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Sitaram Ari

Sitaram Ari, professor of biomedical sciences, studies fundamental biochemical processes in the retina that convert absorption of light into an electrical signal that can be transmitted to the brain. His research has contributed to our understanding of how external signals are recognized and responded to, not only by the cells of the retina responding to light, but also by cells in other tissues that respond to hormones and neurotransmitters.

His recent research has focused on understanding changes that are brought about in the retinal network when a person moves from a dark to a brightly lit environment. His studies include investigation of the role of a unique protein – S100B – in the death of ganglion cells, retinal cells that carry electrical signals from the eye to the brain. These cells are killed in such blinding diseases as glaucoma. Ari's efforts have contributed significantly to an understanding of the biochemical regulation of key signaling proteins in the retina, particularly those involving pathways that utilized the internal messenger, cyclic CMP.

His work is supported by the National Eye Institute. His most recent grant for \$1,420,000 runs through 2004. In addition, he organized a new course, "Science of Vision," to be offered in fall 2002 to students interested in careers in research or the health professions.

SUMMARY

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