



Oswald Avery MD

In 1944, Dr. Oswald Avery and his colleagues, Colin MacLeod and MacLyn McCarty, published a seminal paper in the Journal of Experimental Medicine reporting that the substance (i.e., the gene) that could transform one type of pneumococcus into another was deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). This has been called one of the most pivotal discoveries of the twentieth century.

Oswald Theodore Avery moved to the United States at age 10 when his father, a Baptist Minister, became a pastor at a New York City church. He received his education in New York, and entered general medical practice following his graduation from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Avery, however, soon became frustrated with medicine's inability to help his patients - most of whom were suffering from tuberculosis and pneumonia - and moved to medical research. In 1913 he accepted a position with the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York where, for the next thirty-five years, he focused his investigations on pneumococcus, tuberculosis and immunology.

Dr. Avery received Honorary Degrees from McGill University, New York University, University of Chicago and Rutgers University. He was the author of ninety-one scientific publications in peer reviewed journals. In 1945, Avery was awarded the Copley Medal by the Royal Society of London, and in 1947, the Lasker Award by the American Public Health Association. He was also a member of the National Academy of Sciences, USA.

