

# Prof. Dr. Bernardo Leo Wajchenberg

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The responsibility of writing a memorial honoring a great friend and master is always considered an arduous and sad task. But, in this case, I could realize that it was actually an honor to have the opportunity of sharing with the community of endocrinologists, particularly the younger ones, a little bit of the biography from one of the most prestigious and famous clinical Endocrinologist in our country.

Born in São Paulo, Bernardo Leo Wajchenberg has shown since childhood to have a “brilliant mind”, starting at the first years of his elementary education, when he was considered the best student of his class. During medical school at São Paulo University (USP), he was distinguished as one of the best students, being awarded with 11 of 13 prizes granted by São Paulo Medical School. And, in 1950, at the conclusion of the medical course, he received the *Rockefeller Foundation Prize* as the outstanding graduate in this medical school. After completing residency in Internal Medicine at Clinics Hospital, School of Medicine, University of São Paulo (FMUSP), he ventured to USA to become a Research Fellow at Lilly Lab, at the University of Minnesota, followed by a WK Kellogg Fellowship at the University of Michigan. He returned to his *alma mater* (FMUSP) where he has progressed from Junior staff to Chief of Diabetes and Adrenal Unit, then to Chair of Endocrinology and Metabolism Division, posteriorly to Chief of the Laboratory of Medical Research and, finally, he became Vice-Chairman of the Medicine Department. In 1971 in parallel to his activities at Clinics Hospital, Dr. Wajchenberg organized and became responsible of a Laboratory of Radioimmunoassay in Brazil at the Nuclear and Energy Research Institute, University of São Paulo, a new technique recently developed in United States for quantification of several hormones (not available at this time), with the assistance of Dr. Rosalyn Yalow, who was later awarded with the Nobel Prize in Medicine. Despite the administrative load during his long academic career, Dr. Wajchenberg continued working in medical care with his assistants, directing clinical rounds, teaching residents and medical fellows, mentoring

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post graduating doctors and acting incessantly as an active researcher in different areas of endocrinology, such as diabetes, adrenal, obesity and calcium metabolism, thyroid and steroid hormones metabolism.

During his career he published more than 250 papers in peer reviewed publications in three different languages. From research perspective, Dr. Wajchenberg has moved seamlessly from bench to bedside, contributing to the improvement of knowledge of the physiopathology and the treatment of metabolic and endocrinological diseases. Some of his accomplishments are the use o,p'-DDD for treating adrenocortical carcinoma, in the metabolic effects of sulphonylureas, unraveling the mechanisms of phenformin and on the physiopathology of visceral fat and metabolic syndrome.

The quality of his research can be attested by the impressive number of 11,124 citations observed in peer-reviewed publications of other authors. Two of his review articles published in the *Journal Endocrine Reviews* in 2000 and 2007, respectively, were cited over 3,200 times in papers of other authors. Other publications signed by Dr. Wajchenberg includes several chapters in medical books and his position as Editor for two editions of the book entitled "*Tratado de Endocrinologia Clínica*" (*Treatise on Clinical Endocrinology*; 1992 and 2014).

Recognizing the breadth, depth and longevity of his illustrious career (over 50 years), The American Endocrine Society distinguished Dr. Bernardo Leo Wajchenberg with the *Distinguished Physician Award*. The other prizes that he was granted include: *Francisco Arduino Prize* (from Brazilian Diabetes Society, in 2003), *José Scherman Prize* (from State Institute of Diabetes and Endocrinology; IEDE, in 2011).

After his retirement of the São Paulo University Medical School and after becoming Professor of Medicine, Dr. Wajchenberg continued working as Coordinator of the Diabetes and Cardiology Service of the Heart Institute, at Clinics Hospital. In 2010 he assumed the role of Principal Investigator of the The BARI 2D Study Group in Brazil, a multicenter trial (sponsored by the National Institute of Health) evaluating the relative safety and efficacy of an insulin-providing vs. insulin-sparing regimen in the treatment of type 2 diabetes complicated by coronary heart disease. At that time he also returned to his passion of teaching new students and fellows, participating in rounds and, mainly, coordinating patient care in the outpatient clinic.

Besides academic activities Dr. Wajchenberg also promoted a great contribution for the development of Diabetes and Endocrinology specialties in Brazil and in Latin America, participating actively in the foundation and management of several associations, serving as President of Brazilian Endocrine Society, Brazilian Diabetes Society and Latin American Diabetes Association. He was also part of the Executive Committee of the International Diabetes Federation.

As a master, mentor and a physician, Dr. Wajchenberg was described by most of his subordinates as a tireless worker, an enthusiastic leader, a perfectionist and a man of principles and integrity. At the time of his retirement we counted more than 200 endocrinologists from different parts of Brazil that initiated their medical education with him in São Paulo, and are now disseminating the new advances in the physiopathology and treatment of endocrinology in different medical centers of the country.