

## Guest Editors

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### Antonio Giordano and Michele Maio



Michele Maio (right), Antonio Giordano (left), and Capri's 'faraglioni' (background) on June 2003.

**Michele Maio, MD, PhD**, Director of the Cancer Bioimmunotherapy Unit at the Centro di Riferimento Oncologico of Aviano, Italy, Lecturer in Immunology at the Medical School of Udine and Adjunct Professor, College of Science and Biotechnology, at the Center for Biotechnology, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, USA, is known for his studies on cancer immunobiology and for his clinical activities on cancer bioimmunotherapy.

Dr Maio was born in Naples, Italy, where he was raised and attended school through his Medical Degree obtained in 1982. He is Board Certified in Hematology (Catholic University of Rome, Italy) and Oncology (University of Naples, Italy), and has joined as postdoctoral fellow (1983–1987) and as Adjunct Associate Professor of Microbiology and Immunology (1988–2000) at the Department of Microbiology and Immunology of New York Medical College, Valhalla, NY. He has been fellow of the Associazione Italiana per la Ricerca sul Cancro that has been supporting his research activities for the past 15 years, together with other National and International funding agencies. Dr Maio is the author of more than 100 journal publications, book chapters and monographs, and he serves on several national and international committees, panels, advisory and editorial boards.

Starting in 2004, Dr. Michele Maio has been appointed as Chairman of the Department of Medical

Oncology and Immunotherapy at the University Hospital of Siena (Italy).

**Dr Antonio Giordano** is interested in the molecular mechanisms and biochemical functions of proteins involved in the rate of cellular growth and division. Owing to the emerging appreciation of the cell cycle as a key to the control of cell proliferation and abnormal cell growth, Dr Giordano's research has important implications for the study of cancer. His early research includes seminal work demonstrating the importance of cell cycle proteins in the functioning of DNA tumor viruses. The transforming gene products of these viruses, such as the E1A oncoproteins of adenovirus 5, helped him in the identification of cellular factor p60, later shown by others to be cyclin A. This research led to the first demonstration, in 1989, of a physical link between cellular transformation and the cell cycle, thereby paving the way for the melding of these two areas of research. It also helped to open a very exciting avenue of research involving investigators with expertise in different aspects of growth control and cancer.

In collaboration with other groups, he identified the shift in the timing of activation of the three major mammalian cell cycle complexes involved in different cell cycle phases: cyclin E/cdk2, p60/cyclinA/cdc2/cdk2 and cyclin B/cdc2.

Dr Giordano has made significant progress in his quest to identify novel factors involved in controlling cell growth. Through these efforts, he and his group first identified one of the members of the RB family, pRb2/p130. His seminal contributions regarding this protein include the fundamental characterization of its function. His recent studies demonstrate that pRb2/p130 is able to halt the proliferation of aggressive tumor cell lines both *in vivo* and *in vitro*. In addition, he has demonstrated that pRb2/p130 can function as a *bona fide* tumor-suppressor gene, mutated or inactivated in several cancers. His latest work focuses on developing different therapeutic delivery systems for pRb2/p130, with the goal of inhibiting tumor growth *in vivo*. This places pRb2/p130 as an emerging candidate for gene therapy in humans.

Dr Giordano's research has also led to the identification of two novel kinases, Cdk9 (PITALRE) and Cdk10 (PISSLRE). For this and other work, Dr Giordano is receiving growing recognition for his expertise in the area of cell cycle regulation and oncogenesis.

A native of Naples, Italy, Dr Giordano earned his MD degree summa cum laude from the University of

Naples, and his PhD in pathology summa cum laude from the University of Trieste Medical School. He was then a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at New York Medical College in Valhalla, NY, and later at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, NY.

From 1992 to 1994, Dr Giordano was on the faculty of Temple University as Assistant Professor of Biochemistry and Pathology. In 1994, he moved to Thomas Jefferson University, where he was appointed Professor of Pathology, Anatomy and Cell Biology in 2001.

In 1993 Dr Giordano founded the Sbarro Institute for Cancer Research and Molecular Medicine, together with Mr Mario Sbarro, owner of Sbarro, Inc., the internationally successful fast food chain. Initially, the Institute was affiliated with Thomas Jefferson University. The generous initial contributions of Sbarro and his family launched the Institute and its program of scientific research. In 1994, the Sbarro Institute was officially recognized as a Public Charity. In 2002, the scientists supported by the Institute formed an exciting new alliance with Temple University. As part of this new arrangement, the original Sbarro Institute was renamed the Sbarro Health Research Organization, Inc. (S.H.R.O.), which today funds the Sbarro Institute for

Cancer Research and Molecular Medicine at Temple. That same year, Dr Giordano became Full Professor of Biology at Temple's College of Science and Technology.

Since 1992, Dr Giordano has been awarded eight (8) patents. Furthermore, Dr Giordano has received international recognition on several occasions, including being awarded the Irving J Selikoff Award for Cancer Research and the Rotary International Award, Lions Club Napoli-Europa, for outstanding achievements in the field. He has also been honored as Knight by the President of the Republic of Italy for outstanding achievements in cancer research. In 2003, Dr Giordano received the National Italian-American Political Action Committee (NIA-PAC) National Lifetime Achievement Award in Medical Research. He has published over 200 articles in major peer-reviewed journals, as well as a number of textbooks, and he has been invited to present his data at major scientific conferences all over the world. His research has always been funded very successfully by the National Institutes of Health and other agencies. Dr Giordano sits on many Editorial Boards of major scientific journals as well as Scientific Committees for the National Institutes of Health and other research foundations.