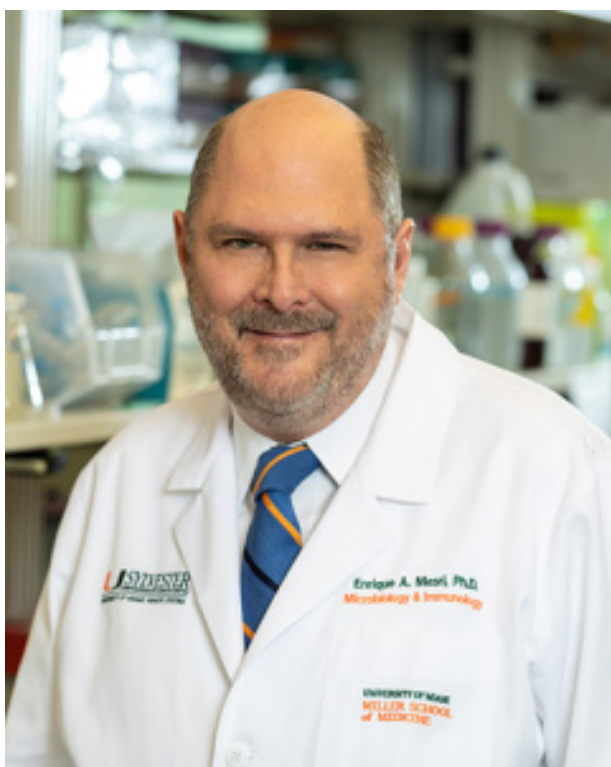




# Remembering Dr. Enrique Mesri

The University of Miami Miller School of Medicine community mourns the loss of Enrique A. Mesri, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, director of the AIDS Malignancies Scientific Interest Groups and co-director of the mentoring program at the Miami Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), director of the CFAR/Sylvester Argentina Consortium for Research and Training in AIDS Malignancies, and member of the Tumor Biology Program at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Mesri died on Saturday, August 27, after a battle with lymphoma.



Dr. Enrique Mesri

Dr. Mesri leaves a tremendous legacy in viral oncology through his work in HIV/AIDS and cancer. Before coming to the Miller



School in 2005, he was the driving force on the team that first characterized the role of HHV-8/Kaposi's sarcoma virus (KSHV) in lymphomagenesis in 1996, shortly after the authentication of this virus, and the oncogenic effects of KSHV-encoded G-protein-coupled receptor (KSHV-GPCR) in 1998 – a discovery that became the springboard for his highly successful research career. Dr. Mesri's laboratory work developed unique pre-clinical animal models that focused on KSHV and the elucidation of the mechanism of cell transformation and activation of angiogenesis by KSHV to identify viral and host therapeutic targets, leading to the development of anti-viral and anti-tumor approaches to treat KSHV cancers. His basic and translational research work was extensively published and is widely cited.

While maintaining a place at the top of the NIH funding list for the Miller School, Dr. Mesri was also a driving force on the faculty, helping to advance vital initiatives as a member of the C-Change Steering Committee and chair of the C-Change Research Faculty Committee – work to which he was deeply committed. He served in administrative capacities on several other Miller School committees.

Dr. Mesri made a distinctive mark through his scientific collaboration with Argentina, his home country. In 2008, he was named to the U.S. advisory committee in Scientific and Technical Cooperation Programs, where he worked with Argentinian leaders; and he earned a subsidy from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in 2010 for three labs in Argentina in a cooperative study of cancers associated with HIV/AIDS.

One of Dr. Mesri's most important accomplishments was the role he played in securing the 2017 NCI U54 grant in consortium



with Sylvester, CFAR, and four Argentinian basic and clinical research institutions, to pursue research in AIDS-related malignancies and help develop the careers of junior researchers in Argentina. He was particularly proud of this work, which helped to elevate the NCI-supported cancer research across the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment/survivorship continuum in Argentina.

Dr. Mesri was twice honored by the government of Argentina for his scientific contributions – most recently earlier this year, when the Argentinian Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation bestowed on him its highest honor, the RAICES Award. With characteristic humility, he expressed gratitude for the support of his colleagues and the institution upon receiving the award, saying, “There is no doubt that the crowning achievement of my collaborative career came thanks to the empowerment received from UM.”

Along with Dr. Zhibin Chen, Dr. Mesri had recently received a grant for the strategic Miami CFAR Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Pipeline Initiative (CDEIPI), to address the lack of leading underrepresented minority scientists by facilitating the participation of minority trainees in research and career skill instruction. One of his ongoing priorities was linking CFAR and Sylvester more closely, particularly for joint grants that could bring support and investigative interest from both entities to AIDS malignancy research.

Dr. Mesri was a member of the American Association for Cancer Research and president and co-founder of Encounter for Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the Argentina Diaspora, and was active in several other professional associations.



A mentor *par excellence*, Dr. Mesri was passionate about training the next generation of scientists, in this country and internationally. He was always enthusiastic in putting new ideas forward and following through to put them into action. Humble and generous in his collaborative work, Dr. Mesri will be remembered as a preeminent and respected researcher, a gifted and inspiring teacher, and an advocate dedicated to improving the lives of people suffering from cancer and related comorbidities. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Dr. Mesri is survived by his wife, Cecilia Rubio; his beloved son, Julian Mesri; Ms. Rubio's two sons; and other family members.

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