

The Robert A. Cooke Memorial Lectureship

Friday, February 23, 2024

1601 Presidential Plenary: Neuroimmunology: Cross Talk Between Allergy and Other Specialties
Convention Center, Level 2, Hall D, 1:45-3:15 PM

Lecturer: Peter Hellings, MD

Neuroimmune Mechanisms in Allergic and Non-allergic Airways Disease

Robert A. Cooke, MD



Robert Anderson Cooke, MD was born in Holmdel, New Jersey in 1880, a descendant of three generations of physicians. He received his M.D. from Columbia University in 1904 and subsequently interned at Presbyterian Hospital. It was his own allergy to stable dusts, pollens and later horses that led him into this particular field. As an intern, he nearly died from an anaphylactic shock induced by an injection of diphtheria antitoxin.

In 1919, he founded the first allergy clinic which was then located at New York Hospital and was later moved to Roosevelt Hospital in June 1932. He was a founder of one of the two parent societies of the American Academy of Allergy in 1925 (also serving as the first President) and the New York Allergy Society in 1937. Additionally, he was the founding editor of the *Journal of Allergy* (now the JACI) in 1929. Throughout his medical life, he was primarily interested in the study and treatment of allergic diseases and is generally considered the father of allergy as a medical specialty. He was the author of approximately 200 scientific papers, most of which dealt with immunologic and allergic diseases. By the time he died in 1960, his influence on the teaching and practice of allergy was being furthered by the more than fifty residents and fellows he trained.

His work included not only the practical treatment of patients, but numerous fundamental contributions to the immunology of allergy. Among his outstanding contributions were studies of heredity in asthma and hay fever (1914), recognition of house dust as an allergen (1921), the immunologic relationship of naturally acquired and artificially induced sensitization (1929), demonstration of blocking antibody developed as a result of injection treatment (1935) and observations regarding skin sensitizing antibody.

The Alumni of the R. A. Cooke Institute of Allergy at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center are privileged to sponsor this lectureship which the AAAAI has established in perpetuity in the memory of an inspiring physician who has played a critical role in the development of the medical specialty of allergy and immunology

Peter Hellings, MD



Peter W. Hellings is Professor in Otorhinolaryngology at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and Clinic Head at the Department of Otorhinolaryngology at the University Hospitals of Leuven. Following his doctoral thesis in 2001, he combined clinical work in the field of upper airways immunology with guidance of PhD fellows in research on airway immunology, sinus disease and surgery. His scientific work has been awarded several national and international scientific prizes, with over 350 scientific reports. He is the founder and chair of the European Forum for Research and Education in Allergy and Airways diseases (EUFOREA, www.euforea.eu), aiming to arrest the epidemic of chronic respiratory diseases by unique research, educational, and advocacy initiatives bridging the gap between the latest research and real-life clinical practice.