

Gajdusek, D. Carleton

D. Carleton Gajdusek (1923–2008)

Biography

D. Carleton Gajdusek, M.D., was co-winner of a 1976 Nobel Prize for his work on kuru, the first human prion disease demonstrated to be infectious. He connected the spread of kuru to the practice of funerary cannibalism by the South Fore people. More broadly, Dr. Gajdusek was a pediatrician, virologist, and chemist whose research focused on growth, development, and disease in primitive and isolated populations. His scientific career was tarnished after accusations and a subsequent guilty plea, in 1997, to sexual impropriety with a minor. After 12 months in a U.S. prison, Dr. Gajdusek moved to Europe in self-imposed exile, where he continued his research at various universities. In addition to the Nobel, Dr. Gajdusek received numerous awards throughout his career and was elected to the National Academy of Science in 1974.



D. Carleton Gajdusek

Resources

Dr. Gajdusek's Own Reflections

- [Autobiography for Nobel Prize, 1977](#) (PDF, 340 kB)
- [Banquet speech for Nobel Prize, 1976](#) (PDF, 110 kB)

NIH Publications

- [D. Carleton Gajdusek and Kuru in New Guinea in Circulating Now, 2015](#) (PDF, 1.10 mB)
- [Dr. Gajdusek Wins Nobel Prize for Kuru Studies, Finding Transmissible Slow Virus, in NIH Record, 1976](#) (PDF, 9.22 mB)
- [Announcement of winning Johnson Award in NIH Record, 1963](#) (PDF, 14.7 mB)

Journal Publications

- [Tribute by Raymond P. Roos in Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 2015](#)
- [Essay Reflection by Francoise Cathala in Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B Biological Sciences, 2008](#) (PDF, 62 kB)
- [Tribute by Donald P. Towers in Journal of American Medical Association, 1977](#) (PDF, 3.4 mB)

Non-journal Publications

- [BBC Documentary about Gajdusek, including his personal life, 1976](#) (video, 1 hr, 20 mins)
- [Biographical memoir by David M. Asher and Michael B.A. Oldstone for the National Academy of Science, 2013](#) (PDF, 280 kB)
- [Obituary in the New York Times, 2008](#)
- [Obituary in Washington Post, 2008](#) (PDF, 131 kB)