

Michele De Luca is Full Professor of Biochemistry, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, and Director of the Centre for Regenerative Medicine of the same University. He is Scientific Director of Holostem Terapie Avanzate S.r.l.

Prof. De Luca was Scientific Director of the Veneto Eye Bank Foundation (2002-2007), Director of the Laboratory of Tissue Engineering at the Istituto Dermopatico dell'Immacolata, Rome (1996-2002), adjunct Professor of Cell Biology of the Medical School of Tor Vergata University, Rome (1998-2000), Deputy Head, Laboratory of Cell Differentiation, Istituto Nazionale per la Ricerca sul Cancro, Genova (1992-1995), Group Leader in the same Institute (1986-1992), Visiting Scientist at the Department of Cell Biology, Harvard Medical School, Boston (1985), Fogarty Fellow at the National Institutes of Arthritis, Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIADDK), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda (1982-1985). He graduated M.D. in 1980 and obtained a Specialty in Endocrinology in 1984. He is founding member of International Ocular Surface Society, member of numerous scientific societies and member of national and international committees. He is author of more than 110 scientific publications in major international journals and author of 4 international patents. He was invited lecturer in more than 120 international meetings and symposia. He was born in Savona, Italy, May, 17, 1956.

*Summary and essence of scientific activity*

Prof. De Luca is internationally recognized as a leading scientist in stratified epithelial stem cell biology aimed at clinical application in regenerative medicine. Prof. De Luca played a pivotal role in epithelial stem cell-mediated cell therapy and gene therapy. Beside his pioneering work on the use of human epidermal stem cell cultures in life-saving treatment of massive full-thickness burns and in repigmentation of stable vitiligo and piebaldism, he was first in establishing human limbal stem cell culture aimed at corneal regeneration in patients with severe limbal stem cell deficiency. This treatment leads to recovery of vision in patients with poor alternative therapy. Prof. De Luca is currently coordinating the first (successful) ex-vivo epithelial stem cell-mediated gene therapy clinical trial for the gene therapy of genetic skin diseases as Junctional Epidermolysis Bullosa. Prof. De Luca is also studying molecular mechanisms regulating long term proliferative potential, clonal evolution and mitotic quiescence of epithelial stem cells.