

## UCSD's Ajit Varki to Receive Glycobiology's Highest International Honor

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Ajit Varki, M.D., Distinguished Professor of Medicine and Cellular and Molecular Medicine, and Founder and Co-Director of the Glycobiology Research and Training Center at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine, has been selected as the winner of the International Glycoconjugate Organization (IGO) Award for 2007. The award which is given every two years to "glycoscientists who have clearly advanced the field of glycoscience and show promise of continuing advancements," will be presented at the 19th International Symposium on Glycoconjugates (GLYCO XIX) scheduled in Cairns, Queensland, Australia, July 15 to 20.

Varki has been a pioneer in the field of glycobiology, which is the study of the structure, biosynthesis and biology of complex sugar chains called glycans which cover all cells and many proteins in nature. Varki's research interests focus on a family of sugars called the sialic acids, and their roles in biology, evolution and disease. He has identified and studied multiple differences in sialic acid biology between humans and great apes, differences that are relevant to understanding aspects of human health and disease. Varki is the chief editor of the major textbook in the field, *The Essentials of Glycobiology*.

This award is the highest international honor in the field of Glycobiology. Varki is one of only three Americans to have won it. He is already 2005 winner of the Karl Meyer Award of the Society for Glycobiology, the other major honor in this field. Varki is one of three individuals to date who have won both awards.

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