Bio 2015

Professor Abass Alavi is a well known figure and a recognized pioneer in nuclear medicine having a CV comprising over 660 peer-reviewed publications. He is recipient of many awards and distinctions, among which are the highest distinction in nuclear medicine, the Georg Charles de Hevesy Nuclear Pioneer Award given by the Society of Nuclear Medicine, the Cassen Prize of the Society of Nuclear Medicine, and honorary degrees from the University of Bologna, the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia and the University of Shiraz in Iran. .

Abass was born 1938 in Tabriz, Iran. He was the second of three children of Mohsen Alavi, who had a 6th grade education. His father's family was originally from Marash in Syria, many generations ago they went to Iran, were in religious positions, in various cities. The grandfather was a hakim, a traditional herbal doctor. His father grew up in Marand, where he started to work in textile business for Mr Nilchi, Abass' maternal grandfather..

Prof. Alavi received his medical degree from the University of Tehran in

1964. At that time, the government required all new medical graduates to serve in the military and in a public health service. The graduates spent a few months in basic training and then were assigned to villages where medical need was great. Abass served in a small village in the mountains north of Tehran. He went to the US to continue his training in 1966, and worked as an intern and resident in Internal Medicine in several hospitals before deciding on Nuclear Medicine as a specialty.

When he began as a research fellow at the University of Pennsylvania in 1971 under David Kuhl, tomographic imaging was very new, and Abass had the opportunity to be in the front line, applying the many novel methodologies including the FDG technique to the human brain, coordinating the research with the chemistry group at Brookhaven National Laboratory. Abass along with Kuhl and Reivich were the first to introduce the

concept of labeling deoxyglucose with Fluorine 18. Abass, in fact, was the first to administer FDG to a human subject it 1976, and to acquire tomographic images of the brain and planar scans of the whole body.
He was appointed to Penn's faculty in 1974, and currently holds appointments as Professor and Director of Research Education, Department of Radiology. He was also Medical Director of the Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Center .

He is recognized internationally as an innovator in this field.. He has made numerous contributions to the field of modern medical imaging, including the introduction of F18-Fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG)-positron emission tomography (PET) with his colleagues.

He and his colleagues have conducted pioneering research in modern imaging techniques including PET, SPECT, CT and MRI . He is an expert in modern imaging techniques and the clinical applications of PET imaging for the detection of cancer and other disorders including dementia, seizures, cardiovascular disease, and infection. He served as a member and chairman of scientific study sections at the NIH and American Cancer Society. He has published numerous scientific papers, and is the most cited faculty member at Penn.

He is a devoted educator, and his former students and research fellows now occupy leading positions in Nuclear Medicine worldwide, including Italy, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Belgium Turkey, India and China. He has been a long-time supporter of educational and research opportunities for students in nuclear medicine. While his name is associated with the Alavi-Mandell Awards, which recognize trainees and young scientists who publish articles as senior authors in the Journal of Nuclear Medicine, his generosity also supports the Pilot Research Grants and the Bradley-Alavi Student Fellowship Awards funded by the Education and Research Foundation of the Society of Nuclear Medicine.