

William Nyhan, M.D., Ph.D.
Emeritus Member
AACR Member Since 1959

Upon completion of my residency in Pediatrics at Yale, I undertook to learn Biochemistry, received a fellowship from the March of Dimes and began work under Harris Busch in the Department of Biochemistry exploring the possibility of metabolic differences between transplanted tumors and non-tumor rat tissues. Before the first summer was over, Harris, the lab and I moved to the University of Illinois, where in due time, I received the PhD. I then moved to Johns Hopkins as Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, obtained an R01 and continued working on amino acids in cancer and seeing patients with tumors.

My focus changed with the admission of the first patient to be described with what is now known to be propionic acidemia. We did not know that then, but knew it had to do with amino acids. Moore and Stein had just published their method of separation of amino acids on cation exchange columns. From then on, our lab has been devoted to the study of inborn errors of metabolism, but I kept my hand in cancer research. Mike Lesch was a medical student working on nuclear proteins in cancer in my laboratory when we discovered what is now known as the Lesch-Nyhan disease.

I continued to do clinical work in cancer and was PI on an NCI grant with ALGB through 5 years at the University of Miami and during my earlier years at UCSD. AACR was my first professional research society, and I have been pleased to continue my membership all these years.