

# William Osler

Sir William Osler, 1st Baronet, FRS FRCP (/ˈɒzlər/; July 12, 1849 – December 29, 1919) was a Canadian physician and one of the four founding professors of [Johns Hopkins Hospital](#). Osler created the first residency program for specialty training of physicians, and he was the first to bring [medical students](#) out of the lecture hall for bedside clinical training.

He has frequently been described as the Father of Modern Medicine and one of the “greatest diagnosticians ever to wield a stethoscope”.

Osler was a person of many interests, who in addition to being a physician, was a bibliophile, historian, author, and renowned practical joker. One of his achievements was the founding of the History of Medicine Society (previously section) of the Royal Society of Medicine, London.

---

[William Osler](#) first used the term “[mycotic aneurysm](#)” in [1885](#) to describe a mushroom-shaped aneurysm in a patient with subacute bacterial endocarditis <sup>1)</sup>. rather than the current usage which infers a fungal etiology.

---

During his time at McGill University from 1871 to 1884, Osler performed more than 1000 autopsies. His pathological reports covered the topics of cerebral aneurysm, apoplectic hemorrhage, vascular infarction, subdural hematoma, meningitis, multiple sclerosis, cerebral abscess, and brain tumor. He wrote about cerebral localization and anatomy and the relationships between the morphological characteristics of the brain and intelligence and criminality. During his continuing career at Philadelphia and Baltimore, Osler published widely on problems in clinical neurology, including monographs on cerebral palsies and chorea as well as chapters on disorders of the nervous system in the first five editions of his popular textbook, *The Principles and Practice of Medicine*. He became familiar with many of the outstanding figures in medical neurology of his time. Regarding neurosurgery, Osler commended the pioneer operation for a brain tumor in 1884 by Rickman Godlee and the surgery for epilepsy in 1886 by Horsley. In 1907, in discussing the state of brain surgery as reviewed by Horsley, William Macewen, and others, Osler made a plea for “medico-surgical neurologists, properly trained in the anatomical, physiological, clinical and surgical aspects of the subject.” He played a significant role as a referring physician, mentor, and friend to his young colleague Harvey Cushing (later to become Osler's Boswell), who was breaking new ground in neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Beyond that Osler became an inspiring hero figure for his Oxford student Wilder Penfield, who a few decades later would establish a neurological institute at McGill University where medico-surgical neurology would flourish <sup>2)</sup>.

---

Harvey Cushing, M.D. (1869-1939), is the acknowledged father of the discipline of [neurosurgery](#) who inspired others to join him in this new field. He was a prolific [researcher](#) in the area of human growth disturbances. And he was among the most literary of doctors having won the Pulitzer Prize for his two-volume biography of his mentor and teacher [William Osler](#) <sup>3)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Bohmfolk GL, Story JL, Wissinger JP, et al. Bacterial Intracranial Aneurysm. *J Neurosurg*. 1978;

48:369-382

<sup>2)</sup>

Feindel W. Osler and the “medico-chirurgical neurologists”: Horsley, Cushing, and Penfield. J Neurosurg. 2003 Jul;99(1):188-99. PubMed PMID: 12854767.

<sup>3)</sup>

Stanton ME, Thomson EH. Harvey Cushing: “From tallow dip to television”. Surgery. 1977 Mar;81(3):284-94. PubMed PMID: 320698.

From:

<https://neurosurgerywiki.com/wiki/> - **Neurosurgery Wiki**

Permanent link:

[https://neurosurgerywiki.com/wiki/doku.php?id=william\\_osler](https://neurosurgerywiki.com/wiki/doku.php?id=william_osler)

Last update: **2024/06/07 02:56**

