sanofi-aventis ICAAC Award Laureate


White

Nicholas J. White, Professor, University of Oxford, United Kingdom and Mahidol University, Bangkok, and Chair, Wellcome Trust South East Asian Research Units, Bangkok, is honored with the 2009 sanofi-aventis ICAAC Award for his work on the pharmacological aspects of antimalarial drugs.

Karen I. Barnes of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, a supporter of White's nomination, writes "The global health impact of Nick White's innovative and comprehensive research and his strong leadership have played a pivotal role in raising the benchmark for adequate response to malaria treatment from >75% (within 14 days of follow up) to >90% (with ≥28 days to follow up), and in the global adoption of artemisinin-based combination therapy as the preferred treatment for uncomplicated falciparum malaria. This major paradigm shift in policy and practice has been one of the major drivers of the marked decrease in malaria morbidity seen in over a dozen countries this decade."

White's early research showed that pharmacokinetics can differ between groups and between those with and without malaria. This observation guided the current recommendations for the dosing of antimalarials.

In the 1990s, White and his colleagues demonstrated the incredible effectiveness of artemisinin, a traditional Chinese-plant derived antimalarial, in treating uncomplicated and severe falciparum malaria. "Critically, Dr. White and his colleagues learned that just adding a new drug wasn't good enough; monotherapy with artemisinin would likely lead quite quickly to the spread of resistant parasites," writes White's nominator, Philip Rosenthal, University of California, San Francisco. This work and realization led to the artemisinin-based combination treatments (ACT) which is endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the first line treatment for falciparum malaria worldwide. Furthermore, their research showed that artemisinin derivatives reduce malaria transmissibility.

White received his M.B., B.S., M.D., and D.Sc. Medicine from the University of London, and he has published over 800 papers. He has worked with international policy bodies on antimalaria treatment policy and according to Rosenthal, "The importance of Nick's role at the WHO cannot be overstated; he has clearly had a bigger influence than anyone else on the evolution of policies for the treatment and prevention of malaria."