



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Angelos Constantinou on January 20, 2024. Angelos Constantinou was a world-renowned biochemist specializing in DNA repair mechanisms. He was an outstanding researcher, combining scientific rigor with remarkable creativity. Angelos was also an excellent teacher, a formidable colleague and, on a personal level, a friend. His death leaves a huge void at IGH and throughout the scientific community.

Angelos Constantinou carried out his thesis in Stuart Clarkson's team at the University Medical Centre (CMU) of Geneva from 1993 to 1998. His work focused on the analysis of a DNA repair mechanism involving the XPG protein. He then joined Steve West's prestigious laboratory (CRUK, Clare Hall), to embark on the quest for the famous human resolvase. This enzyme involved in the repair of chromosomal breaks had been sought unsuccessfully for over fifteen years. Thanks to his talents as a biochemist, and after months of work in the cold room, Angelos succeeded in isolating a new enzymatic activity associated with this resolvase (Constantinou et al., Cell, 2001). This major breakthrough paved the way for the identification of human resolvase by the West team seven years later. This work, along with other equally important discoveries, enabled Angelos to join the Institute of Biochemistry at the University of Lausanne in 2008, where he set up his own research team. His focus was on the mechanisms that protect the integrity of replication forks, and in particular the role of Fanconi anemia proteins in this process.

In May 2010, we were fortunate to recruit Angelos Constantinou as Research Director at Inserm and team leader at the IGH, as part of the ARC Foundation's "Leaders of Tomorrow in Oncology" program. Since his arrival, Angelos has established himself as a key figure in the Montpellier community in the fields of DNA replication and repair, as well as protein structure and the functional organization of the nucleus.

An excellent biochemist, Angelos also cultivated a constant desire to explore new horizons. After publishing several important papers on FANCD1 proteins, he tackled a new and fundamental problem concerning the self-organization of DNA repair factors within membrane-less cellular compartments. Convinced that classical models of protein-protein interaction failed to capture the complexity of the molecular exchanges involved in DNA repair, he convinced the MSDAVENIR Foundation to fund a highly ambitious project aimed at establishing a new paradigm in the field. After several years' hard work, and beyond all expectations, his team succeeded in demonstrating that molecular condensates form at the level of DNA lesions, following the controlled self-assembly of repair factors. This pioneering work led to several major publications, which had a huge impact on the scientific community.

However, this remarkable momentum was shattered on Friday, January 20, 2024. With the death of Angelos Constantinou, the IGH has lost not only one of its most brilliant researchers, but also an engaging and available colleague who was very involved in the life of our institute. He headed the IGH's "Molecular Bases of Human Pathologies" department for almost 10 years and was a member of several scientific bodies. As soon as we heard of his death, we received many messages of support from all over the world, testifying to Angelos' reputation and the emotion aroused by his passing. At this difficult time, our thoughts are with his family and friends, to whom we offer our deepest condolences.

On behalf of all IGH staff,

Philippe Pasero