
Obituary

SIR JOHN ROBERT VANE

The world of pharmacology lost a distinguished member; Sir John Robert Vane in 19 November 2004 at the age of 77. His main areas of interest were inflammation, role of prostacyclin and thromboxane A2 in thromboembolic disorders, the preventive effect of Aspirin in coronary and cerebrovascular incidents and the effect of converting enzyme inhibitors in hypertension and heart failure. His research activities on prostaglandins, the discovery of prostacyclin and the mechanisms of Aspirin's effect made him won the 1982 Nobel Medicine and Physiology Award.

I had the chance to meet him during a meeting in Case Reserve University where he was an invited speaker. His lecture was on the role and importance of bioassay in pharmacology. As he had stated in many reviews, pharmacology is a discipline which has close connections with physiology, chemistry, biology and mathematics, thus using their methods, but bioassay is a unique method specific to pharmacology. Bioassay made it possible to determine the conditions of formation of biological and circulating active materials, and the reflection of these conditions to physiology and clinical pathology and also enabled us to assay these materials using biochemical methods. I used this approach in most of my studies.

In 1970, I had the opportunity to work with him in London Royal College of Surgeons and met him in various occasions later on. We developed a close friendship during these meetings. In the 80's, Sir John Vane told me that he wanted to come to Turkey. He gave two lectures in Ankara University Medical School Morphology building and in Hacettepe University Medical School. When I was presenting him before his lecture I had stated that he would win the Nobel Prize in the near future. When this became a reality in 1982, he answered my letter of congratulation saying that I had told this to him before. He had also stated that his partner Dr. Salvador Moncada helped him during his entire work. His pharmacology adventure started in Oxford fol-

lowed by Yale University, Royal College of Surgeons, and like Sir Henry Dale in Wellcome Foundation. He developed and improved the prostaglandin research laboratory headed by Dr. Salvador Moncada. Prostacyclin was discovered in this laboratory.

The answer to the question " Which is the most commonly used drug in the world?" is undoubtedly Aspirin. Sir John Vane, by demonstrating the mechanisms of the effect of aspirin, frequently used as a pain reliever, or as a protective or therapeutic agent in various disorders, will remain as one of the milestones in the history of pharmacology.

Prof. Dr. R. Kazım TÜRKER