

OBITUARY

Dr. Patrice Talaga (1962-2010)

Patrice Talaga was born in Stiring-Wendel, France in 1962. He studied chemistry at the University of Strasbourg where he completed his Ph.D. related to the synthesis and biological testing of allergen-(non)peptides conjugates for the treatment of contact dermatitis, in 1989 under the supervision of the late Professor Claude Benezra. He also obtained a master degree in drug design from Lille II University in 1995.



He began his career at Hoechst AG (now part of Sanofi-Aventis) working on peptidomimetics and non-natural peptides. After a 2 years stay in Germany, he decided to move to Belgium where he started as a medicinal chemist at UCB Pharma in 1991. In his early days at UCB, Dr. Talaga took an active part in the initiation of combinatorial chemistry which then became a key unit. Very rapidly though, he showed a great interest in the relationships the chemistry department could link with the external world, universities and CRO's in particular. That interest, together with an exquisite scientific expertise that went well beyond chemistry, allowed him to create a small team responsible for external collaborations and contracts. His scientific skills, as well as an extraordinary capacity to engage in respectful relationships characterized by mutual trust, helped him to quickly establish an impressive network which he has developed and enriched throughout the years. The success of several drug discovery collaborations resulted in a well-deserved international recognition in the field of outsourcing. His pronounced interests for new trends and hot topics in the pharmaceutical industry led him recently to actively foster "open innovation" partnerships in the chemistry department, a domain for which he was also starting to be widely recognized.

Dr. Talaga also acquired a particular expertise in the field of Parkinson's disease and epilepsy. His personal interests were nevertheless biased towards cognitive disorders. His passion for innovation in those fields allowed him to propose several new therapeutic projects, one of them being currently in Phase I for the symptomatic treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

He was a referee for numerous journals and an esteemed member of the editorial board of several international journals such as "Mini-Reviews in Medicinal Chemistry", for which he served as co-editor-in-chief, "Future Medicinal Chemistry" or "Chimie Nouvelle". He acted as an expert for the European Community in the framework of FP6 and FP7 calls and was also the leader of a FP7-IAPP project around foldamers. Dr. Talaga was a respected scientist with an impressive publication list, being the author or co-author of about 40 papers and patents, and has been invited at several key symposia.

The unexpected death of Dr. Talaga last December has devastated all the people who had the chance to work or do business with him or simply meet him. UCB's chemistry department as well as the entire scientific community have lost a great colleague and one of their most human, open-minded and innovative chemist.

SELECTED PAPERS

Talaga, P. "The future of pharmaceutical R&D: Somewhere between open and reverse innovation?" *Future Med. Chem.* **2010**, 2, 1399-1403

Talaga, P. "Open Innovation: share or die..." *Drug Discovery Today* **2009**, 14, 1003-5

Talaga, P. "β-Amyloid aggregation inhibitors for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease: dream or reality?" *Mini Reviews Med. Chem.* **2001**, 1, 175-186

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