

2020 Wallace H. Coulter Award for Lifetime Achievement in Hematology Recipient: Mohandas Narla, DSc



ASH will recognize Mohandas Narla, DSc, of the New York Blood Center with the 2020 Wallace H. Coulter Award for Lifetime Achievement in Hematology. Dr. Narla is being recognized for his significant contributions to hematology through his ground-breaking research, his inspirational mentoring style, and his invaluable service to ASH and to the advancement of the field at large during his career.

“I am extremely humbled and honored to receive this incredible recognition from my peers at ASH – where I’ve been an active member for nearly 50 years,” said Dr. Narla. “It is particularly gratifying to be the first engineer to receive this prestigious award named after Mr. Wallace Coulter, who was an engineer himself.”

The Wallace H. Coulter Award for Lifetime Achievement in Hematology, the Society's highest honor, is named after the late Wallace H. Coulter, a prolific inventor, innovator, and entrepreneur. His most significant discovery, the Coulter Principle, pioneered the development of flow cytometry, defined particle characterization, and made possible automated hematology, thus revolutionizing laboratory medicine. Additionally, the Coulter Counter led to major breakthroughs in science, medicine, and industry. This award, in his name, recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a lasting commitment to the field of hematology through outstanding contributions to education, research, and practice.

With more than 400 peer-reviewed publications and 100 reviews under his belt, Dr. Narla has had a distinguished research career focused on the pathophysiology of inherited and acquired red blood cell disorders. He is known for his invention of the ektacytometer, a tool used today in clinical research and diagnosis to characterize red blood cell abnormalities. Using his skillset as an engineer, he also invented what can be considered an entire resource toolbox to address various scientific problems. Most recently, Dr. Narla has focused his efforts in developing strategies for the quantitative analysis of the various stages of erythropoiesis in human peripheral blood and bone marrow. He believes that a detailed understanding of normal and disordered erythropoiesis will lay the groundwork for novel diagnostic and therapeutic options that can improve patient care.

Dr. Narla is commended not only for his extensive red blood cell research, but also for his generous and supportive attitude as a mentor to others. He is seen as a true leader in bringing together researchers from all over the world.

Dr. Narla received his doctoral training at the Washington University in St. Louis and his postdoctoral training at the Institute of Cellular Pathology in Paris. It was in Paris that his passion for red blood cells and erythropoiesis began. His mentors, Drs. Marcel Bessis and Gil Tchernia, encouraged him to bring his unique engineering perspective to hematology research, advice that truly brought Dr. Narla to where he is today.

Through his many inventions and significant achievements, Dr. Narla walks in the footsteps of Dr. Coulter, a fellow inventor. He serves as a great role model for less experienced ASH members by highlighting that it is possible to wear the many hats of brilliant researcher, a great mentor and facilitator, and most importantly, an inspiring human being.