

Meet our Editor

Professor Arun Dharmarajan



Professor Arun Dharmarajan (Dharma) presently holds the position of Professor in the School of Anatomy and Human Biology at the University of Western Australia, Perth. His interest in science arose from the moment he entered university and took his first Biology course. His fascination with the topic has grown from each passing year.

Born in southern India, Dharma spent the better part of his upbringing in Sri Lanka. He undertook his Bachelor of Science in Biology and his Master of Science in Human Physiology, Anatomy and Biochemistry at the University of Madras, India. He then returned to Sri Lanka to complete his Master of Medical Science in Physiology at the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya. In the mid 1980s, he undertook his PhD degree in the department of Anatomy and Human Biology at the University of Western Australia, supervised by Professor Neville Bruce who plied him with highly stimulating ideas. Dharma's doctoral thesis was in reproductive endocrinology with particular emphasis on transport of progesterone from the corpus luteum to the blood. For the first time, he was able to demonstrate almost 97% of luteal cells are adjacent to a blood capillary. His doctoral thesis resulted in seven publications in major peer-reviewed journals.

Now moving to Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, USA, Dharma completed a postdoctoral Fellowship in the Departments of Gynaecology and Obstetrics and the Department of Population Dynamics. He acknowledges his deepest thanks to Professors Edward Wallach and Barry Zirkin for their help and supervision. Promoted to Instructor in 1988 and promoted to Assistant Professor in 1990 in the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics, he became Acting Director of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Associate Director of Core-Radioimmunoassay Laboratories. His particular focus concentrated on the mechanisms and physiology in maintaining the corpus luteum and its regression in its role in reproductive fertility. In-vitro perfusion assisted on the clarification of structure/function relationships in the corpus luteum, as his interests expanded to its application in oocyte maturation, ovulation and embryonic development. Demonstrating a role for nitric oxide in ovulation, his research changed decisively in 1992 to examine the role of apoptosis in corpus luteum, supported by the NIH, Lalor Foundation and

Rockefeller Foundation, stimulated by Professor Jon Tilly.

Returning to Australia in 1994 to pursue his research interests, Dharma became Associate Professor and finally full Professor in the School of Anatomy and Human Biology. Also assessing molecular mechanisms of apoptosis in various tissues and its role in differentiation induced in skin, Dharma's collaboration with Professor Bob Friis, University of Bern, identified a novel gene associated with cell death by means of differential display coincidence analysis. *Secreted Frizzled Related Protein-4 (sFRP-4)* had a role in apoptosis and cell proliferation in interactions with *Wnt* signalling molecules. Its ability to prevent cell proliferation gained much attention in cancer-related research. His laboratory currently explores its role in ovarian, breast and prostatic cancers, mesothelioma and skin. It may offer a diagnostic test.

Dharma remains fully committed to his research. Enjoying his role in Perth, Dharma has supervised more than 40 Postdoctoral Fellows and research students and has gained considerable grant support. He has published over 90 papers in refereed journals. He works actively on various committees in his University. He gives invited lectures at numerous national and international meetings, and has developed significant collaborative links within and outside Australia. He has sat on editorial boards of *Reproductive Toxicology*, *Biology of Reproduction*, and *Endocrinology* and is currently on those of *Molecular and Cellular Endocrinology*, *Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology* and *Reproductive BioMedicine Online*. A reviewer for 25 top-ranking journals, he has also served on the Programme, Membership and Strategic Planning committees of the US Society for the Study of Reproduction, and the Programme Committee of the Endocrine Society of Australia and the Australian Society for Reproductive Biology. He currently serves on the International Advisory Committee of 'International Symposium on Molecular Aspects of Apoptosis and Cancer' to be held in Trivandrum, Kerala, India in December 2005.

Married with one son, Dharma declares he owes all his achievements to his family, friends, and former and present research students. His curriculum vitae can be found at <http://school.anhb.uwa.edu.au/PersonalPages/Dharma>