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Professor Hualiang Jiang: A tribute to an esteemed visionary chemist and pharmacist



Professor Hualiang Jiang, a leading chemist and pharmacist in China, Academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences, former Director General of Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica (SIMM), Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the founding Dean of School of Pharmacy, East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST), passed away on 23 December 2022 in Shanghai at the age of 57. He was well-known for his brilliance and strategic vision as a scientist, his kindness and generosity as a friend, and his dedication as a teacher and a mentor. The untimely demise of Professor Hualiang Jiang is a great loss to us and to the field of chemical and pharmaceutical research.



Professor Hualiang Jiang

Professor Hualiang Jiang was born in 1965 in Jiangsu Province, China. He received his B.S. degree from Nanjing University in 1987, his M.S. degree from East China Normal University in 1992, and his Ph.D. degree from SIMM in 1995. Since then, he has been working at SIMM and devoting his life to research and education in the field of computational and pharmaceutical chemistry.

Professor Hualiang Jiang was a pioneer in the development of computational methods for drug design, molecular modeling, target identification, and drug discovery. He made significant advances in the development of methods for drug-target interactions prediction, in silico “target fishing” for potential target identification, drug-target binding kinetics prediction, virtual combinatorial library design, and high-throughput virtual screening.

Furthermore, Professor Hualiang Jiang established the drug innovation platform encompassing “molecular dynamics simulations → drug design → chemical synthesis → biological assay → structural

biology”. Professor Hualiang Jiang also focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI) accelerated drug design and development. He developed AI-based models to predict the oxidase-mediated metabolism of drug-like molecules, and the compound-protein interactions using protein sequence only, which are the important advancements in AI-based drug design. Professor Hualiang Jiang is not only the lead inventor of VV116 and XIANNUOXIN approved for the treatment of COVID-19, but also contributed to numerous drug candidates that have already been approved or are in clinical trials for pulmonary hypertension, schizophrenia, type 2 diabetes, infections, metabolic syndrome, and Alzheimer’s disease.

As a prolific researcher, Professor Hualiang Jiang published more than 600 articles in international renowned journals, such as *Nature*, *Nature Chemical Biology*, *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*. In addition, he published more than ten monographs and filed more than 100 patents. Under his mentoring, more than 100 Ph.D. students graduated and begun to play vital roles in chemical and pharmaceutical industry as well as academic research. In recognition of his outstanding achievements in the fields of chemical and pharmaceutical research, Professor Hualiang Jiang received numerous awards, including the National Natural Science Award, the National Science and Technology Invention Award, Ho Leung Ho Lee Science and Technology Innovation Award, and Shanghai Science and Technology Award.

Beyond his scientific accomplishments, Professor Hualiang Jiang was a person who loves and embraces life fully. He possessed profound literary and artistic attainments and enjoyed playing table tennis and basketball. He excelled in Yue Opera and culinary skills. His blog, “the Merad Reaction in Braised Pork” perfectly bridged daily food making and chemistry, providing an interesting way to popularizing science for the public. He also upheld traditional Chinese family values, demonstrating mutual support and respect to his wife for more than thirty years even during times of poverty.

Professor Hualiang Jiang’s motto, “What the country needs is where my aspiration lies” was deeply ingrained in his heart and reflected in his lifelong dedication. In his absence, we will strive to carry on his legacy with courage and competence. Professor Hualiang Jiang will always be remembered by his family, colleagues, friends, students, and those he helped and inspired.

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