

## **Pierre Schembri Wismayer MD PhD**

**(with Yanika Debattista and  
Analisse Cassar)**

Senior Lecturer and Head  
Department of Anatomy  
University of Malta  
Speciality : Cell Differentiation.



### **Personal Profile**

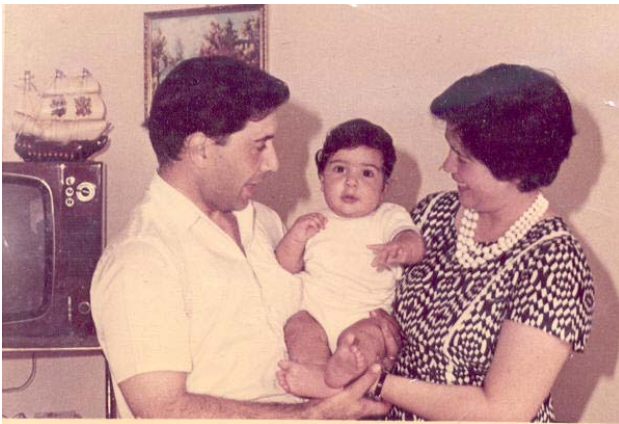
Pierre Schembri Wismayer was born on the 31st of December 1967 in St Lukes' Hospital in Malta as the first child of Roy and Mercedes Schembri-Wismayer.

He has four younger brothers and sisters, Marika, a doctor, Edward, an IT network specialist, Karl, an oilrig engineer and Sandra a psychology graduate.

He attended primary school at St Joseph's in Sliema, and also for a short while in the UK. He attended secondary school at De La Salle College, Bormla, Malta. He then went to the Junior College 6th form and studied to become a medical doctor at the University of Malta.

Pierre as a young boy with his sister Marika.

Pierre as a baby with his mum and dad.



After working as a doctor in St Lukes' hospital, and also at Gozo general hospital, he studied cancer cell differentiation in Glasgow at the Beatson Institute for

Cancer Research and was awarded his PhD from Glasgow University in 2000. He returned to Malta and now teaches anatomy and biotechnology to students at the University of Malta and supervises research in cellular trans-differentiation, and cancer and gene transcription control.

He is married to Svetlana, nee' Pulis, who teaches Chemistry at the Junior College in the University of Malta. They have a boy called Keiran, aged 3 and a half and a baby girl called Holly.

His favourite sayings include the Massai proverb " Success or failure is in the hands of the Gods - our value is in the struggle".

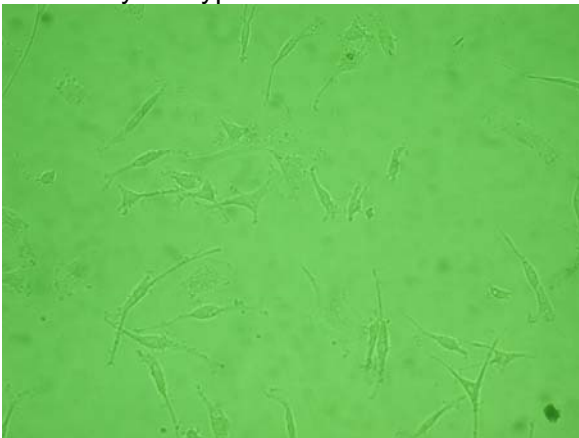
Pierre with Svetlana and baby Keiran



Keiran and baby Holly



Mesenchymal-type stem cells isolated from Cord Blood.



## Research Profile

Pierre supervises research into different aspects of cell differentiation and cancer and how genes expression is controlled during these processes.

Most of the gene expression studies have involved genes in blood cells, both normal ones and cancerous ones. Graduate student Analisse Cassar is growing different types of stem cells from cord blood and then trying to encourage these cells to become cells of another type – such as nerve cells. This kind of change is called trans-differentiation because cells change from blood cells to nerve cells.

Yanika Debattista, another student is fusing these cells to tumour cells using special equipment.

Still other students expand cord-blood derived cell populations and work on the transcriptional control of genes involved in differentiation and disease.

Analisse working with cord blood



Yanika working with tumour cell fusions



## Other interests

Pierre is presently also supervising the scientific aspects of the production of the **X-lab TV series**. His hobbies include gardening, dancing, reading and snorkelling. He loves spending time with his family who help him find happiness, wisdom and reality in the middle of a competitive research world.

Yanika and Analisse are both active in sports namely yachting and basketball respectively. Analisse also plays and teaches the piano.

## Relevant Links or info

Anyone who would like to ask Pierre some more questions about his work or life as a scientist should send him an e-mail on [pierre.schembri-wismayer@um.edu.mt](mailto:pierre.schembri-wismayer@um.edu.mt)

More about Pierre's research interests can be found on <http://www.um.edu.mt/ms/anatomy/staff/pschembri-wismayer>