Francis Peyton Rous Encyclopedia Article

Francis Peyton Rous

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Francis Peyton Rous

1879-1970

American pathologist and oncologist who discovered cancer-causing viruses in chicken. In 1909, while working as a scientist at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Rous discovered that chicken tumors were derived from viruses that could be transmitted to other fowl of the same stock by injecting an agent extracted from the tumor cells. His work was not well received in the scientific community, and he eventually abandoned his research and instead turned to the study of liver and gallbladder pathology. However, his theory of viral cancer causation was later validated, and Rous was awarded the 1966 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine, which he shared with Charles Huggins.