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REFLECTIONS ON THE CAREER OF MICHEL SAFAR – Lifetime Achievement Award 2008

The contribution of Michel Safar to hypertension research

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How wonderful to learn that Artery has recognized Professor Michel E. Safar to receive its first Lifetime Achievement Award for his monumental research contributions on the role of large arteries in health and disease. They have provided the impetus to the basic and clinical research community to become more deeply dedicated to further understanding of the function of large arteries. His efforts, in truth, have made a tremendous impact on a new aspect of medicine, systolic hypertension in the elderly.

I have known Professor Safar for 50 years and am very familiar with his scientific and clinical stature, his many contributions to hypertension, and the esteem to which he is held by his peers world-wide. In the earlier years of our relationship, we have shared mutual interest in the systemic hemodynamic characteristics of hypertensive diseases.

Thereafter, Professor Safar entered into an intensive series of studies, spanning at least 35 years when he resurrected, transformed, and led an in-depth inquiry into the role of large vessels and their stiffness, compliance and distensibility in patients with hypertension.

The significance of his work was enormously enhanced by several multicenter studies demonstrating the significance, treatment, and reversibility of the inherent risk of systolic hypertension in the elderly. It was his fundamental

and clinical studies that have championed the necessity and practicality of other clinical studies to mandate and detail further a systematic inquiry into this major problem. Thus, it was his investigative contributions that provided an enlightened approach to systolic hypertension in the elderly.

Doctor Safar's personal works and their impact have been nothing less than phenomenal. He has trained a large cadre of researchers whose work, in turn, has added tremendously to our extant knowledge and popularity of this new field. Furthermore, his personal commitment to this new area of investigation has been extremely effective as evidenced by many international workshops on this subject which he organized, conducted and contributed.

I had the distinct honour and privilege to endorse his efforts to publish their proceedings while I served as editor of 'HYPERTENSION'.

In short, Professor Safar's long-standing impact on the overall knowledge of the hemodynamics of hypertension and his personal stimulation of the resurgence of interest into the role of large arteries in hypertension clearly testifies to the merits of his singular recognition. Its immediate relevance to recent interest in isolated systolic hypertension in the elderly speaks volumes to his seminal contributions.