

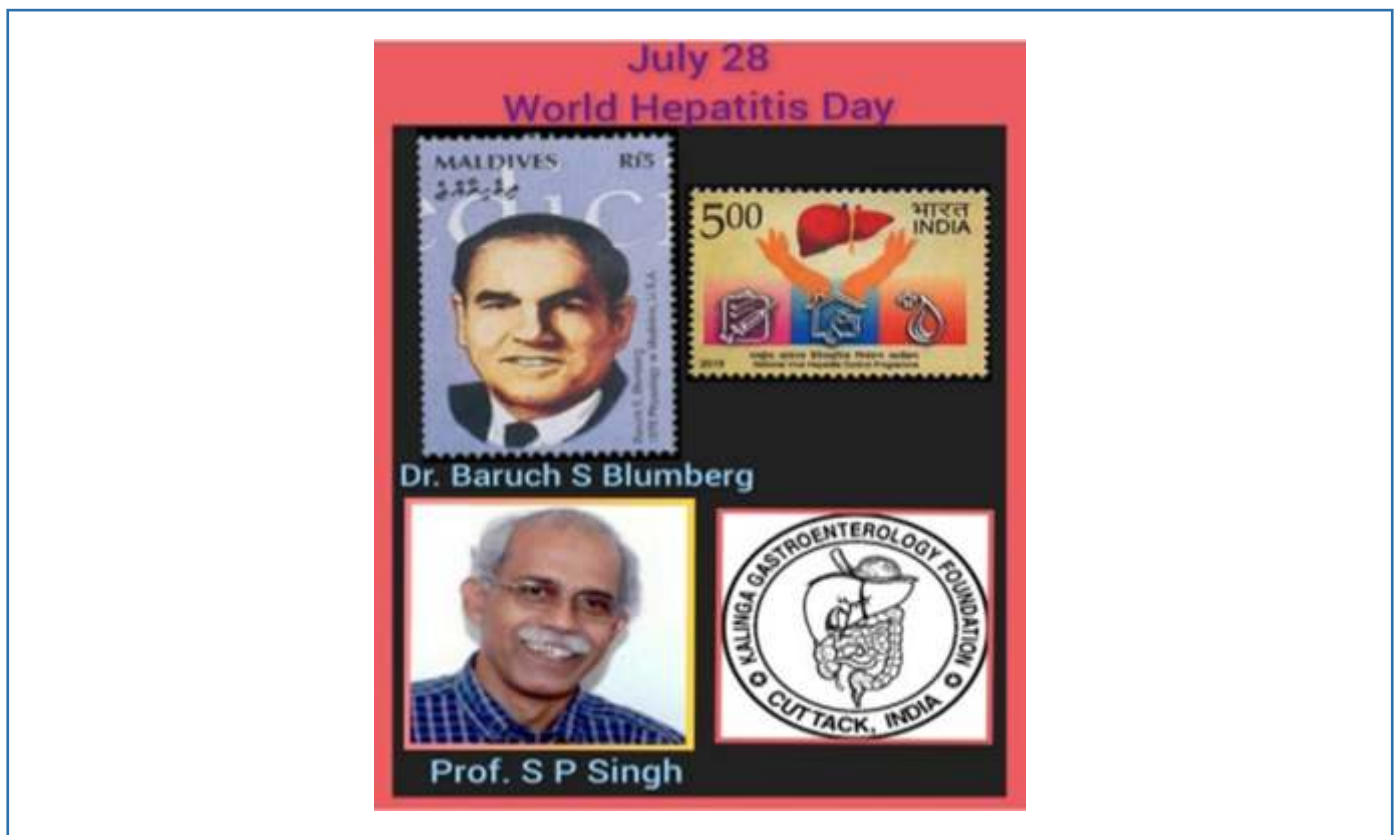
History

World Hepatitis Day- July 28

Dr. Baruch S. Blumberg

July 28, 1925 - April 5, 2011

American Physician & Geneticist



His Contributions

- Blumberg studied medicine at Columbia College of Physician and Surgeon and received his MD in 1951. He completed his Doctoral Degree in Biochemistry at Balliol College, Oxford.
- He became a Medical Anthropologist in 1950. Then he travelled all over the world for collecting blood samples to study the Genetic variations in human beings. He started his research with the question of ***"Why do some people contract a disease in a given environment, while others do not"***.
- In 1967, he serendipitously discovered a Surface Antigen of Hepatitis B virus in the blood sample of Australian Aborigines and he called as "Australia Antigen".
- He further worked on the Hepatitis B virus and found that it causes hepatic cancer.
- Subsequently, Dr Blumberg and his team developed the Screening Test for Hepatitis B. Thereby, they prevented the spread of the virus in blood donations. He also developed the



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first vaccines to prevent infection in 1969. This vaccine has considered as First Cancer Vaccine.

- His continuous involvement and inspiration lead to establish a "Hepatitis B Foundation." It's an organization dedicated for improving the lives of those infected by hepatitis B and for cure worldwide.
- Consequently, he was honoured with many awards. In 1976, he was honoured with the Nobel Prize of Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of the Hepatitis B virus.
- He was also a Director of the NASA Astrobiology Institute at California. There he helped NASA's search for extraterrestrial life.
- Dr. Blumberg had started his career with the search for inherited differences but his research landed with the discovery of a new virus. His intellectual curiosity in diagnosing and treating the disease saved the lives of millions.
- The Kalinga Gastroenterology Foundation (KGF), in India was founded by one of the eminent Gastroenterologist, Prof Dr Shivaram Prasad Singh from SCB Medical College & Hospital in Cuttack. He is the Chairman of this Charitable Educational Trust. He is known for his efforts toward hepatitis B eradication in our country.
- Prof. S P Singh started observing Dr Blumberg's birthday on July 28th as "World Hepatitis B Eradication Day" in 2001. Later, World Health Organisation (WHO) adopted "World Hepatitis Day" to increase awareness of viral hepatitis.

***Dr. Gowri Shankar
Coimbatore***