

Riccardo Cortese, MD, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of Okairos

Riccardo Cortese has a medical degree from the University of Naples. Prof Cortese worked for many years at the LMB of Cambridge UK with the most distinguished group of molecular biologists in the world. Prof. Cortese was a founder and the first director of the Gene Expression Program at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg, where he organized a world class laboratory, recruited and coordinated the work of several research groups.



Prof. Cortese was the Founder and Scientific Director of IRBM, research institution between Merck, various other pharma companies, and the Italian government.. In particular Prof. Cortese discovered that the integrase of HIV is an excellent target for the development of new drugs and coordinated the effort towards the development of ISENTRESS, presently the most innovative anti-HIV drug. Merck ultimately acquired all the shares of IRBM. Well into his career, Prof. Cortese founded and led Okairos, a Biotech Company dedicated to the development of a new technological platform for the development of genetic vaccines and applied to diseases that afflict the population of the third world countries, such as HCV, Malaria, AIDS, Ebola, etc. More recently, Prof. Cortese founded NOUSCOM, a biotech company dedicated to the development of personalized cancer vaccines, based on individual genomic information and patient specific immunogens.

He has published in leading scientific journals and is an elected member of several prestigious international societies.

Abstract

From vaccines for the masses to vaccines just for one patient

1) From genes to vaccines : vaccines for millions

Vaccines are the most successful medical treatment in the history of medicine, and yet we still do not have efficacious vaccines for the worse and wide spread diseases such as Malaria, Tuberculosis, AIDS, nor we have vaccines against the most lethal viruses such as Ebola..

One new attractive strategy to make cheap, safe and efficacious vaccines for infectious diseases is based converting natural viruses in safe genetic vaccines to be administered to millions of subjects of all ages, from babies to elderlies. Okairos developed and validated a new technology to design, manufacture and test vaccines against widespread pathogens such as HCV, MALARIA, tuberculosis, or true killer virus like Ebola. Based on convincing clinical results Okairos was acquired by GSK.

The Okairos team remained intact and independent, under a new name, Keires, a company dedicated to manufacturing clinical lots of genetic vaccines

2) Vaccine for one

The former Okairos executives founded NOUSCOM a new company in the field of immunoncology. Most recent advances in cancer resuscitated interests in the development of cancer vaccines: cheap genomic analysis provides information for the development of patient specific vaccines: technical challenge for NOUSCOM : the development of “vaccine for one, for each patient its own proprietary vaccine