

Citation: Dr. Autar Singh Paintal

Late Dr. Autar Singh Paintal was a human physiologist best known for his breakthrough studies and discoveries that added a new dimension, to the methods adopted by medical science for studying lung diseases, heart diseases, and neurological diseases.

He was among the toppers from his MBBS batch during his studies at the King George Medical College, Lucknow. Everybody expected him to opt for a clinical specialty, but he loved science and research much more than clinical medicine, and against popular advice, he ultimately decided to pursue his MD in Physiology.

During his MD thesis, he created new electronic instruments to study electrical resistance of the skin, and developed a scoring system to identify Psychotic patients. This system later came to be known as Paintal-Index and was widely used by the Psychiatrists.

He was awarded Rockefeller Fellowship, and joined a Ph.D. program in electrophysiology at Edinburgh. Once again he built his own electronic equipment to study and also devised a new dissection technique to study deep nerve fibers that supply lungs and heart.

Dr. Paintal ultimately succeeded at building a new method for the identification of "receptors". Using this method, he discovered the "J" receptors in the lungs, "Atrial-B" receptors and "Ventricular Pressure" receptors in the heart, "Gastric-stretch" receptors in the stomach, "Mucosal-Mechano" receptors in the intestines, and "Pressure-Pain" receptors in the muscles.

These discoveries and his various other studies about other nerve fibers and receptors earned him an unparalleled reputation as a scientist across the globe, and even beyond the confines of physiology and the medical community. He was recognized as a distinguished scientist and was elected as the President of the Indian National Science Academy and Indian Science Congress Association. He also founded the Society of Scientific Values, a body aimed at promoting ethics and integrity in science, among the first of its kind in the world.

He held high administrative and leadership positions during his journey. Some of those were the Director of VP Chest Institute, New Delhi, The principal of University College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, and the Director-General of Indian Council of Medical Research,

He holds the distinction of holding the Padma Vibhushan award. Besides Padma Vibhushan, he was bestowed with multiple international and national awards, fellowships, and honorary degrees.

Finally, we end with his most famous quote "Perfection must be encouraged and rewarded" –

In his name, we start this Oration on the occasion of Teachers day.