



John Bienenstock MD

Dr. John Bienenstock is a renowned expert in the disciplines of mucosal immunology, neuroimmunology and allergy. His landmark studies have led to new approaches in immunization and an improved understanding of how the nervous and immune systems communicate with one another. Dr. Bienenstock has made outstanding contributions to the Canadian and international scientific communities. Considered one of the fathers of mucosal immunology, Dr. Bienenstock launched his impressive scientific career in Canada at McMaster University in 1968. Dr. Bienenstock's list of pioneering achievements is both extensive and impressive. His two important initiatives both among 'firsts' of their kind – clinical immunology outpatient clinics and a school of midwifery – were established as a result of Dr. Bienenstock's leadership.

His exceptional leadership skills led to appointments as chair of the Department of Pathology, and vice-president and dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. A true visionary, he pioneered and promoted prestigious multidisciplinary programs such as the Intestinal Disease Research Program involving immunology, neuroscience, virology, physiology and gastroenterology, and the McMaster Brain-Body Institute at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton whose aim is to integrate brain and neurosciences, medicine and psychiatry.

Over the years, he has trained a significant legacy of clinicians and basic scientists, many of whom now hold prominent positions throughout the world. An excellent administrator, he has served as president of both the Canadian Society for Immunology (1985-1987) and the Society of Mucosal Immunology (1990-1992).

As a researcher, Dr. Bienenstock is credited with many discoveries in his fields of study. Mucosal mast cells were first characterized by him, as was "BALT" (i.e. bronchus associated lymphoid tissue) which led to the concept of a common mucosal immune system. Both revelations have resulted in significant changes to therapeutic approaches in allergy and mucosal immunology respectively. His landmark studies since 1987 on the two-way interactions and influences between the nervous and immune systems (psychoneuroimmunology), have impacted our understanding of conditions as varied as allergy and rheumatoid arthritis. One of the founding editors of the classic textbook, Mucosal Immunology, Dr. Bienenstock has also published 290 peer reviewed publications.

A recipient of the Order of the Red Cross in 1990, Dr. Bienenstock is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (1992) and a Member of the Order of Canada (2002).