Terry Hamblin—creationist and path-breaking scientist

Jerry Bergman

Terence Hamblin, a leading research scientist who died in 2012, is one of many highly accomplished scientists who prove Richard Dawkins' claim "if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane" is not only wrong, but irresponsible. Hamblin's achievements were outstanding and widely recognized as such by the leading scientists in his field. His kindness and concern for his patients and fellow scientists were also often mentioned in the tributes to him and his work.

Professor Terence John Hamblin M.B., Ch.B., D.M., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.Path., F.med.Sci. (1943–2012) was Professor of Immunohaematology at the University of Southampton and a hematologist at Southampton University Hospital. Dr Hamblin dedicated most of his career to leukemia research, in particular the most common form, chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). Hamblin was an internationally known expert, not only on chronic lymphocytic leukemia, but also on myelodysplastic syndrome, plasma exchange therapy, monoclonal antibody therapy and stem cell transplantation.

Daniel Catovsky, Emeritus Professor at the British Institute of Cancer Research, wrote that Hamblin

> "… was a great man, always cheerful, and the centre of attention for his jokes and anecdotes. Concern for patients was always his priority [and he] was one of the best minds in clinical research today."[1]

Education and academic positions

Born in Worcester, England, in 1943, Professor Hamblin studied Medicine at Bristol University. After a series of medical positions in Bristol, Poole, and Dorset, he was appointed a hematologist at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital in 1974 at the young age of 31. He then embarked on his lifelong work, cancer research. He was Professor of Immunohaematology at University of Southampton from 1986 until his death. He also worked as a hematologist at Kings College Hospital, London, from 2004 until he passed away in 2012, leaving behind Diane, his wife of 44 years, and four children, Karen, Richard, Angela, and David.[1] In his obituary, his daughter, Angela Hamblin M.D., the hematology regristrar in the Oxford Deanery, wrote that Medicine was her father's childhood ambition.

> "'I think it appealed to him as a career as he was naturally inquisitive about all things scientific and loved acquiring knowledge on just about anything.' He enjoyed practising medicine and doing research equally' ... . 'The latter allowed him to think laterally about what was going on at the molecular level to make a patient ill and why two patients with ostensibly the same disease behaved so differently, while the former reminded him why performing such research was so important.'"[1]

His cancer research

Hamblin's research resulted in developing an innovative cancer 'vaccine' by combining genetic material from a cancer cell with a harmless part of a toxin. This innovation stimulated the body's immune system to destroy the toxin—and the cancer cell along with it. More than a decade after his first vaccination trial in 1999,[2] trial programs are still in progress, and "genetic immunization with [DNA vaccines] has proven to be a promising tool in conferring protective immunity against tumors in various animal experiments".[3] Its effectiveness for humans, however promising, still remains to be established.[4]

It had long been known that the disease progresses slowly in about half of CLL sufferers, and may require years for symptoms to appear or for treatment to be required. The other half had the more aggressive form of the disease and required treatment much sooner. Using DNA analysis Hamblin and his colleagues discovered that the disease had two different molecular forms. This discovery was critical in determining very early which form of the disease a patient had. Patients with the less agressive disease form had an average of 25 years' survival time; those with the other disease form had an averge of only eight years left to live. Consequently, clinicians could reassure many patients, especially older ones with the more slowly progressing disease form, that they probably would not need treatment during their lifetime. A leading CLL researcher, Professor Catovsky, wrote that

> "... the major contribution of Terry Hamblin to CLL research is, without question, the paper published in *Blood* … back to back with an American paper describing the same finding … . These findings have been confirmed by everybody around the world and have generated a large area of new research in CLL based on the nature of the B cell recepter—the immunoglobulin molecule on the surface of B cells … . Both papers are now citation classics and may represent one of the most original observations in this disease for a long time."[1]

In the early 1980s, Hamblin achieved the first successful autologous stem cell transplant into a lymphoma patient using stem cells from the patient's own blood. The procedure had previously required the very unpleasant,

Figure 1. Professor Terry Hamblin

painful, and invasive process of taking stem cells from the patient's bone marrow. The use of blood for stem cell transplants is now a standard medical procedure. His other major achievements include "helping pioneer new types of treatments such as plasmapheresis, anti-idiotype therapy, peripheral blood autologous stem cell transplantation, and DNA vaccines."[1]

At Bournemouth hospital, Hamblin and his colleagues developed a first-class hematology service, and for the next 30 years he travelled regularly to the Southampton Medical School, attending seminars, working with scientists, and studying scientific data as part of his innovative research.

Publications

Hamblin has published over 300 medical and research papers in the peer reviewed scientific literature and over 100 popular medical articles. He was also editor-in-chief of the *Leukemia Research* medical journal, and a regular columnist for the *World Medicine* magazine. His books include *Plasmapheresis and Plasma Exchange* (1979), *Immunological Investigation of Lymphoid Neoplasms* (1983), *Haematological Problems in the Elderly* (1987), *and Immunotherapy of Disease* (1990). His research covered areas other than cancer. One interesting published article was on his research findings that, contrary to popular belief, spinach contains no more iron than lettuce, and that the respiratory pigment of pink succulent lobster is based—like all invertebrates— on copper, not iron.[5]

His many awards

Included among his many awards for his scientific work is the Binet-Rai medal for outstanding research in chronic lymphocytic leukemia.[1] He also established the Hamblin Prize, which is awarded annually for the the best CLL-related publication from a British-based scientific research group. This has been his most sucessful area of research, but he has also made important contributions in other fields, including stem cell transplantation technology, myeloma, myelodysplastic syndrome, antibody therapy, cytokine therapy and DNA vaccines.[6] Hamblin has also received numerous large monetary grants to fund his cancer research. In 1986 he was also awarded a Guernsey Fellowship for his stem cell transplantation research.

His Christian faith

Hamblin was a devout Christian, a vice-president of the Biblical Creation Society of London, and also served as a deacon in his local Baptist church. He kept a blog in which his commentary on the latest discoveries in cancer research alternated with his thoughts and conclusions about God's creation. He was very sensitive to his audience and, if the subject of the Bible came up in conversation with non-believer colleagues, he addressed issues in a secular manner. The prestigious British Medial Journal obituary noted that

> "Hamblin's Christian faith was a major part of his life. He served as vice president of the Biblical Creation Society and spent more than 20 years in leadership at Lansdowne Baptist Chuch in Bournemouth as deacon, elder and lay preacher."[7]

Furthermore,

> "David Oscier, consultant haematologist at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital, describes him as 'a devout Christian with strongly held beliefs which he never sought to impose on those who did not share them … . Terry had a wonderful sense of humour and a large repertoire of terrible jokes. He was an enthusiastic and charming individual alive with ideas and full of energy. He loved to communicate. He loved writing.'"[7]

Objections to evolution

Richard Dawkins claimed in 1989 that "It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that)."[8] Hamblin is only one of thousands of accomplished scientists who have proven this claim wrong.

Professor Hamblin effectively critiqued the evolutionary worldview—that life began as a random natural process over immense time. Chemical evolution postulates that primordial gases led to the formation of amino acids, then proteins, nucleic acids and, next, into some form of cellular organization. Evolution theory postulates that these simple cells eventually evolved into more complex cellular forms until, finally, the prolific array of different species that now inhabit the earth evolved, including all of those that have become extinct. This view of origins, Hamblin concluded, can only be accepted by persons who do not critically examine the evidence for and against Darwinism.

He has cogently and effectively recognized that breeding—either natural or that produced by humans—can "produce extreme variations within a species—a Toy Poodle or a Great Dane, for example", but "there are limits to that variation and no-one has yet produced a tiger from a tortoise or a rabbit from a greyhound".[9] He understood that Darwin was a man of his time and had no clear understanding of the complex mechanisms involved in producing this variation. This knowledge had to wait for research such as Mendel's

genetic experiments with peas, and Crick and Watson's formulation of the DNA code.

Hamblin noted that modern "neo-Darwinism postulates a molecular model of random mutations that are selected for by the same 'survival of the fittest' tautology that Darwin hit upon." However, mutations are almost always "deleterious and are the chief mechanism of cancer. To suggest that they are the driving force of evolution envisions a highly improbable landscape."[9] He recognized that evolutionists effectively teach that the creator of humans is simply an enormous number of mistakes and damage to DNA. This idea is contrary to the fact that mutations cause not only disease, but their accumulation causes aging and the degeneration of the genome. Most mutatitons are near neutral, but the damage they cause builds up, contributing both to the aging of the individual and the species.

Andrew Copson

Hamblin recognized that he was by no means alone in articulating the many lethal problems with neo-Darwinist evolution. For example, he cited Francis Crick, who was not a creationist but clearly documented the origin-of-life problem for evolution: "The origin of life seems almost to be a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going."[10] Hamblin also eloquently defended creationists against the attacks of evolutionists. For example:

> "Andrew Copson describes the proposal to teach evolution in primary schools as an 'important defense against the ignorance of intelligent design'. Apart from the clear insult to the British people, a majority of whom, when polled, think that intelligent design should be explored in schools, we are concerned about Andrew Copson's own ignorance of intelligent design."[9]

Hamblin added that, like other persons who accept what he (Hamblin) documented was an erroneous view about Intelligent Design, Copson confuses

> "... intelligent design with religious belief. While creationism primarily draws its conclusions from religious sources, intelligent design argues from the data available in the natural world. The origin of life, the integrated complexity of biological systems and the vast information content of DNA are not matters which have been … adequately explained by purely materialistic or neo-Darwinian processes."[9]

Copson tried to argue that the Intelligent Design controversy is not based on the scientific evidence but, as Hamblin documented, the fact is the preponderance of evidence is against the orthodox evolutionary explanation for

> "... the origin and development of life, where we cannot observe what happened directly, a proper scientific approach is to make an inference to the best explanation. In the case of the functional information embedded in biological systems, the best explanation, based on the observation everywhere else that such information only arises from intelligence, is that it too has an intelligent source. If Andrew Copson is skeptical of the scientific respectability of this approach, we urge him to read Dr Steven Meyer's recent book, 'Signature in the Cell'[11]."[9]

Intelligent Design is, therefore, a minimal commitment to intelligent causation. Hamblin added that

> "... the evidence for evolution is treated as if all aspects of it are uniformly convincing, failing to distinguish between what is directly observable, such as change and adaptation through natural selection, and the more speculative elements, like the descent of all living things from a single ancestor. The evidence for both is not of equal force."[9]

Furthermore, he opined that if evolution is "taught in schools, it should be done properly, recognising the tentative nature of scientific conclusions and not excluding legitimate scientific propositions which challenge the reigning paradigm."[9] He added that Andrew Copson overstated his case for censoring Intelligent Design, writing that the British Government

> "... does not specifically 'prohibit' the teaching of intelligent design in science lessons. It concludes, wrongly in our view, that intelligent design is not a scientific position, but recommends that if it is raised by pupils in science lessons it be dealt with appropriately."[9]

He then backed up these conclusions with the same thoughtfulness and experience that has marked his very productive and successful scientific career.

British Medical Journal

Another example of his influence is a letter published in the *British Medical Journal* in response to an article titled 'Evolutionary biology within medicine: a perspective of growing value'[12]:

> "The authors suggest that evolutionary biology as they see it has a significant contribution to make to the education of doctors and to clinical practice. Are they able to offer any specific examples where a clinician or researcher who fully accepted Darwinian theory could design or read a clinical trial, make a diagnosis or manage a patient better than an equivalent doctor who (like the late Terry Hamblin) accepted the Biblical creation account? Dr Hamblin managed to do world leading science in the field of chronic lymphocytic leukemia unhampered by his young earth creationist beliefs.The issue of antibiotic resistance is a red herring: it is a mere matter of differential survival and change in gene frequency which no creationist has any problem with."[13]

The writer concluded that the "undergraduate curriculum is busy enough" and the "… pseudoscience of evolutionary medicine would be an unwelcome and entirely pointless addition to it."[13]

Conclusion

Professor Hamblin was a highly sucessful doctor, university professor, scientist and medical researcher who became convinced that the case for evolution has been disproven and accepted the case for creationism. He was also known to his patients and colleagues as one who lived his Christian faith until he died in 2012. He is greatly missed by his family, his patients, and his colleagues.

References

1. Stafford, N., Terence John Hamblin, *British Medical J*. **344**:7850–7851, 28 March 2012, p. 7850.
2. Hamblin, T., Davis, Z., Gardiner, A., Oscier, D.G. and Stevenson, F.K., Unmutated Ig VH genes are associated with a more aggressive form of chronic lymphocytic leukemia, *Blood* **94**:1848–1854, 1999.
3. Schoen, C., Stritzker, J., Goebel, W. and Pilgrim, S., Bacteria as DNA vaccine carriers for genetic immunization, *The International J. Medical Microbiology* **294**(5):319–335, 15 October 2004; p. 319.
4. Dietrich, G., Kolb-Ma¨urera, A., Spreng, S., Schartl, M., Goebel, W. and Gentschev, I., Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria as carrier systems for DNA vaccines, *Vaccine* **19**:2506–2512, 2001.
5. Hamblin, T., Fake! *British Medical J*. **283**(6307):1671–1674, 19–26 December 1981.
6. Professor Terry Hamblin, who has died aged 68, was a hematologist who delivered the 'world's first cancer vaccine', *The London Telegraph*, 1 February 2012.
7. Stafford, ref. 1, p. 7851.
8. Dawkins, R., Put Your Money on Evolution, *The New York Times*, 9 April 1989, section vii, p. 35.
9. Hamblin, T., Mutations of mortality: random thoughts of Terry Hamblin about leukaemia, literature, poetry, politics, religion, cricket and music, mutated-unmutated.blogspot.com/, accessed 8 June 2012.
10. Crick, F., *Life Itself, Its Origin and Nature*, Simon and Schuster, New York, p. 88, 1981.
11. Meyer, S., *Signature in the Cell*, HarperOne, New York, 2009.
12. Hayes, S., Re: Evolutionary biology within medicine: a perspective of growing value, *British Medical J.*, 6 February, 2012, www.bmj.com/rapid-response/2012/02/06/re-evolutionary-biology-within-medicine-perspective-growing-value.
13. Gluckman, P.D. and Bergstrom, C.T., Evolutionary biology within medicine: a perspective of growing value, *British Medical J.* **343**:1319–1321, 19 December 2011.

Jerry Bergman has nine academic degrees, including two PhDs. His major areas of study for his graduate work were in biology, chemistry, and psychology. He graduated from Wayne State University in Detroit, Medical University of Ohio in Toledo, University of Toledo and Bowling Green State University. A prolific writer with numerous publications, Dr Bergman has taught biology, chemistry and biochemistry at Northwest State in Archbold, Ohio, for over 24 years. He is also an adjunct Associate Professor at The University of Toledo Medical College.

Errata

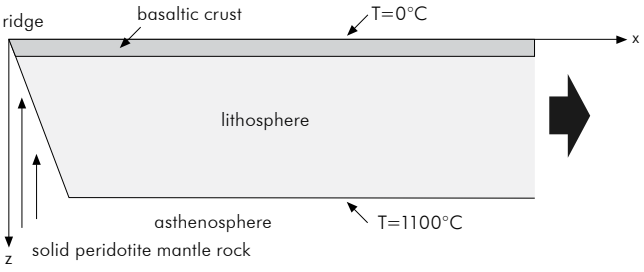
Journal of Creation **26**(1)

Evenboer, T. and Borger, P., The origin of American Indian populations.

- On p. 72, 1st column, line 8 should read: "... back to the *East*, from where the sun rises."
- On p. 73, 2nd column, lines 31 to 33 should read: "... a journey of more than 12,000 km (7,500 miles), it is a realistic possibility.[9] Brazil is less than 4,000 km (2,500 miles) from Gibraltar."

Baumgardner, J., Is plate tectonics occurring today?

- On p. 104, figure 7 should be:



Taylor, I.T., Adam—Man of clay.

- On p. 125, figure 1, the first sentence of the caption should read: "Sir James George Frazer, 1854–1941."