

Biographical Sketch

Dr. J. Ramachandran

Dr. Ramachandran graduated from the University of Madras in India with Honours in Chemistry. He pursued graduate studies in the United States receiving the MS degree in Chemistry from De Paul University in Chicago and Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of California at Berkeley. Following postdoctoral work at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, he joined the Hormone Research Laboratory and the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the University of California at San Francisco as Assistant Professor in 1968. He rose to the rank of Associate Professor in 1972 and Professor in 1978.

Prof. Ramachandran was recruited by Genentech, Inc. in 1984 where he pioneered the molecular cloning and expression of several important cell surface receptors (including the human insulin receptor), thus making these targets accessible for the development of novel therapies based on high throughput screening of combinatorial libraries. In 1988, he became Vice President of Research at Neurex Corporation in Menlo Park, California and spearheaded the development of highly selective neuronal calcium channel antagonists derived from the venoms of marine, fish-eating cone snails. SNX-111, a synthetic conopeptide with three disulfide bonds was shown to be highly effective in suppressing chronic intractable pain in cancer patients. Clinical trials including two pivotal phase III trials were completed successfully and SNX-111 received approvable status under the name Ziconotide in June 2000. Neurex was acquired by Elan Pharmaceuticals in August 1998 and SNX-111 received approval from the FDA in 2004 under the name Prialt.

Dr. Ramachandran began his association with AB Astra in 1986 as Director of Astra Research Centre India in Bangalore and has been responsible for Astra's R & D activities in India. He has served as President of Astra Biochemicals Private LTD since 1996 when the wholly owned subsidiary of Astra was established. Following the merger of Astra with Zeneca in 1999, he served as Head of AstraZeneca R & D Bangalore and President of AstraZeneca India. During his tenure with Astra and AstraZeneca, he established state-of the art R & D programs for discovering and developing novel therapies for the treatment of tuberculosis and antibiotic resistant infection.

Throughout his career, Professor Ramachandran's research has been concerned with the structure and function of the polypeptide hormones of the pituitary as well as the molecular basis of transmembrane signaling through cell surface receptors and ion channels. During the past fifteen years, he has been actively involved in the development of novel strategies to combat infection. In September 2000, Dr. Ramachandran started GangaGen Biotechnologies Pvt. Ltd. to develop novel biotechnologies for the prevention and treatment of infection through medical, veterinary, and agricultural applications.

Professor Ramachandran is a member of the Indian Academy of Sciences (elected in 1988) and serves as Honorary Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research in Bangalore. Between 1990 and 1992, he was a member of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee on Tropical Diseases Research for the World Health Organization. He has authored and co-authored over 150 original research publications and 45 reviews.