



October 27, 2017

Dear Members and Friends of the Consortium,

With a heavy heart, I am writing you with the tragic news that Ather Ali, ND MPH MHS, passed away yesterday morning, surrounded by loving family, friends, and colleagues. Ather was 42 years old and died of complications from metastatic esophageal cancer. Ather is survived by his wife Sumiya, his two young children Rayhan and Yasin, and parents Faiz and Akbar.

Ather was a humble, intelligent, generous, soft-spoken and gentle human being. He was loved by many and will be remembered by all who were touched by his life. Ather was truly selfless. His ideas, questions, and passion were fueled not by ego but by a sincere to be of service.

Ather graduated from Bastyr University in 2003 with a degree in naturopathic medicine. He was one of very few naturopath physicians in North America who became truly integrated into an academic medical center and assume a leadership position in integrative medicine. He was the founding director of the Yale Program in Integrative Medicine. He was an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Medicine at Yale and was at the time of his death the Medical Director of Integrative Medicine at Smilow Cancer Hospital. He died at Smilow, the Center he poured his heart and soul into. He was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar, NCCIH F32 postdoctoral fellow, and recipient of a K23 Career Development Award. He consulted to the Turkish Ministry of Health on Traditional Medicine Practices and was a visiting fellow in the Australian Research Centre in Complementary and Integrative Medicine.

He was a national and international leader in integrative medicine and health. He completed innovative research on irritable bowel syndrome, Lyme disease, nutritional interventions, diagnostic testing, fibromyalgia, and the microbiome. He was not afraid to take his research to new terrain. For example, in a paper published in [BMJ Open Gastroenterology](#), one month before he died, he conducted a double-blind, randomized controlled trial demonstrating for the first time that irritable bowel syndrome would respond to an individualized diet based on food sensitivity testing using a leukocyte activation assay. We can only imagine what he would have accomplished over his career had his life not ended so prematurely.

He truly loved his Consortium friends and colleagues, and always expressed gratitude for the mentorship and guidance he received. His contributions to the Consortium were numerous and included serving as Research Working Group Chair, At Large Board Member, lead on website redesign, and Conference Planning Committees. He provided wise and thoughtful guidance on our direction. He spoke many times of his appreciation to be part of our community and know you all.

The funeral will take place on Saturday October 28, 2017 after the completion of afternoon prayer services, which start at 1:15 pm, at the Islamic Society of Orange County, 1 Al-Rahman Plaza, Garden Grove, CA 92844. The formal funeral prayer services will begin at 1:25 pm. Those wishing to say prayers, view the body and say their farewells are requested to come earlier at 12:00 noon. The family and community will leave for the burial at 1:45 pm from the mosque. The burial will be at 2:30 pm at Green Hills Mortuary & Cemetery, 27501 S Western Ave, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275. All those who knew Ather are welcome.



The Consortium has created a page where you can leave your memories and reflections of Ather and express your condolences. These will be compiled into a book and given to his family. Further information on a memorial service at Yale and other opportunities to honor Ather's memory will be forthcoming.

We have lost a dear friend and colleague who will be greatly missed and never forgotten. Life is short, delicate, and precious. Ather will continue to teach and inspire us all.

Thank you.

Rob

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