Frank Macfarlane Burnet Encyclopedia Article

Frank Macfarlane Burnet

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Frank Macfarlane Burnet

1899-1985

Australian physician and biologist who made major contributions to immunology, virology, and the ecology of diseases. He was awarded a Nobel Prize in medicine in 1960 for developing two key concepts in immunology: acquired immunological tolerance and the clonal selection theory of antibody production. His investigation into the deaths of children who had received diphtheria vaccinations led to safer methods for the storage of vaccines. Burnet developed methods for culturing viruses, established a classification for bacteriophages, and investigated such diseases as influenza, Q fever, psittacosis, and encephalitis.