

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Professor Sir Stephen Bloom
FMedSci, FRS Hon DSc

Oration by Professor Sudhesh Kumar
Dean, Warwick Medical School



Professor Sir Stephen Bloom

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Today, we honour the achievements of Professor Sir Stephen Bloom. Let me start with some numbers that capture the sheer scale of his academic achievements. He has published over 1,000 papers in the very best journals, including *Nature*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*. This is absolutely extraordinary! He is the 64th highest cited academic in the world and remains as productive as ever today. He is Head of Division for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism at Imperial College London, and Clinical Director of the North London Pathology Network. And he continues to lead his 40-strong research group, investigating gut hormones and the control of appetite.

In the 1980s when I was still a medical student, Steve pioneered the discovery of several gut hormones and did most of the defining research in this area. He practically made the field his own, and became to 'go to' scientist in this field. His work has led to new treatments in the area of diabetes and obesity. He did this through deploying several innovative approaches to his research and integrating information from all of them. He started with good clinical observations involving clinical conditions where these hormones were being produced in excessive amounts. He then carried out experimental studies in human volunteers and patients to understand how these peptides worked in the whole person. He combined this with study of the mechanism of action of these newly discovered peptides in the laboratory.

Let me give you two examples. A long time ago, Steve observed that one of the gut peptides he had discovered - called GLP-1 - stimulated the release of insulin. This finding has led to the development of a new class of drugs, known as GLP-1 analogues, for the treatment of type 2 diabetes. Second, his work

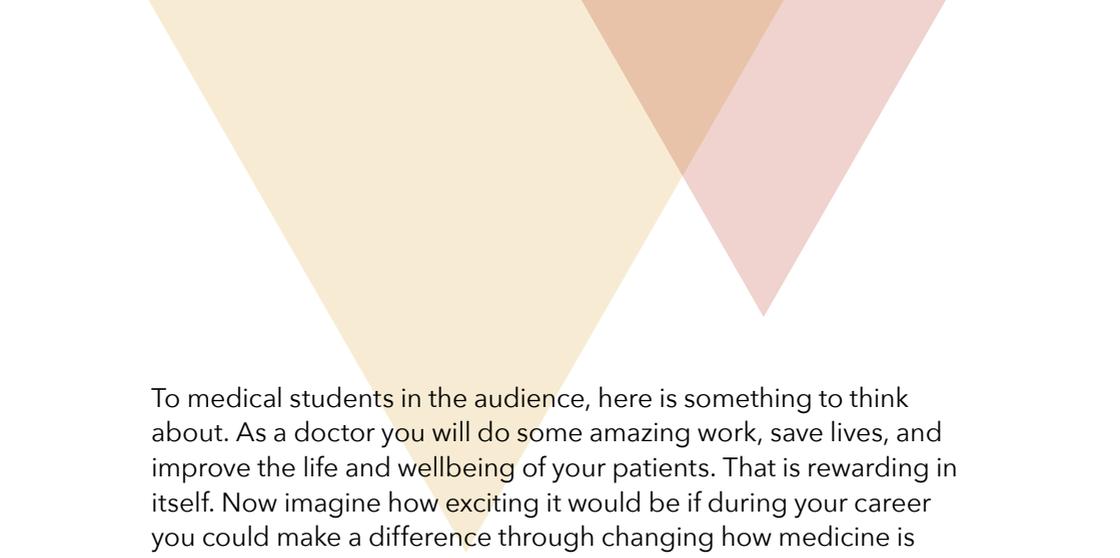


has illuminated the complex endocrine system of the gut through his discovery of gut hormones. He discovered that food intake stimulates the release of peptides with the ability to regulate appetite. Now, he is working on new treatments to restore satiety using knowledge of these newly discovered peptides. There is the potential for these to have myriad applications including treating obesity and diabetes and he remains at the forefront of driving research in this area. But it is not only the new knowledge he has created that he is being honoured for today.

He has also been a great teacher. He has influenced and inspired a large number of outstanding talented scientists who are themselves trailblazers in their fields. He was knighted in 2012 for services to medical science. Steve has been awarded Fellowships of both the Academy of Medical Sciences and the Royal Society in recognition of his major contributions to medical science.

Outside work, he spends time with his family. He has four children and 10 grandchildren. All of them high achievers, his eldest son is a Professor of Economics and Head of Department at Stanford University.

Steve is becoming a familiar figure here for us at Warwick. His association with Warwick began with his role as Chair of the Faculty Advisory Board for medicine some five years ago. He has also supported and guided our up-and-coming research staff, and is now the first Chair of the Health Partnership Board with University Hospital Coventry.



To medical students in the audience, here is something to think about. As a doctor you will do some amazing work, save lives, and improve the life and wellbeing of your patients. That is rewarding in itself. Now imagine how exciting it would be if during your career you could make a difference through changing how medicine is practised? By inspiring yourself and others through your curiosity and drive to improve patient outcomes? This is what Steve has done. This is his example and his legacy and I am delighted we are able to honour him today.

Vice-Chancellor, in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, Professor Sir Stephen Bloom.