



Erik De Clercq, M.D. Ph.D.



A pioneer in antiviral research, Dr. Erik De Clercq began his medical career in 1966, received his certification in Clinical Pathology in 1971, and his Ph.D. the following year. While at the Rega Institute for Medical Research, he led teams that discovered some of the first anti-HIV medications and played a central role in developing the paradigm-shifting concept of combination therapy for HIV, which today is the most effective treatment strategy for HIV/AIDS patients. Over his prodigious career, Dr. De Clercq's research focused on the development of new therapies, and in particular, the development of new agents against viral infections. He is widely recognized for his seminal work in the field of nucleotide analogs, which were the first broad-spectrum antivirals, and sparked a new era in antiviral development.

Dr. De Clercq is celebrated for his invention or co-invention of six approved drugs which are widely used in antiviral therapy:

- Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (marketed as Viread[®]); in combination with emtricitabine, as Truvada[®]; in combination with both emtricitabine and efavirenz, as Atripla[®] for human immunodeficiency virus
 - Valaciclovir, Valtrex[®] and Zelitrex[®] for herpes simplex virus
 - Brivudin, Zostex[®], Brivirac[®], Zerpex[®] for varicella-zoster virus
 - Cidofovir and Vistide[®] for cytomegalovirus
 - Adefovir dipivoxil, Hepsera[®] and Viread[®] for hepatitis B virus
- His research also included agents against both the human papilloma and hepatitis C viruses.

Dr. De Clercq held numerous chairmanships, academic posts and director positions during his distinguished career, including:

- Chairman of the Directory Board Member of the Rega Institute, Leuven University, and the Rega Foundation, Leuven
- Chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Leuven University
- Director of the Belgian (Flemish) Royal Academy of Medicine
- Member of the Academia Europaea
- Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.
- President of the International Society for Antiviral Research
- Editor-in-Chief of the Journal Antiviral Research

Dr. De Clercq's achievements have been recognized by numerous awards including The Otto Krayer Award for Pharmacology; the Hamao Umezawa Memorial Award for outstanding contributions in the field of chemotherapy; the René Descartes Prize -- the highest award bestowed by the European Union -- for Scientific and Technological Excellence in European Collaborative Research; the Blaise Pascal Medal for Science and Technology of the European Academy of Sciences, the Gertrude Elion Distinguished Lecture Award; and the Maisin Prize for Biomedical Sciences from the National Science Foundation, Belgium, for his pioneering efforts in the field of antiviral research. In 2008 he was elected European Inventor of the Year and presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr. De Clercq has published more than 2,500 scientific papers, mostly in the area of antiviral therapy, and has served on many editorial boards during his career. He has given more than 1000 lectures worldwide on antiviral chemotherapy and has served as a scientific advisor for a number of pharmaceutical companies.