Gregory Goodwin Pincus Encyclopedia Article

Gregory Goodwin Pincus

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Gregory Goodwin Pincus

1903-1967

American endocrinologist who, with Min Chueh Chang and John Rock, developed the first effective birth-control pill. Pincus co-founded the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology in 1944, where he studied steroid hormones and reproduction. At the encouragement of Margaret Sanger, founder of the birth-control movement in the United States, Pincus turned his attention to the use of synthesized hormones to prevent pregnancy. After experimenting with as many as 200 potential substances, Pincus and his collaborators derived a steroid from the wild Mexican yam that could inhibit ovulation without serious side effects. The "pill" was first made available to the public in 1960.