

Sharon M. Wahl Biography



Dr. Sharon M. Wahl is currently a *Scientist emeritus* at the NIH following a distinguished career as a Senior Investigator and Branch Chief in NIDCR, NIH. Among other activities, she has been Adjunct Professor of Molecular Microbiology & Immunology at Johns Hopkins University and Adjunct Professor in Department of Periodontics at University of Maryland. She dedicated most of her career to investigations of innate immunity and host-pathogen interactions, as well as immunomodulation of infection, wound healing and autoimmunity. She and her colleagues were the first to demonstrate the potent chemotactic activity of TGF- β , which inaugurated a new paradigm for TGF- β in the immune system. Dr. Wahl was subsequently involved in defining several “firsts” in our understanding of this quixotic molecule in immune regulation and T cell differentiation, including 1) its role in immune suppression, 2) potent pro-inflammatory actions, 3) induction of peripheral CD4⁺CD25⁺Foxp3⁺ Treg, and 4) regulation of differentiation of Th17 lineage commitment. Her work also involved studies on the genetics of myeloid and lymphoid cell differentiation, phenotype and function in normal and pathologic conditions, making inroads into malignant (oral squamous cell carcinoma, lymphoma), infectious (HIV, *M. avium*, *L. major*) and autoimmune (RA, SS, SLE) diseases.

Dr. Wahl’s professional activities include memberships in numerous professional societies and editorial boards, and she was an elected councilor and President of SLB. Dr. Wahl has served on multiple advisory boards, including the Canadian Arthritis Network; Foundation for Education in the Sciences (FAES) Board of Directors (Secretary & VP); Fogarty International Center Scholars Committee, and DeWitt Stetten Museum of Medical Research Advisory Committee. In addition to decades of intramural funding, Dr. Wahl was the recipient of external grants as well as a NIH AIDS Targeted Antiviral Program Research Grant, NIH Office of AIDS Special Equipment Award, NIDCR Emerging Scientific Opportunities Award, and NIH Bench-to-Bedside Award. She received EEO Awards, Howley Prize in Rheumatology, NIH Director’s Award (x2), NIDCR Director’s Exemplary Service Award, elected Fellow of AAAS, Fellow of AAM, selected to Senior Biomedical Research Service, and a Highly Cited Researcher (ISI). In 2007, Dr. Wahl received the SLB Marie T. Bonazinga Award, was honored as the Anita B. Roberts Lecturer for Distinguished Women Scientists at NIH (2009) and in 2010 received the IADR Distinguished Scientist Award.

Dr. Wahl’s most notable accomplishments during the past 4 decades include the training of many young scientists, and her former students and Fellows have gone on to establish independent careers and reputations as research scientists, department chairs, and other leadership positions. Her work and that of these new generations of scientists have generated an ongoing repertoire of insightful investigations in virology, inflammation, and immunology, applicable to a variety of important diseases.