

OBITUARY

Prof. HAMA O UMEZAWA, MD, PhD (1914–1986)

Dr Hamao Umezawa, Japanese Regional Editor for the *Journal of Enzyme Inhibition*, passed away on 25 December 1986.

Dr Umezawa was born on 1 October 1914 in Obama City, Fukui, Japan. He graduated from the Medical School at the University of Tokyo in 1937, and received his PhD in medicine from the same university in 1945. He continued his research and educational activities at the University of Tokyo as Associate Professor and Member of the Institute of Infectious Diseases (now the Institute for Medical Sciences) (1944–1947), as Professor directing research in the 6th (1954–1965) and 12th Departments (1965–1975) of the Institute of Applied Microbiology and at the Cancer Biology Department of the Institute for Medical Sciences (1972–1975), and as Director of the Department of Antibiotics at the National Institute of Health, Japan (1947–1978). In 1981, Dr Umezawa was a visiting professor at Harvard University. From 1962 until his death, he was Director of the Institute of Microbial Chemistry. Dr Umezawa received many prestigious scientific awards, honorary doctorates and civil decorations, both in Japan and in countries around the world. He was also awarded honorary membership in many international scientific organisations.

Active in wide-ranging research fields, Dr Umezawa discovered numerous physiologically active compounds as secondary metabolites of microbial origin. Of his many scientific contributions, the most notable are kanamycin (1956), kasugamycin (1965), istamycin (1979) and many other antibiotics. Dr Umezawa opened a new research area by screening microbial products for anticancer activity as early as 1951. In this field, his most outstanding research achievements are the discoveries of sarcomycin (1956), bleomycin (1966), aclacinomycin (1975), spergualin (1981), pepleomycin (1984) etc. Dr Umezawa's contributions in the field of low molecular weight enzyme inhibitors produced by microorganisms include more than 50 compounds with various structures. Among these agents, leupeptin (1969), oudenone (1970), pepstatin (1970), bestatin (1976) and erbstatin (1986) are the most thoroughly studied because of their physiological activities.

As a scientific leader, Dr Umezawa guided several generations of researchers, encouraging them to choose novel research areas. He set a high standard for himself and was very active until the last days of his fruitful life. Dr Umezawa was warm, openhearted and sympathetic to those around him, and strongly inspired young scientists to devote themselves to creative research. He is survived by his wife Mieko, two sons, Kazuo and Yoji, and three grandchildren.

The official funeral ceremony was held at Aoyama Funeral Hall, Tokyo, on 13 January 1987, and was attended by many distinguished Japanese and foreign scientists.

T. AOYAGI
February 1987