

Professor Ross G. Clark, PhD, ONZM, and a pioneer in the field of growth hormone (GH) and insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1), died at his home in Auckland, NZ on Sunday, June 22 after a long battle with malignant melanoma. He was 57 years old.

Dr. Clark received his PhD from Massey University in 1978, and began his life-long passion for the GH/IGF-1 axis in 1980 at the National Institute for Medical Research in Mill Hill, England. There, he pioneered studies of the regulation and potential therapeutic applications for both hormones.

In 1988, Clark was recruited to Genentech, where he was named a Senior Scientist and was charged with advancing the science of GH, GH secretagogues, GH receptor antagonists, IGF-1, and combination therapy with GH and IGF-1.

After 9 highly productive years at Genentech, he returned to New Zealand, where he was named Professor of Endocrinology at the University of Auckland. While in New Zealand, Clark also served as Chief Scientist of NeuronZ, a private company engaged in IGF-1 central nervous system research, and as a founding Board Member of ViaLactica Biosciences, an agricultural biotechnology company funded by the New Zealand dairy industry.

In 2000, Dr. Clark founded Tercica, Ltd in Auckland, in order to develop IGF-1 therapy for the treatment of GH-resistant short stature. After obtaining world-wide licenses for IGF-1 from Genentech, he relocated Tercica to Brisbane, California, where the company brought recombinant human IGF-1, as Increlex®, to the US and European markets for the treatment of severe Primary IGF-1 deficiency.

Tercica subsequently acquired the rights for the use of Somatuline® Depot for the treatment of acromegaly from Ipsen S.A. Acromegaly is a disease associated with pituitary tumors which result in excess circulating GH and IGF-1. In April 2008, Tercica and Ipsen announced they had entered into a merger agreement in which Ipsen would acquire all of the shares of Tercica.

Dr. Clark was the recipient of 46 patents in the GH and IGF-1 field and the author of more than 100 academic papers and review articles. In 2008 he was honored as the Distinguished Biotechnologist of the Year by NZBio, and by being made an Officer of the Order of Merit of New Zealand.

He is survived by his wife Gillian, and his children, Andrew and Frances. The family have requested donations be made to the North Shore Hospice, New Zealand (www.nshospice.co.nz) in lieu of flowers.