

A well-deserved, overdue encomium for Dr. Bruce Ames

By ACSH Staff — July 9, 2014



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Photography

Dr. Bruce Ames got a well-deserved plaudit in the current issue of *TheScientist* [1], aptly entitled Mutagens and Multivitamins. These two topics have come to define his research accomplishments: the first highlighted by [the Ames test](#) [2], which is an *in vitro* method (i.e., uses test tubes and petri dishes, rather than animals) to determine the degree of mutation-inducing properties of a tested substance, be it a chemical (e.g. a pesticide) or a pharmaceutical. In the 1970s, he and his colleague and close friend, Dr. Lois Swirsky Gold, established the [Carcinogenic Potency Project](#) [3] database at UC-Berkeley, ranking various substances in order of their observed mutagenicity on the Ames test. (Sadly, Dr. Gold, another good ACSH friend, passed away prematurely a few years ago).

While Dr. Ames has been a long-time friend of ACSH, his main specific contributions have been as a reviewer and co-creator of our classic [Holiday Dinner Menu](#) [4], which informs about the presence of animal carcinogens in our daily diets, and our 2005 monograph, [America's Misguided War on Carcinogens](#) [5], which formed the basis for our petition to the EPA to trash the standard rodent tests for chemical toxicity and substitute a more reliable test, e.g. the Ames test.

In recent years, despite (or more likely because of) his advanced age 85 years he has devoted his research skills and lab to the study of micronutrients and vitamins as factors in retarding (or in some cases accelerating) the aging process. He has developed a supplement called The CHORI-Bar (for *Children's Hospital of Oakland Research Institute*) which he has reason to believe contains needed nutrients and vitamins to protect DNA and mitochondria from premature degradation, the essence of aging. Clinical studies are ongoing (he quipped to his wife, as per the article: I have moved from mitochondria to hypochondria, one of the best lines ever).

We here at ACSH congratulate him for his major accomplishments for science, as we eagerly anticipate those yet to come!

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Links

[1] <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/40054/title/Mutagens-and-Multivitamins/>

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ames_test#cite_note-16

[3] <http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/cpdb/>

[4] <http://acsh.org/2013/11/acsh-holiday-dinner-menu/>

[5] <http://acsh.org/2005/01/americas-war-on-carcinogens-reassessing-the-use-of-animal-tests-to-predict-human-cancer-risk/>