

MEDICINES THAT CHANGED OUR WORLD

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Human beings have strived hard to develop ways and means to fight different types of diseases. The roots of this struggle go back to the hazy recesses of the prehistoric epoch. Alas, we do not have any concrete evidence about the time when humans prepared medicine for the first time.

Nevertheless, great advance have been made in the realm of medicines in the last century alone. Biotechnologists who are working in various bio processing and manufacturing facilities across the globe prepare remedies against maladies. Hundreds and thousands of drugs are available in the market now-a-days. However, only a few medicines have left a lasting impact on the wellbeing of humanity and changed our world.

Ether. Narcotic action of ether was opened in 1525. But only in 1846 the first operation with ether applying was performed. Ether was the first anesthetic, and is very important for surgery. Without anesthetic the patient remains awake during an operation, which severely limits what surgeons can do effectively. More modern anesthetic used now are usually administered by inhalation or injection.

Smallpox vaccine. Since ancient times medical practitioners had strived to eradicate the scourge of smallpox. Success came in 1798 in the form of an anti smallpox vaccine prepared by Edward Jenner, a British country doctor. After careful research, Jenner created the said vaccine using cowpox, a disease similar but milder in form than smallpox. The person inoculated with cowpox developed immunity against smallpox. This technique ultimately caused the complete eradication of smallpox from the world in the 1970s.

Aspirin. One cannot ignore the contribution that aspirin has made to mankind since it was first commercially introduced in 1899. It is believed that aspirin tablets are one of the most widely consumed medicines in the world. This remedy is so popular because

of its anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and fever-reducing properties. This medicine is prescribed for reducing high temperature, and relieving different types of rheumatic pains. The anti-inflammatory and anticoagulant properties of aspirin are beneficial for heart patients.

Insulin. People afflicted with diabetes hardly had any chance survival up until 1920s. Earlier, doctors virtually starved their patients to death. However, in 1921 two Canadian surgeons, Frederic Banting and Charles Best isolated the insulin hormone. This hormone is crucial for the functioning of the human body. Insulin helps the body to control carbohydrates it has absorbed by the way of food intake. This keeps check on the level of blood sugar in the body. After its first human test in 1922, this drug went into full-scale commercial production. Since that time, this medicine has helped normalize and stabilize the lives of countless people suffering from diabetes.

Penicillin. Bacterial infections have been the root cause behind hundred of millions of human fatalities since ancient times. All this changed with the discovery of the wonder drug penicillin in 1928 by Alexander Fleming, a Scottish scientist. However, this discovery was forgotten till World War II. From then on, this antibiotic and other medicines derived from it are continually protecting humans from a vast range of biotic infections. The impact of this particular medicine on human existence is profound. Penicillin was the first antibiotic medicine to be produced. It is believed that a vast majority of the current world population directly owes its existence to penicillin one way or the other.

Birth control pills. Oral contraceptives first appeared on the scene in 1960s. Commonly referred to as "pills" this pregnancy preventing drugs have had a deep impact on human society. These drugs are not only helping to control the burgeoning population of the world but also empowering women to take control of their reproductive life.

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