

Prof François RIEGER:

After studying physics at the Joseph Fourier University in Grenoble, François Rieger joined the Pasteur Institute in 1966, in the group of Nobel Prize winner Jacques Monod. In 1968, he was appointed as a research fellow at the CNRS, assigned to the Institute of Physical and Chemical Biology in Paris, and chose to do a PhD in Neurobiology, which he completed in 1973 at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris, rue d'Ulm. His work allowed him to purify and characterize the structure of acetylcholinesterase, the main current target of Alzheimer's disease treatments.

He then went on to study the cholinergic synapse and neuromuscular pathologies related to deficient functioning of nerve impulse transmission. He was appointed Visiting Assistant Professor of Neuropathology at Harvard University from 1975 to 1978, and upon his return to France, he developed a research team in a joint INSERM/CNRS unit at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital on the role of ion channels in the function and morphogenesis of mammalian nerve and muscle.

A stay from 1985 to 1988, at the Rockefeller University in New-York, in the laboratory of Professor Gerald Edelman, Nobel Prize, as Senior Associate Researcher, allowed him to extend his field of investigation to the field of Cellular Adhesion Proteins and to demonstrate the implication of N-CAM and cytotactin/tenascin in synaptic morphogenesis and innervation-reinnervation phenomena.

In 1990, he established in his laboratory a new line of research on the primary factors of Multiple Sclerosis, an autoimmune demyelinating disease in humans, which led his laboratory to characterize a gliotoxic protein factor in MS patients and, later, in 1998, to discover in humans a fossil retrovirus still active through its envelope protein, and involved in the triggering of the autoimmune cascade in the disease.

In 2007, F. Rieger created in Geneva a Binational Scientific Interest Group on the Broader Theme of Aging and Longevity, with the participation of several Franco-Swiss scientific leaders, intended to take into account both the molecular and societal aspects of this largely unexplored field. F. Rieger is Director of Research at the CNRS and author or co-author of more than 175 international publications in the field of Life Sciences and Neurosciences.

F. Rieger is currently leading an Innovative Project concerning the therapeutics of Autoimmune Diseases and a co-Founder of the biotech Medsenic. He has led two successful Phase 2 clinical trials on Systemic Lupus erythematosus and Graft-versus –Host Disease, opening a solid path towards the use of several formulations of active arsenic for the treatment of chronic, autoimmune diseases.

In addition to his scientific skills and international reputation, François Rieger has mastered over the last 15 years the rules of biotech development and private and public fundraising together with his longtime associate in Business Operations, Mrs Véronique Pomi.