

## Obituary

# Fabrizio Poccia (1967–2007)

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The cell death research community in particular, and science in general, prematurely lost a friend on 12 June 2007, as Fabrizio Poccia died of cancer at the age of 39.

Fabrizio Poccia was a celebrated immunologist who founded the Laboratory of Cellular Immunology at the Italian National Institute for Infectious Diseases “Lazzaro Spallanzani” in Rome. He was educated at the Tor Vergata University in Rome, the Pasteur Institute in Paris and at Wisconsin University in Madison. He felt at home in the world of learning. He was multi-talented and could have pursued several careers, but his call to research, particularly to immunology was the greatest.

He was appointed the Director of the Laboratory of Immunology of the National Institute for Infectious Diseases “Lazzaro Spallanzani” (INMI) in 2005. Fabrizio’s greatest achievement was to develop the INMI into a leading research unit for immunology of emerging pathogens (HIV, tuberculosis, hepatitis, viral infections in immunocompromised hosts and level 4 viral pathogens). His exceptional taste in selecting problems and his high standards for top quality work will have an enduring influence, even beyond his numerous and brilliant specific contributions. However, he is most remembered for his work on the role of  $\gamma$ - $\delta$  lymphocytes and innate immunity. A cancer diagnosis brings a drastic change in one’s life. In spite of many difficulties, Fabrizio decided to fight his terrible illness with a high level of endurance and a positive attitude. He continued to work at the laboratory until his last days, despite not feeling well and being in a wheel chair. Fabrizio was always enthusiastic, a meticulous experimental scientist who was determined to maintain friendship and solidarity within the group.

He will be widely missed by everyone who knew him. Old and young scientists and investigators who have enjoyed his help or support will miss this extraordinary man. His death has left a great hole at the heart of the INMI and in the world of immunology, and the thoughts of all his friends and colleagues are with his wife and his son and the INMI family as a whole.

**Mauro Piacentini<sup>1</sup> and Giuseppe Ippolito<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*The National Institute for Infectious Diseases ‘Lazzaro Spallanzani’, Via Portuense 292, Rome, Italy*