Obituary

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‘Those Dying Young and Suddenly Will Be with Us Forever’

Dr. Jiří Lácha, Head of the Transplant Division, Department of Nephrology of the Prague-based Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine (IKEM), Vice President of the Czech Transplant Society, Scientific Secretary and designated Chairman of the Czech Society of Nephrology, died suddenly and tragically, aged 45, in a car accident on January 27, 2005.

His career, short and skyrocketing, came to an end unexpectedly, while busy working on his numerous research, teaching, and clinical projects.

Dr. Jiří Lácha was born on April 1, 1960 in the beautiful landscape on the confluence of the Vltava (Moldau) and Labe (Elbe) rivers. He graduated from the Charles University School of Medicine in Prague in 1985 and went to work at the IKEM's Department of Nephrology becoming Head of the Transplant Division in 1993. He soon established himself as a top clinical expert while being involved in transplant immunology on both the European and international scale (primarily with Prof. H.D. Volk with whom he was jointly awarded a EU grant).

Dr. Lácha earned his PhD degree in 1994 with a study on ‘Fine needle biopsy in diagnosis of allograft rejection’; he subsequently set up a transplant laboratory to launch systemic research into chronic rejection nephropathy. His abstract addressing TGF β polymorphism in relation to cyclosporine nephrotoxicity after a heart transplantation was awarded the First Prize of the Transplantation Society in 2000.

His subsequent publications called ‘Intercellular cell adhesion molecule-1 and selectin ligands in acute cardiac

allograft rejection: a study on gene-defective mouse models.’ [J Leukoc Biol 2002] received the First Prize of the Czech Society of Nephrology.

Anyone familiar with Dr. Lácha knows he was a kind, sociable man always ready to lend a helping hand. He was a great sportsman and an excellent dancer, popular with his friends and coworkers. He was an excellent father to his two gifted daughters, setting them an example with his unremitting diligence and activity. Though dying relatively young, he achieved a lot.

We will never forget you.