

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Introductory Address for John Howland Award Recipient, Russell Chesney, M.D.

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It is my distinct pleasure and honor to be introducing Dr. Russell Chesney, this year's recipient of the John Howland Award. I assume many of you know Dr. Chesney and I hope through this introduction all of you will concur that Dr. Chesney is a worthy recipient of the Howland award.

Dr. Chesney was born and raised in East Tennessee, completed secondary school at St. Andrews in Delaware, and received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in biology and a medical degree from the University of Rochester. He spent 1 y in a predoctoral program in the Department of Physiology at the University of Rochester studying renal physiology. His internship and residency was at the Harriet Lane Service at Johns Hopkins University, which included time in research at the National Institutes of Child Health and Development with Dr. Bert Sacktor. Dr. Chesney then completed his training in a fellowship in Montreal in nephrology with Dr. Keith Drummond and in biochemical genetics with last year's Howland Awardee, Dr. Charles Scriver.

One other important milestone that occurred in Rochester was the development of a life-long partnership between the (then) Joan Cook and Russell Chesney. Russell and Joan went to the University of Wisconsin, and during his 10 y at Wisconsin, he moved from an Assistant Professor to Full Professor. Following a brief sojourn at the University of California-Davis, Dr. Chesney moved to the University of Tennessee and LeBonheur Children's Hospital where he has served as Professor and Chair of Pediatrics. Dr. Chesney will complete his 23+ years as Chair of Pediatrics this summer and return to faculty.

Dr. Chesney has contributed greatly to pediatrics with over 170 book chapters and books, over 350 journal publications with an additional 75 letters to editors and e-publications. He has given over 450 local or national presentations and more than 120 international presentations.

I would like to touch on some specific basic and clinical research areas where Dr. Chesney has made seminal contributions. I would like to juxtapose two manuscripts that reflect on

one of Dr. Chesney's major career foci. The first is Dr. Chesney's publication on taurine and taurine transport (1) and the second on the gene expression of the taurine transporter gene after renal injury (2). In those 33 y, Dr. Chesney has greatly expanded our knowledge of the maturation of amino acid transporters, especially early in postnatal life and our understanding of how tubule transporters respond to dietary intake. He has also helped us learn how taurine may serve a useful purpose not only in the renal tubule but in osmoregulation and cell volume regulation as well as in response to injury and even in the role taurine plays in the vision of cats.

What is demonstrated here is his continued focus on the question of taurine, taurine transport, and taurine regulation as a model for understanding physiology, pathophysiology, and cellular adaptation to the environment and to injury.

As much as I am sure you are fascinated by renal physiology and amino acid biology, Russell is probably better known for his contribution in the area of vitamin D research. A 1978 publication (3) shows an early (but not his first) publication in the use of the active form of vitamin D, 1,25 dihydroxy vitamin D, to improve renal osteodystrophy and growth in children with chronic renal disease. As one of the first to describe the benefits of providing active vitamin D metabolites to children with chronic kidney disease, he ushered in a time of substantial improvement in the growth and overall well-being of children with chronic kidney disease.

The second manuscript (4) demonstrates the ongoing focus Dr. Chesney has had on vitamin D—not only the calcium, vitamin D, phosphorus PTH axis but also in other roles vitamin D may play such as immunomodulation.

There are other areas where Dr. Chesney's contributions have been important such as hemolytic uremic syndrome, childhood hypertension, and transplantation. I cannot help but point to two other manuscripts. Perhaps, prophetically, in 2003, he published "Who was John Howland and why was an award named after him" (5). The second publication, where he marries his interest in metabolic bone disease with his interest in history was "Rickets in lion cubs at the London Zoo in 1889. Some new insights" (6).

Through the years, Dr. Chesney has been recognized for his contributions, with the E. Meade Johnson Award for Pediatric Research in 1985, the St. Geme leadership Award in 2001, the Barnett Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics along with recognition from the American Academy of Pedi-

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iatrics Committee on Nutrition, and the Founders Award from the American Society of Pediatric Nephrology.

Dr. Chesney has assumed a number of leadership positions in which he has guided a number of organizations to even greater successes: as Chair at the University of Tennessee where he facilitates the success of others and serves as a mentor and teacher; for the American Academy of Pediatrics at a state and national level; for the American Board of Pediatrics as Chair of the Board; as Chair of the leadership organization of Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs; the American Society of Pediatric Nephrology as its President and the International Pediatric Nephrology Association where he served as the editor of its journal, *Pediatric Nephrology*, and of course, the American Pediatric Society where he served as President.

Russell has also been highly influential at a policy level in the training of pediatricians. Dr. Chesney was a lead author and contributor to the FOPE 2 (Future of Pediatric Education) reports in 2000 and as a major contributor to the recent pediatric redesign effort—a community wide effort to foster innovation in the future training of pediatricians.

Dr. Chesney is joined here today by Joan Chesney, two of their children, Chris and Gillian, Chris's wife Sarah and Russell's brothers, Thomas and Allen.

Finally, I would like to close on a personal note. I started working with Russell as a resident in 1975, then fellow, faculty colleague and as a collaborator, colleague and friend since then. He has been a remarkable mentor. Before a previous introduction I was honored to give, I was discussing Russell with Joan and she made the observation that Russell does not take himself seriously, but he takes what he does very seriously. We are all the better for Russell's attention to what he has chosen to do.

On behalf of colleagues, students and trainees, protégés, friends, patients and families, and the Pediatrics community, congratulations and—perhaps, more importantly—thank you.

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