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निदेशक

Dr. Radha Rangarajan

Director

August 22, 2023

To,

The Selection Committee,  
Sun Pharma Science Foundation

I am delighted to recommend Dr. Dipak Datta for the prestigious Sun Pharma Award, in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the field of cancer research.

After completing his post-doctoral training at Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA, Dr. Datta started his independent academic career at CSIR-CDRI as a Senior Scientist in 2011. For the last ten years, he has not only published numerous high impact research articles (*Mol Cancer Ther, Cell Death Dis, Nat Commun, Redox Biol*) but has also made seminal contributions in cancer drug discovery. He currently heads the Cancer Biology Division at CSIR-CDRI.

Dr. Datta's research is characterized by his distinctive approach to tackling challenges in cancer therapy through scientific innovation. His recent breakthrough publication in *Nature Communications* (Nov, 2022) on an epigenetic modulator, EZH2, for Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) metastasis, garnered widespread media attention. Dr Datta and team demonstrated that instead of a classical suppressive function, EZH2 functional activation can promote specific gene expression, like KRT14, leading to TNBC peritoneal metastasis. The team also identified that the EZH2 inhibitor drug Tazemetostat (EPZ6438) could be a promising therapeutic option for aggressive TNBC. This work demonstrates Dr. Datta's ability to drive basic research uncovering the genetic underpinnings of cancer, while staying focused on potential therapeutic benefits. Given the high incidence of TNBC, this work is of particular significance.

In terms of translational research, one of Dr. Datta's major contributions has been the discovery and preclinical development of a novel and pioneering compound series against therapy resistant cancer (*PCT/IN2021/051182*). Dr. Datta led the team that has now identified S-016-1348 as a candidate for IND-enabling studies. The systematic progress of this project from concept to candidate is testament to his goal oriented approach, perseverance and pursuit of excellence.

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In recognition of Dr. Datta's scientific prowess, he was given the responsibility to lead a large CSIR wide mission-mode program, "Pan CSIR Cancer Research Program" focusing on women cancers of Indian relevance. The program, one of its kind in scope and scale, has brought together over 100 scientists from various CSIR laboratories, underscoring his ability to foster collaboration and drive impactful research. His recent collaborative publications in *Nature Communications* (2020) and *Cancer Research* (2023) are additional examples of his collaborative strength.

Dr. Datta has successfully trained and mentored several students. One of his graduate students obtained a top-notch scientist position at Pfizer San Diego, reflecting his contributions to shaping the next generation of global researchers. Dr. Datta's involvement as an ad-hoc reviewer for esteemed granting agencies and peer-reviewed international journals like *JCI*, *Oncogene*, *BBA* etc. further attests to his influence in the field. His insights shape cancer research within India and beyond.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend Dr. Dipak Datta for the Sun Pharma Award. His visionary mindset, transformative leadership, and commitment to scientific advancement make him an ideal recipient. His strong commitment to addressing unmet needs in the Indian context is commendable. If selected, the recognition will further motivate him to engage in impactful research in cancer drug discovery and development, leading to improved patient care.

Sincerely,



22 AUG 2022

Radha Rangarajan, Ph.D.

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