Hans Spemann Encyclopedia Article

Hans Spemann

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Hans Spemann

1869-1941

German zoologist and embryologist who received the 1935 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of embryonic induction. Fascinated with newts, his early experiments were on the evolution of the eye lens of amphibians. This delicate work led him to develop small, precise surgical instruments and techniques—the foundation of microsurgery. His experiments with newt's eggs showed that at early stages cells were not specialized, and he discovered the first known example of a causal mechanism controlling the development of an embryo.