OBITUARY

In memory of Marcos Vidal (1974-2016)
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With the untimely death of Marcos Vidal, we have lost a good friend and a creative, brilliant colleague who made important contributions to the field of cancer biology through fruit fly research. Marcos began his research into Drosophila at Ross Cagan’s laboratory in 2003, first at Washington University in St Louis and later at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. In 2009 Marcos was appointed as Research Group Leader at the Beatson Institute for Cancer Research in Glasgow.

I (Ross) had just finished giving a talk in the Renal Division at Washington University School of Medicine when a young scientist approached me. He was a biochemist but liked the idea of using fruit flies to study diseases. Marcos Vidal was an impressive young man and I was excited to have him join the laboratory. A few days later a woman approached me with the same request. Julia Cordero assured me that her relationship with Marcos would not be a problem, that they were used to working together and that they never fought. I sat them on opposite sides of the laboratory.

Marcos and Julia were a brilliant young couple who instantly made the laboratory smart and fun. Marcos took up cancer research, the second person to ever work on this disease in the laboratory. He loved everything about conducting science and he was ambitious. He worked crazy hours. With a laconic Argentinian accent, he kept up a running science conversation that lasted until now. Julia worked on separate topics and they lived balanced lives. Marcos loved board sports from snowboarding to kite- and wind-surfing, and was superb at them. Marcos and Julia made friends easily. The Facebook postings and the emails we’ve received and the conversations we’ve had over the past few days are a reminder of just how much they are loved. We all rooted for their success because they were really good people.

Marcos pushed the fly as a discovery platform further than almost anybody else. He was enthusiastic to exploit the power of drug screening. He had a feel for the organism and, perhaps most importantly, he had a feel for what constituted an important biological question. In 2005 he validated Vandetanib as a candidate therapeutic for medullary thyroid carcinoma. The drug was approved in 2011 for its laboratory, and later started her own. They lived balanced lives. Marcos worked as hard as he could to make a recovery. He received tremendous support from his colleagues and friends and, most of all, from Julia. Despite struggling with his illness, Marcos sailed through his tenure review with flying colors and, in July 2015, he became a Senior Research Group Leader at the Beatson Institute and a Professor at the University of Glasgow. Marcos fell ill 18 months ago and those extremely difficult times were a testimony to the central role his family and friends played in his life. Marcos worked as hard as he could to make a recovery. He received tremendous support from his colleagues and friends and, most of all, from Julia. Despite struggling with his illness, Marcos sailed through his tenure review with flying colors and, in July 2015, he became a Senior Research Group Leader at the Beatson Institute and a Professor at the University of Glasgow.

Marcos Vidal died on January 2, 2016. Julia, Lautaro and Mara lost a warm-hearted, dedicated and loving husband and father; the science community has lost a brilliant young scientist and a good friend.