



Mark Wainberg, PhD

In 1981, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, describing several cases of a rare lung infection in five young, previously healthy, gay men in Los Angeles. This document is now recognized as the first official reporting of the AIDS epidemic. Thirty-five years later, this once baffling and almost uniformly fatal disease is now treatable, survivable, and increasingly controlled in much of the world. One of the people significantly involved in this tremendous human achievement is Dr. Mark Wainberg.

Combining scientific excellence with a social conscience on a global scale, Dr. Wainberg's research and collaborations are acknowledged as having helped save millions of lives. Dr. Wainberg served as the director of the McGill University AIDS Centre at the Jewish General Hospital upon his untimely death in a swimming accident. He revolutionized our understanding of HIV/AIDS at medical, epidemiological and political levels. Dr. Wainberg was well-known for his involvement in 1989 in the vastly important initial identification of lamivudine (3TC) as an antiviral drug, now one of the most widely used drugs in the treatment of HIV.

While president of the International AIDS Society in 2000, he brought the XIIIth International Conference on AIDS to Durban, South Africa, drawing unprecedented international attention to the lack of access to anti-HIV drugs in developing countries, which remains a great challenge to containing the ravages of this cruel disease. Dr. Wainberg then turned his attention to achieving a cure for HIV infection based on the possibility that HIV may not be able to become resistant to certain new compounds that block viral replication.

The fight against AIDS continues throughout the world. The ability of modern medicine to understand and respond to crises of this dimension, both scientifically and politically, is foundational for sustaining our developing global civilization, and Dr. Wainberg, working with his national and international colleagues, has significantly advanced the day when AIDS may be finally eradicated. In that hope, shared by the world, he continued his profoundly important work.

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