

Profile – Dr. Nishigandha Naik

Dr. Nishigandha Naik is working as **Emeritus Scientist of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Adjunct Professor at the G N Khalsa College**, Mumbai. She is also associated as Adjunct Professor at **Institute of Chemical Technology**, Mumbai and **Yenepoya Research Centre**, Mangaluru. Earlier, she was working as the Assistant Director and also held additional charge as the **Director of the Haffkine Institute for Training, Research and Testing (HITRT)**, Mumbai from where she superannuated in 2020. In her capacity as Assistant Director, she served as the Head of the Departments of Biochemistry and Toxicology. She has more than thirty years of research experience that includes stints in academia as well as industry. Her work is in the field of cancer cell biology, imaging, snake venom and pre-clinical drug discovery. Her research primarily relates to cell motility related signal transduction events and development of diagnostic & therapeutic approaches for tuberculosis and cancer, especially chronic myeloid leukemia, breast cancer, glioblastoma and neural stem cells. Studies of her group have identified novel therapeutic targets. She is also involved in research on snake venom and establishment of the Facility for Testing of Snake Venom & Anti-Snake Venom as well as the National Venom Research Centre.

Dr. Naik did her Ph.D. at the Cancer Research Institute (CRI) of the **Tata Memorial Centre**, which is a pioneering and leading comprehensive cancer centre of India. She did her post-doctoral research at the Centre d'Etudes Nucleaires de Grenoble, France. She worked as a Principal Investigator at the CRI (now known as Advanced Centre for Training, Research and Education in Cancer – ACTREC). The focus of her group was to understand pathogenesis of chronic myeloid leukemia and breast cancer. In her tenure of almost two decades at the CRI, she developed expertise in the field of imaging. She was instrumental in establishing the Institute's Laser Confocal Facility, which was the second of its kind in India. She also contributed to the Flow Cytometry and Live Cell Imaging Facilities of the Institute and served as a member of the Academic Committee, Institutional Scientific Committee, etc.

The NCE research division of the **Piramal Enterprises Limited** was focusing on discovery and development of new drugs to treat unmet medical needs in the areas of cancer, diabetes and inflammation. The Centre had comprehensive capabilities ranging from target identification, lead discovery & optimization to pre-clinical development and clinical R&D. As a Sr. Group Leader, Dr. Naik initiated her work from establishment of her group and the laboratory too. She undertook tasks from target identification, discovery and development of lead compound to the preclinical stage. One of the compounds has reached the stage of clinical trials. As the Head of Imaging and Cancer Biology, she had set up a complete preclinical imaging facility required for the drug discovery industry.

Dr. Naik is an inventor in international patents and is a recipient of several national and international awards including the Indian National Science Academy's Medal for Young Scientist, award for Young Scientist from International Federation for Cell Biology (IFCB) and European Cell Biology Organization (ECBO), Marie Curie Fellowship from the Commission of European Communities and DST, Long Term Overseas Associateship award from DBT, STA Fellowship from Government of Japan and DST, etc. Dr. Naik has served several times as an elected office-bearer of the Indian Association for Cancer Research and the Indian Society of Cell Biology. She is the founder president of the ACTREC Alumni Association and is also associated with the Moving Academy of Medicine and Biomedicine as a member of the Governing Council.