OBITUARY

Professor John M. Goldman CML Pioneer and Journal Founder 1938–2013

Bone Marrow Transplantation (2014) 49, 161–162; doi:10.1038/bmt.2014.1

Cowards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste of death but once. Of all the wonders that I yet have heard, It seems to me most strange that men should fear; Seeing that death, a necessary end, Will come when it will come.

William Shakespeare *Julius Caesar*

John M Goldman, founder of this Journal in 1984 (with Prof Robert Peter Gale) and Emeritus Professor of Leukemia Biology at Imperial College London, was a leader in studies of leukaemia for the last 40 years. His focus was on CML, an incurable disease when he began his research in 1975. Prof Goldman tackled the problem of blastic transformation using autotransplants of chronic-phase cells frozen at diagnosis. He showed engraftment and a return not only to chronic phase but also, in some patients, normalization of haematopoiesis without the Ph¹-chromosome. Subsequently he used autotransplants in chronic phase to try to delay blastic transformation. Prof Goldman then moved to allotransplants, where he developed the largest CML transplant programme in Europe. More recently he promoted the use of imatinib and other tyrosine kinase inhibitors, and he and colleagues at the Hammersmith Hospital played an important role in proving the efficacy of these agents.

John Goldman was the son of Carl Heinz Goldman, a Jewish doctor who fled Germany in 1933 with his young wife Berthe' to escape the Nazis' racial laws. He arrived in London with a five-pound note, his wife's jewels sewed into her clothes and a letter of introduction. He quickly established a successful Harley Street surgery and would later treat Elizabeth Taylor, Rex Reed and Kay Kendall. Carl Heinz served in the British Army in WW II after, paradoxically, detention as an enemy alien.

John was born in 1938 and educated at Westminster School, where he was a King's Scholar but was not allowed to sing at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, nominally because of his religion, but perhaps also because of his vocal talents! He went up to Magdalen College, Oxford, on a Classics scholarship, but quickly transferred to psychology and physiology and completed his medical training at St Bartholomew Hospital, London. After initial training in North London he moved to the University of Miami and later to Massachusetts General Hospital. His initial training was in surgery, oncology and radiation therapy, but he soon realized his true love was haematology.

In 1970, John was recruited by Prof Sir John Dacie to join a distinguished group of haematologists in the Department of Haematology at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School and the Hammersmith Hospital. Together with Profs Dacie, David Galton, Victor Hoffbrand, Daniel Catovsky and others, he developed the Medical Research Council's Leukaemia Unit. On the retirement of David Galton, John worked closely with Prof Lucio Luzatto, eventually succeeding him as Chair of the Department and Head of the Leukaemia Research Fund Centre for Adult Leukaemia. Prof Goldman trained the current generation of eminent British haematologists, who are too numerous to mention, including his successor at the Hammersmith Hospital, Prof Jane Apperley. On the retirement of Dr David James, he became the medical director of the Anthony Nolan Trust, appointing Prof Alejandro Madrigal as Scientific Director. He worked tirelessly with Simon Dyson to increase donor recruitment and extend the applicability of allotransplants to more persons with leukaemia. His commitment to donor management was further exemplified by his founding of the World Marrow Donor Association in 1984 with Prof Jan van Rood and others. In 1987, Lester Cazin, his patient, helped develop Leuka, the Hammersmith Hospital's leukaemia charity, of which John was the Chairman of the Trustees until his death. Supported by Peter Levine, the Lord Mayor of the City of London in 1999, Leuka raised sufficient funds to build the Catherine Lewis Centre at the Hammersmith Hospital, a unit dedicated to caring for persons with blood diseases.

In the 1990s Goldman focused on promising research on imatinib, a tyrosine kinase inhibitor directed towards the genetic mutation causing the disease defined in 1983 by Profs Eli Cernaani, Robert Peter Gale and others. The drug worked brilliantly in preclinical studies done by Prof Brian Druker, but no drug company was willing to develop it because of a perceived limited commercial incentive. Much like Sirs Howard Florey and Ernest Chain who developed penicillin following its discovery by Sir Alexander Fleming, but had to travel to the United States to find a drug company willing to produce it despite the potential to alter the course of WW II, Goldman flew to Basel to persuade Novartis

to manufacture imatinib. He succeeded, and imatinib and successor tyrosine kinase inhibitors have extended the lives of tens of thousands of people worldwide.

Goldman was a founder and president of several professional organizations promoting research and collaboration in blood disorders and transplantation, including the European Hematology Association, the European Group for Blood and Marrow Transplant and the British Society of Blood and Marrow Transplant. In 1998–2002 John was Chair of the International Bone Marrow Transplant Registry.

Following his retirement from Hammersmith Hospital in 2004, Goldman focused on global health issues. He was a Fogarty Scholar at the National Institutes of Health with Prof John Barrett in 2005. He developed the International CML Foundation with Profs Timothy Hughes and Jorge Cortes to spread best practice in CML throughout the world and offered scholarships for physicians from developing countries to train in centres of excellence. Lately he campaigned to reduce cancer drug prices so that people in developing countries could receive advanced therapies.

Among his professional colleagues, Prof Goldman was considered the leader in his field. He published over 800 scientific papers and many books, coordinated an international community of leukaemia researchers and fostered a climate of openness, collaboration and free intellectual exchange. He also mentored a generation of leukaemia specialists who now head haematology departments across the UK and the world. It is impossible to name them all, but the list includes Profs Jane Apperley, Nicholas Cross, Junia Melo, Andreas Hochhaus, Charles Craddock and Timothy Hughes.

John Goldman was a skilled physician with legendary devotion to his patients. He was regularly found in the early morning hours

reading medical charts and reassuring sleepless people. His overseas colleagues thought nothing of calling John at 1 AM London time to discuss an idea or complex medical case; no one is certain when (or if) he ever slept.

Prof Goldman was a gentleman and scholar known by his colleagues and friends for his erudition, sense of irony, generosity and modesty. He enjoyed reading Saki, Wilde, Shakespeare, Greek mythology and histories of the Napoleonic wars. He loved skiing, spoke perfect French and passable Russian and Spanish and travelled extensively. He once drove from London to India with a group of his Oxford classmates. When their party was briefly imprisoned by Iranian authorities, they escaped by drugging their captors with barbiturates. John also tried to solve the problem of the Elgin Marbles by suggesting a duplicate set be made and that each side alternately choose the piece they wanted until two full sets were assembled. No one has come up with a better solution but the quandary remains. Apparently a trickier problem than curing CML.

John Goldman was invariably polite to colleagues, friends and acquaintances, perhaps to a fault. When people approached him with bizarre ideas or ridiculous scientific hypothesis, he was always polite, commenting: 'That's an interesting idea.' Afterwards he reminded senior colleagues of a quote from Field Marshall Arthur Wellesley, first Duke of Wellington, who having been addressed by a passerby near Apsley House as: 'Mr. Jones, I believe' replied: 'If you believe that Sir, you will believe anything'.

JF Apperley and RP Gale

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