

The Princess of Harduf: A Family's Confrontation with Alzheimer

by Iulius Iancu MD

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An estimated 24 million people worldwide have Dementia, most of whom are thought to have Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease is a devastating illness that results in a progressive decline in cognitive ability and functional capacity and the emergence of behavioral and psychological symptoms (usually referred to as Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms in Dementia, BPSD).

The progressive decline and the BPSD cause immense distress to patients and their families, disrupt their careers, and have an enormous societal impact. This distress is described in detail in the book *The Princess of Harduf: A Family's Confrontation with Alzheimer*, by Iulius Iancu MD

Dr. Iancu writes about his wife Rita. As in real life where the story line is not fluid, the author unravels his story, piece by piece from his memory, as if depicting a collage. From the pages of the book, and the paralleling of his story to the collage in the day by day description of



their doings and his thoughts, it seems as if the author is reliving his war against oblivion, perpetuating his wife Rita in every moment, in every second. Those everyday experiences portray the image of a man who is suffering, trying to regain what he once had and lost. Though the emotions grow stronger as the illness progresses, and the intensity of the pain

reveals itself along with the details, some of the writer's reminiscences are hard for the reader, who has not shared those rare moments, to relate to.

The collage in the book represents another element of the disease, one that is not verbal but describes the progress of Rita's illness. Throughout the reading this element conveys the image of Alzheimer, as if the book itself had the disease. The book successfully creates a comprehensive image of Alzheimer disease, as it describes the difficult moments, the misgivings, and most importantly the bright moments as well. While reading it I identified completely with the author, who carefully paves the way to his own painful reality, including the reader in his world. While reading, I felt his agony, and that of many others who I see every day.

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Capsule

Death receptor 6 negatively regulates oligodendrocyte survival, maturation and myelination

Survival and differentiation of oligodendrocytes are important for the myelination of central nervous system (CNS) axons during development and crucial for myelin repair in CNS demyelinating diseases such as multiple sclerosis. Mi et al. show that death receptor 6 (DR6) is a negative regulator of oligodendrocyte maturation. DR6 is expressed strongly in immature oligodendrocytes and weakly in mature myelin basic protein (MBP)-positive oligodendrocytes. Overexpression of DR6 in oligodendrocytes leads to caspase 3 (casp3) activation and cell death. Attenuation of DR6 function leads to enhanced oligodendrocyte maturation, myelination and down-regulation

of casp3. Treatment with a DR6 antagonist antibody promotes remyelination in both lysolecithin-induced demyelination and experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis (EAE) models. Consistent with the DR6 antagonist antibody studies, DR6-null mice show enhanced remyelination in both demyelination models. These studies reveal a pivotal role for DR6 signaling in immature oligodendrocyte maturation and myelination that may provide new therapeutic avenues for the treatment of demyelination disorders such as multiple sclerosis.

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