaron Diamond Foundation and the Patti Birch 1991 Trust, United States. He has directed over twenty competitive research grants from the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), the European Commission, international charitable foundations and the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation (CRPF). He is also a holder of two U.S. patents, one at Rockefeller University with a license agreement with Mayo Foundation, USA, and another with Birch Biomedical Research LLC. The latter invention is a swift molecular diagnostic test for the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)-Associated Coronavirus which caused major epidemics in 2001 in Canada and China. In addition, he is an Editorial Board member for seven international journals, and has served on study sections and committees for European and international grant agencies, charities, and scientific conferences in HIV/AIDS. He is a co-founder and Executive Board member of the European Society for Translational Antiviral Research (ESAR) and a member of the Board of Directors of the Takis & Louki Nemitsas Foundation.

Prof. Kostrikis is an internationally recognized scientist in the field of HIV/AIDS, who has made important independent contributions to the study of human genetics in the transmission of HIV-1 and disease progression, to global molecular epidemiology of HIV-1 infection, and to HIV-1 drug resistance. His laboratory research work continues to focus on HIV-1 transmission and pathogenesis and on how host and viral factors may influence the progression of the disease; studying the mechanisms of drug resistance development during HIV antiretroviral therapy; understanding the implications of natural genetic diversity in efficacy of antiretroviral drugs; studying the molecular phylogeography of HIV-1 and HCV infection in Europe; and developing novel HIV-1 immunogens and vaccination strategies for

mucosal and systemic immunity. Dr. Kostrikis has recently turned his attention to novel concepts in HIV vaccine development and prevention of HIV-1 transmission.

Leondios started his career at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center of Rockefeller University in New York City during the 1990's. Since then, he has made many contributions to infectious disease research in the HIV research field. He has published extensively over the years and his C.V. now lists over 70 published, peer-reviewed original research articles. This work has been highly cited, with an accumulated citation index of 4,314 (based on ISI) and an average of over 70 citations per paper with an h-index of 27, one of the highest in Cyprus. These scientific output indices prove how highly his work has been regarded within the field. Leondios' contributions to the current understanding of how HIV strains are transmitted to and from Cyprus is impressive; so are his collaborative efforts in building strong scientific networks within the European Community to monitor and combat this disease. He is also active in several research consortia, and participates frequently in international meetings aimed at fostering multi-center collaborations. Leondios' ability to bring in grant support is also commendable. Moreover, Leondios has been continuously serving the University of Cyprus, the Cyprus government and the people of Cyprus by virtue of his committee work, which is comprehensive in scale and scope. Note is due to be taken of his aim in training young scientists, both as a faculty and as a mentor for over 30 students and visiting scientists.

Prof. Leondios Kostrikis has made remarkable contributions to scientific knowledge, and to the academic life of the University of Cyprus, in the ten years since he joined the faculty. His professional accomplishments, strong work ethic and solid commitment to educational and scientific excellence are some of the reasons that the Takis & Louki Nemitsas Foundation strongly support his work and contribution to our society.

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