



CYSTIC FIBROSIS ASSOCIATION OF S.A. INC.

NEWSFRONT

Vol No. 5

SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1989



Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Fondation canadienne de la fibrose kystique

Thursday, 24 August 1989
10:00 a.m

News Release

"THE GENE FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUND"

Toronto - The Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CCFF) is proud to confirm that the defective gene which is responsible for cystic fibrosis has been identified. This important discovery is the result of an intensive search led by Dr. Lap-Chee Tsui, as part of a five-year Research Development Program in CF Genetics/Gene Expression (RDP), based at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. Dr. Tsui is a member of this internationally-renowned RDP team, whose work is being supported financially by the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

The gene discovery has been a collaboration between Dr. Tsui's team, members of the laboratory of RDP project director, Dr. Jack Riordan, and Dr. Francis Collins, geneticist at the University of Michigan and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Ann Arbor.

"Identification of the CF gene is a spectacular achievement," stated Dr. Janet Forstner, the Chairman of the CCFF's Medical/Scientific Advisory Committee, and a member of the RDP team. "It will lead to new diagnostic tests, and to an explosion of knowledge about the cause and secondary effects of cystic fibrosis. This new finding guarantees as well a dramatic acceleration of research focused on improving CF treatment."

Thanks to the discovery of the CF gene, a number of new research opportunities can now be explored. Among these:

- o the development of tests to detect carriers of the defective gene;
- o identification of all CF-specific mutations within the gene, and the links between these and the signs and symptoms of cystic fibrosis;
- o identification of the protein product of the gene, and of the function(s) of the gene product;
- o studies to investigate how cellular malfunctions caused by the CF gene might best be corrected.

"This is the most exciting news in the history of our Foundation. It's the big boost we've been waiting for," said Phil Wall of St. John's Newfoundland, President of the CCFF, and the parent of an adolescent with CF. "It will give us all new energy to carry on. It isn't a cure, of course, but it is a giant step in the right direction, and it shows very clearly that CF research is paying off. We are proud that this discovery was made in Canada, and that our Foundation has been the major funder of the Canadian investigations leading to the gene."

"This is a fabulous opportunity, but it is important that no one be misled. The discovery of the gene will have an impact on the health of individuals only if additional, intensive research can be carried out. Our priority now is to maintain momentum, to apply this new knowledge for the persons who have CF today, and for those who are yet to come."