Elie Metchnikoff Encyclopedia Article

Elie Metchnikoff

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Elie Metchnikoff

1845-1916

Russian embryologist and bacteriologist who studied phagocytosis and successfully promoted the theory of cellular immunity. He applied the term "phagocytes" to the cells that removed unnecessary tissues during larval invertebrate metamorphosis. Metchnikoff recognized that through phagocytosis of bacterial invaders, white blood cells are capable of defending the body and provide immunity against disease. His years of research led to a shared Nobel Prize in medicine with Paul Ehrlich in 1908. Metchnikoff's *Immunity in Infectious Disease* (1905) is a classic text of comparative immunology and the theory of phagocytosis.