CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

ANN M. PULLEN

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview Conducted by

Steven J. Novak

at

University of Washington Seattle, Washington

on

7, 8 and, 9 August 1996

From the Original Collection of the University of California, Los Angeles

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INTERVIEWEE

1.23

(Signature)

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Department of Immunology

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817-196 Date

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ANN M. PULLEN

1961	Born in Eastbourne, England, on 23 January	
	Education	
1983	B.Sc., Biochemistry, University of Bath	
1987	Ph.D., Immunology, Cambridge University	
	Professional Experience	
1987-1991	Howard Hughes Medical Institute, National Jewish Center for Immunology and Respiratory Medicine, Denver, Colorado Postdoctoral Associate	
1991-present	University of Washington, Seattle, Washington Assistant Professor, Department of Immunology	
	Howard Hughes Medical Institute, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington	
1992-present	Assistant Investigator	
Honors		

1983	Cathenne Memorial Prize Biochemistry
1992-1996	Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences

Selected Publications

Pullen, A.M. and P.C. Marrack et al., 1988. The T-cell repertoire is heavily influenced by tolerance to polymorphic self-antigens. *Nature* 355:796-801.

White, J. and A. Herman et al., 1989. The V3-specific superantigen staphylococcal enterotoxin B: Stimulation of mature T cells and clonal deletion in neonatal mice.*Cell* 56:27-35.

Pullen, A.M. and P.C. Marrack et al., 1989. Evidence that Mls-2 antigens shapes the T cell repertoire. *Journal of Immunology* 142:3033-37.

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Berg, L.J. and A.M. Pullen et al., 1989. Antigen/MHC specific T cells are preferentially exported from the thymus in the presence of their MHC ligand. *Cell* 58:1035-46.

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V13 repertoire in wild mice. Journal of Experimental Medicine 171:49-62.

- Pullen, A.M. and T. Wade et al., 1990. Identification of the region of the T cell receptor 13chain which interacts with the self superantigen, M1s-1^a. *Cell* 61:1365-74.
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- Pullen, A.M. and Y. Choi et al., 1992. The open reading frames in the 3' long terminal repeats of several mouse mammary tumor virus integrants encode V133-specific Superantigens. *Journal of Experimental Medicine* 175:41-47.
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- McMahon, C.W. and L.Y. Bogatzki et al., 1997. Mouse mammary tumor virus superantigens require N-linked glycosylation for effective presentation to T cells. *Virology* 228:161-76.
- Page, S.T. and N.S.C. van Oers et al., 1997. Differential contribution of Lck and Fyn protein tyrosine kinase to intraepithelial lymphocyte development. *European Journal of Immunology* 27:554-62.

ABSTRACT

Ann M. Pullen was born in Eastbourne, a small town on the south coast of England, though was raised in Sutton Coldfield just outside of Birmingham, the elder of two sisters. Both of her parents were university-educated teachers who lived through World War II-era England (her father serving a stint in the military while in college): her father taught history and English, her mother English and music. Pullen was interested in science and nature from a young age, exploring the outdoors with her family on regular nature walks, keeping a "Wood Book"—a diary/log of what she discovered when out exploring—and using a microscope to dissect flies and other insects. She was always competitive in school, looking to perform the best on all of her exams and studying intently for her classes, and she had the opportunity to attend a new science-emphasized school (situated next to a pig farm) in her community while still young. By the time she was in her teens, Pullen self-selected to pursue a career in science, focusing her coursework on such a goal and attending what she felt was a more intensive pre-college school. Throughout her pre-college years, and in some cases well into them, Pullen played netball, threw the javelin on her track and field team, and also played piano. Several influential, female teachers helped guide her into a scientific career and into an appropriate university.

Pullen attended the University of Bath in the United Kingdom, in part because of the university's emphasis on applied scientific training, providing students with real-world experience. While at Bath she worked for six months in a state-run agricultural lab that was a part of the University of Bristol's Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, another six months at the Technical Research Centre of Finland in Helsinki, Finland, which was a brewing laboratory, and time in a lab with Michael J. Danson at Bath working on citrate synthase; her experiences led her to pursue a doctoral degree in science instead of a medical degree. She matriculated at Cambridge University in order to study immunology with Alan J. Munro, researching Peyer's patch T cell hybridomas. Though Pullen found that Cambridge's intellectual environment was rich and quite useful to a budding scientist, the limited funding and availability of resources proved somewhat frustrating. In order to continue her career and expand it beyond the confines of the British scientific community, Pullen then went on to a postdoctoral fellowship in the John W. Kappler-Philippa C. Marrack lab at the National Jewish Center for Immunology and Respiratory Medicine in Denver, Colorado. In the Kappler-Marrack lab she focused her work on T cells, quickly discovering superantigens (antigens that were extremely potent at triggering cells) and publishing her results in *Nature*. From there she moved on to an assistant professorship at University of Washington, starting her lab with funds from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the National Institutes of Health. At Washington she collaborated with Michael Patrick Stuart on Mycoplasma fermentans and also began using transgenic mice to study extrathymic T cell development

At the end of the interview Pullen discusses various aspects of being a principal investigator, as well as what it is like to live the life of a scientist. She talks about dealing with administrative paperwork; the multidisciplinary focus of the Pew annual meetings; competition with other labs; the impact of research funding cuts on the University of Washington School of Medicine; problems with the tenure system; and her belief in preventive public health programs. The interview concludes with her thoughts on her participation in the Association for Women in Science and in a University of Washington biomedical faculty women's group; problems facing women faculty who decide to have children while pursuing tenure; delivering one of the university's Science in Medicine talks; balancing family life with her career; regulation of experimental animal use; animal rights activism and research; studying human T cell repertoire in patients with necrotizing fasciitis; and modeling her lab on the Kappler-Marrack lab.

UCLA INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

Steven J. Novak, Senior Editor, UCLA Oral History Program. B.A., History, University of Colorado; Ph.D., History, University of California, Berkeley; M.B.A., UCLA Graduate School of Management.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Pullen's office, University of Washington.

Dates, length of sessions: August 7, 1996 (122 minutes); August 8, 1996 (123) ; August 9, 1996 (94).

Total number of recorded hours: 5.65

Persons present during interview: Pullen and Novak.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

This interview is one in a series with Pew Scholars Program in the biomedical sciences conducted by the UCLA Oral History Program in conjunction with the Pew Charitable Trusts's Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences Oral History and Archives Project. The Project has been designed to document the backgrounds, education, and research of biomedical scientists awarded four-year Pew scholarships since 1988.

To provide an overall framework for Project interviews, the director of the UCLA Oral History Program and three UCLA faculty consultants developed a topic outline. In preparing for this interview, Novak held a preinterview telephone conversation with Pullen to obtain written background information (curriculum vitae, copies of published articles, etc.) and to agree on an interviewing schedule. He also reviewed prior Pew scholars' interviews and the documentation in Pullen's file at the Pew Scholars Program office in San Francisco, including her proposal application, letters of recommendation, and reviews by Pew Scholars Program national advisory committee members.

For technical background, Novak consulted J.D. Watson et al., *Molecular Biology of the Gene*. 4th ed. Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin/Cummings, 1987 and Bruce Alberts et al., *Molecular Biology of the Cell*. 3d ed. New York: Garland, 1994.

The interview is organized chronologically, beginning with Pullen's childhood in Eastbourne, England, and continuing through her education at the University of Bath and Cambridge University; her postdoc at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (at DenverNational Jewish Center for Immunology and Respiratory Medicine; and her appointment to an assistant professorship at the Department of Immunology, University of Washington. Major topics discussed include superantigens, laboratory management, treatment of laboratory animals, science funding, and the status of women in science. ORIGINAL EDITING:

Gregory M.D. Beyrer, editorial assistant, edited the interview. He checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Pullen reviewed the transcript. She verified proper names and made minor corrections.

Jane Collings, editor, prepared the table of contents and index.

Beyrer assembled the biographical summary and interview history.

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