The paper included a review of the literature and some of my own research work dealing with the relationship between vitamin A and tumors. In animal experiments and in clinical investigations vitamin A and vitamin A acid had shown a preventive effect on the development of tumors as well as a therapeutic effect on certain established premalignant and malignant epithelial lesions. [The SC of 1983 indicates that this paper has been cited in over 105 publications.]

When I started research on vitamin A in 1967, I had already spent 10 years with Hoffmann-La Roche as head of cancer research. My task was the search for new cytotoxic agents. In spite of the successes with fluoropyrimidines and methyldihydrines I felt unhappy with this approach to cancer chemotherapy with fluoropyrimidines and methyldihydrines. In fact, at the time of the publication of the article in 1970, we had already synthesized and biologically tested, by means of our new screening model system of the carcinogen-induced mouse skin papillomas, a large series of retinoids possessing properties different from vitamins A and their analogs. An intensive search for better compounds still continues.

Honors received for the discovery and development of retinoids include a cancer research award in Switzerland (1971); a cancer research award from the American Academy of Dermatology (1982); an award for psoriasis research, US (1982); the Prix Gallen, Paris (1984); and an honorary doctorate from the University of Basel, Switzerland (1987).


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