

## **World-renowned Neuromuscular Specialist Marinos Dalakas, M.D., Named Director of Jefferson Division**

Newswise - Marinos C. Dalakas, M.D., a world-renowned expert in neuromuscular diseases, has been named director of the Division of Neuromuscular Diseases in the Department of Neurology and professor of Neurology at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, announced Abdolmohamad Rostami, M.D., Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Neurology at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University and the Jefferson Hospital for Neuroscience.

Prior to coming to Jefferson, Dr. Dalakas was Chief of the Neuromuscular Diseases Section at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) in Bethesda, MD, a position he held for more than 20 years. He first joined the staff of NINDS in 1981 and became Chief of the Neuromuscular Diseases Section in 1989.

Dr. Dalakas' research is focused on exploring the immune, viral and genetic basis of various neuromuscular, demyelinating and neuronal disorders affecting muscle, nerves or brain, and applying new therapeutic interventions via target-oriented control therapeutic clinical trials.

"Jefferson and the neurology department are delighted to have an expert with the extensive skills and experience Dr. Dalakas possesses to further our research and treatment of these disorders," said Dr. Rostami

He plans on establishing a clinical lab at Jefferson for muscular enzyme histochemistry and immunocytochemistry, the study of enzyme and immune reactions in affected muscle and nerve tissues, to "develop a precise diagnosis of a patient with neuromuscular disorders," said Dr. Dalakas. Further, he plans to continue his work with experimental drug trials by applying new therapies to patients with heretofore untreatable neuromuscular diseases. He has been successful in the past in exploring and describing new therapies.

"Patients with these disorders can best be helped by a physician with clinical expertise in these disorders who combines the clinical information with electrophysiology and morphology," said Dr. Dalakas. "Not many neuromuscular specialists do all three together."

Dr. Dalakas also focuses his clinical work and research on rarer disorders including "stiff person syndrome," an autoimmune disease, which is often misdiagnosed as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis or other disorders.

"It's like being the tin man because the patient has great difficulty walking and needs to use a wheelchair, crutches or walker," he said.

He also noted that because such patients become easily startled, sometimes the disorder is diagnosed as an emotional or psychiatric medical issue.

As part of his neurology training, Dr. Dalakas completed a neurology residency at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, followed by a fellowship in neuromuscular diseases at the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke in Bethesda, MD. He then completed a senior staff fellowship in neurovirology and neuroimmunology at NINDS. Dr. Dalakas is an author or co-author of more than 470 scientific papers or chapters in peer-review journals. He has also edited 11 books and monographs and currently serves on the editorial board of several journals including *Brain*; *Muscle and Nerve*; *BMC Neurology*; and *Neuromuscular Disorders*. Up until 2005, he was on

the editorial board of the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry*.

He is the recipient of a number of honors and awards, including the:

- U.S. Public Health Service Special Recognition Award
- NIH Director's Award
- U.S. Public Health Service Special Recognition Award
- Duchenne-Erb-Prize, by the Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Muskelkrankheiten e. V. (DGBM) (German Association for Neuromuscular Diseases and German Academy of Neurology)
- Ramsay Lectureship and Ramsay Medal by the Ramsay Society of London, the University of Glasgow and the World Federation of Neurology
- 2002 Gaetano Conti Prize for Clinical Research
- Bench-to-Bedside Award from the Clinical Center, NIH, 2002, 2003
- 2007 Plenary Lecturer at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology

Dr. Dalakas also holds a patent on an immunotoxin for the treatment of focal movement disorders.

Board certified in neurology and psychiatry, Dr. Dalakas is a Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology, as well as a member of the American Neurological Association, the European Neurological Society and the World Muscle Society. He is also a Diplomate of American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

He received a doctor of medicine degree in 1972 from the Medical School of the National University of Athens, Greece.