

Professor Terry Hamblin MB ChB DM FRCP FRCPath

1943-2012

On 8 January 2012, the world of haematology lost one of its great free thinkers and innovators.

Terence John Hamblin was born in Worcester on 12 March 1943. He attended Farnborough Grammar School and then went to the University of Bristol to study medicine. After qualifying in 1967, he continued his postgraduate medical training in Bristol, Poole and Southampton before being appointed in 1974 as the first ever consultant haematologist in Bournemouth. With characteristic vision, drive and leadership, Terry took what was then a very basic laboratory-based service and transformed it into a modern combined clinical and laboratory haematology unit, which rapidly acquired an international reputation in CLL and MDS. He was among the first to adopt plasmapheresis and autologous stem-cell transplantation into routine clinical practice.

On the research side, he developed longstanding and highly productive collaborations with Professor George Stevenson and Professor Freda Stevenson at the University of Southampton that formed the basis for ground-breaking work on the potential role of anti-idiotypic antibodies and DNA vaccines in the treatment of B-cell malignancies. In 1987, he was appointed Professor of Immunohaematology at the University of Southampton. Among his many achievements, Terry is perhaps most famous for his seminal paper, co-authored by Professors Freda Stevenson and David Oscier, reporting the prognostic effect in CLL of mutations in the immunoglobulin heavy chain variable region (IGHV). The importance of this study lies in the fact that, unlike most prognostic factors which affect only a proportion of the malignant clone and can vary during the course of the disease, IGHV status is fixed at the point of clonal expansion and therefore provides insight into the cell of origin. This landmark paper set the scene for a swathe of subsequent studies confirming the original observation and showing the importance of antigenic stimulation in the initiation and perpetuation of CLL. He was awarded the Binet-Rai medal in 2003 in recognition of his contribution to CLL research. Terry was also an internationally acknowledged leader in the field of MDS and is probably most famous for developing the "Bournemouth" prognostic scoring system. He co-authored more than 300 papers, review articles, editorials and chapters and was co-editor of *Leukemia Research* for 25 years.

One of Terry's crowning achievements was the creation of the UK CLL Forum which he founded in 2000 and chaired until 2006. Terry's vision was to improve the treatment of CLL by bringing together clinicians, scientists and patients to share best practice and exchange ideas through twice yearly scientific and educational meetings. The Forum also provided a framework for writing guidelines and co-ordinating clinical trials, although the latter was subsequently subsumed into the NCRI structure. Since its creation, the Forum has gone from strength to strength and is now firmly established in the UK haematology community as the focal point for all issues relating to CLL. Terry was also a founding member of the UK MDS Forum and has established, chaired or served on numerous other international, national, regional and local organisations and committees.

On a personal level, Terry was a family man and a devout Baptist who played a leading role in his local church. He was also a great patient advocate who was never afraid to speak up and always provided advice to anyone who asked for it. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge about a wide range of issues including literature, sport and music. This, together with his keen (if not always finely honed!) sense of humour meant that he was always excellent company.

Following his formal retirement from the NHS in 2003, Terry continued as an honorary consultant haematologist at Bournemouth, Southampton and Kings and retained his Chair at the University of Southampton. He continued to work throughout his illness whenever it was feasible and faced his adversities calmly and with great dignity.

In summary, Terry was a unique man of great vision, compassion, humour and courage. His contribution to haematology was considerable and he is sorely missed by a great many people.