

IN MEMORIAM



Jianming Li, MD PhD, FHRS.

(1962-2020)

Dr. Jianming Li, Director of Cardiac Electrophysiology at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System and Associate Program Director for Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology and Professor at the University of Minnesota, died suddenly on June 12, 2020 at his residence in Eagan, Minnesota.

Jianming, known as “Jimmy” was born on September 24, 1962 at Jilin City, Jilin, China. Dr. Jian-Ming Li graduated with a BS in Biochemistry from Nanjing University in 1982. In 1983, as one of sixty students selected for a US-China CUSBEA exchange program, he went to the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Dallas and earned a PhD in Biochemistry in 1988. His dissertation was titled, “The N-terminus of the tRNA methyltransferase contains both nuclear and mitochondrial signals.” This led to a publication of his seminal work in ‘Science’ on reversal of the orientation of an integral protein of the mitochondrial outer membrane in 1992. Dr. Li earned his MD and CM (Master of Surgery) at McGill University in 1995. In his time at medical school, he studied the relationship between the L-type Ca channel and hypertension by using molecular cloning technique. This research won him the Medical Scientist Award from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada three times, the Young Scientist Award from the 15th International Society of Hypertension in 1994, and Sandoz Research Excellence award in 1995. He completed his Internal Medicine residency at the University of Toronto in 1998 and Cardiology and Cardiac Electrophysiology fellowship at the University

of Texas Southwestern Medical School in 2002. He then joined the Minneapolis VA Health Care System and established the Cardiac Electrophysiology and Fellowship program, taking it to an International level. He was the past president of the Association of Minnesota Chinese Physicians and the past president of Chinese American Heart Association. His recent research interests include the mechanism of sudden cardiac death and the effect of cardiac resynchronization therapy. In April 2013, he received the “outstanding contribution award” from Chinese Heart Rhythm Society for his role in advocating pacemaker infection awareness and management in China. In November 2013, he received the American Heart Association Hero Award for his outstanding contribution to cardiovascular care and research.

Jimmy was passionate about teaching fellows, leading to many accolades including Best Teacher. His main strength was in bridging the gap between major international societies with his tremendous interpersonal skills, including serving as an ambassador of Heart Rhythm Society, Ambassadors’ Counsel for Asia-Pacific. He brought in new ideas in education and health care and has authored many publications.

Jimmy’s last talk was on June 10, 2020, an online meeting titled “Cardiovascular Therapeutics Summit Conference”(CTSC 11th 2020). He was addressing an audience of 37,631, showing his dedication and energy until his last moments.

More importantly, Jimmy was an even better person than he was an academician. He was respectful, humble, held no bitterness or resentment, and was always grateful. His brilliant smile and infectious laughter uplifted the spirits of everyone around him. He was a social magnet who had friends throughout the world. Jimmy did not stop working up until his last moment.

Jianming is survived by his father, two brothers, a sister, and loving wife Min Hu. He was also a devoted and loving father of two daughters, Stephanie Li and Lori Li.

Venkatakrishna Tholakanahalli

MD FHRS.

Professor, University of Minnesota

Director: Advanced interventional cardiac electrophysiology
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