

Guest Editor

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David Sidransky



Dr D Sidransky received his MD in 1984 from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and carried out his clinical training at Baylor College and Johns Hopkins University. During his research fellowship under Dr Bert Vogelstein at Johns Hopkins, he first discovered that Ras gene mutations could be identified in the stool of patients with colorectal cancer, opening up a new molecular approach for the detection of human cancer. Dr Sidransky is currently Professor of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, Oncology, Pathology, Urology and Cellular and Molecular Medicine, and is Director of the Head and Neck Cancer Research Laboratory at the Johns Hopkins University. His laboratory is actively engaged in the elucidation of molecular genetic changes that drive the progression of

various types of cancer. He has worked diligently on identifying new genetic changes on smoking associated tumors including lung cancer, head and neck cancer and bladder cancer. He has also published on the molecular epidemiology of smoking induced cancers and the link between tobacco smoke and mutations of critical oncogenes.

Dr Sidransky's work is best known for his pioneering efforts in molecular detection approaches based on the identification of clonal genetic changes in many bodily fluids including urine, saliva, stool, and blood. The Sidransky laboratory has pioneered several recent major innovations in this area. Many of these approaches, such as the hypermethylation of p16 in human cancers and the discovery of mitochondrial mutations at high frequency in many tumor types, have shed new light in the field of cancer biology and detection. Dr Sidransky also discovered that circulating free DNA was in fact derived from tumor cells by showing that this DNA shared the identical genetic changes present in the primary tumor. Dr Sidransky has also led new approaches in molecular staging based on the identification of micro metastatic disease in various tumors. This approach may one day be the standard for staging patients with cancer and will allow for more aggressive therapy in patients with minimal residual disease. Throughout his career, Dr Sidransky has tried to bridge basic research into the clinical setting and has published over 200 research papers and reviews. His recent awards include the Sarstedt International Research Prize (German Society of Clinical Chemistry 1997) and The Alton Ochsner Award Relating Smoking and Health (American College of Chest Physicians 1998).