



BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn & Wound Healing Research Laboratory
at
Vancouver General Hospital

DR. AZIZ GHAHARY, Director
Short Bio

The Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute has recruited world-renowned burn and wound healing expert, Dr. Aziz Ghahary, to Vancouver General Hospital. He is also a professor of surgery at the University of British Columbia.

Since he began his career, Dr. Ghahary has been awarded 33 research grants. He currently holds four Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) grants as the principal investigator. Also, he currently holds another three grants from national and international agencies. Of mention, four of his grants in the past were from the International Association of Fire Fighters. Dr. Ghahary has published or co-published over 98 papers, and presented over 125 abstracts and major presentations at national and international conferences.

Dr. Ghahary and his team have discovered communication among different types of cells in the skin is crucial to successful healing. They have isolated a protein that is key to the communication. This discovery is essential to learning how to prevent formation of scar tissue after a burn, as well as understanding why other wounds fail to heal. The therapeutic use of the protein has been patented.

In the new BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn and Wound Healing Research Laboratory at VGH, Dr. Ghahary will be developing a shelf-ready topical cream containing the purified protein, as well as an actual skin substitute that can be applied to burns and wounds to allow the skin to heal properly. The result will be significantly less scarring from burns and improved healing of wounds. These groundbreaking achievements, which may be ready for clinical trials in 1-3 years, could radically change patient care and health outcomes for burn and accident survivors, diabetics, and many others.

Dr. Ghahary was graduated in 1976 from the School of Medicine at the University of Tehran, Iran. At the University of Manitoba School of Medicine, Department of Physiology, Dr. Ghahary received both a Ph. D. in 1988 and completed his post-doctoral training in research between 1988 and 1990. He joined the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine in 1990, and held the position of Professor in the Department of Surgery since 2003.

Among numerous awards, Dr. Ghahary has twice been the recipient of the United Nations Development Award. He travelled to countries like Cuba and Iran, and studied genes from patients who were suffering from different disorders, including post-burn hypertrophic scarring.

Dr. Ghahary initiated a Transfer Knowledge Program (TKP) through which knowledge in the treatment of certain diseases, such as diabetes, is transferred to developing nations. This program is a significant contribution to international research and training.

Dr. Aziz Ghahary is married to Ruhangiz T. Kilani, Ph.D., who will become a senior research associate with her husband at the UBC Faculty of Medicine. The couple live in Vancouver, and have three grown sons. One is a medical doctor, another is a digital artist, and their youngest son is a pharmacy student at the University of British Columbia.

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