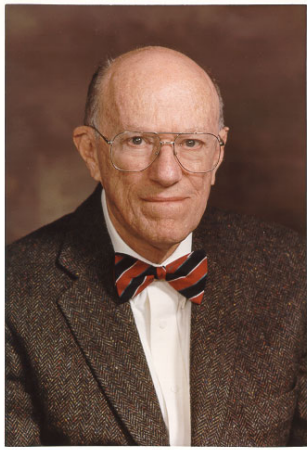


Leon Eisenberg

Leon Eisenberg, MD	
	
Dr. Leon Eisenberg	
Born	1922 USA
Died	September 15, 2009 Cambridge, Massachusetts
Nationality	USA/American
Occupation	Child Psychiatrist, Social Psychiatrist, Medical Educator
Religion	Jewish (secular)
Spouse	Ruth Harriet Bleier, MD ^[1] Carola Eisenberg, MD
Children	Mark Philip Eisenberg, MD; Kathy Bleier Eisenberg, Alan Edward Guttmacher, MD ^[2] (stepson); Laurence Guttmacher, MD (stepson)

Leon Eisenberg (1922 – September 15, 2009^[3]) was a child psychiatrist, social psychiatrist^[4] and medical educator who "transformed child psychiatry by advocating research into developmental problems" ^[5] (David DeMaso) ^[6]. He was credited with a number of "firsts" in medicine and psychiatry - in child psychiatry, autism, and the controversies around autism, randomized clinical trials (RCTs), social medicine, global health, affirmative action,^[7] and evidence-based psychiatry. Having retired in 1967 from Johns Hopkins Hospital Department of Child and adolescent psychiatry (he was the chairman of the department after Leo Kanner^[8]) and from Harvard Medical School in 1988, he continued as The Maude and Lillian Presley ^[9] Professor of Social Medicine and Psychiatry Emeritus (and actively serving - lecturing, researching and writing, and mentoring ^[10]) in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine ^[11] of the Harvard Medical School ^[12] in the Longwood Medical Area of Boston until a few months before his death in 2009. He received both his BA and MD degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, taught previously at both the University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins University, and was Chief of Psychiatry at both

Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston during formative periods in psychiatry for each institution.

Medical accomplishments

The reasons Leon Eisenberg is listed as a famous figure in world and American psychiatry are numerous. Leon Eisenberg identified rapid return to school as the key to treatment in the management of the separation anxiety underlying school phobia. He completed the first outcome study of autistic children in adolescence and recognized patterns of language use as the best predictor of prognosis. Of the two first studies of the outcome of infantile autism, he reported the American study in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* in 1956, and the UK study was reported in *JCPP* ^[13] shortly afterward by Victor Lotter ^[14] and Sir Michael Rutter. That was a time when a narrow rather than a broad definition of autism was in fashion. It is of interest that the poor prognosis was evident both in the narrowly- and broadly-defined cases and that, because many of the cases now called autistic would have been called "mental retardation: moderate to severe", they would have joined other such children with a relatively poor outcome.

He was Principal Investigator (PI) on the first grant from the Psychopharmacology Branch of NIMH for RCTs in child psychopharmacology. From a concern for evidence-based care, well before the phrase was coined, he introduced randomized controlled trials (RCTs) in psychopharmacology and showed that "tranquilizing" drugs were inferior to placebo in the treatment of anxiety disorders, whereas stimulant drugs were effective in controlling hyperactivity. He completed the first RCTs of psychiatric consultation to social agencies and of the utility of brief psychotherapy in anxiety disorders. He published a forceful critique of Konrad Lorenz's instinct theory. He established the usefulness of distinguishing "disease" from "illness". He has highlighted the environmental context as a determinant of the phenotype emerging from a given genotype, and from the late 1990s through 2006, he had been involved with developing conferences and resources for medical educators in various specialties that would help them incorporate, into courses with their current and future students, the tidal wave of new information in genomics yet to puzzle future clinicians. This interest may have been encouraged by his stepson, Dr. Alan Guttmacher, Acting Head of the National Human Genome Research Institute. For many decades, Leon Eisenberg had criticized psychoanalysis from a number of platforms.

The scientific contributions of Dr. Eisenberg include:

- the first longitudinal follow-up of Leo Kanner's original cases of autism
- a study that identified the roots of social phobia in parental anxiety
- the first clinical trial of the effectiveness of psychiatric consultation in a social agency
- the first randomized controlled trial in childhood psychopharmacology
- the first randomized controlled trial of stimulant drugs in adolescents
- the first randomized clinical trial of brief psychotherapy
- a forceful critique of Lorenz's theory of instincts and imprinting
- an early statement of the distinction between "disease" (what doctors deal with) and "illness" (what patients suffer)
- a widely-cited critique of the oscillation of psychiatry between brain-centered and mind-centered approaches arguing for the integration of the two
- a synthesis of the evidence on the importance of training primary care physicians to recognize and treat depression
- papers that highlight the molding of the brain structure by social experience
- publications putting inheritance in an environmental context as a determinant of risk and resilience.

Specific publications referring to the above achievements are contained in his bibliography

Leon Eisenberg is proudest of the Diversity Lifetime Achievement Award he received in 2001 for his role in inaugurating affirmative action at HMS in 1968 and sustaining it as Chairman of the Admissions Committee from 1969 to 1974. He regards that as his most important contribution to Harvard Medical School.

With his wife, Dr. Carola B. Eisenberg, former Dean of Students, first at MIT, then at Harvard Medical School, he has been active with Physicians for Human Rights ^[15], which as an organization received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for its International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

In mid-2009 (June 22, 2009), a Leon Eisenberg Chair in Child Psychiatry was named at Children's Hospital Boston ^[16]. The first chairholder of the Leon Eisenberg Professorship in Child Psychiatry is David R. DeMaso, MD ^[6], HMS Professor of Psychiatry and Psychiatrist-in-Chief at Children's Hospital Boston ^[17].

His brief (~30 pages) autographical memoir (a walk through the history of psychiatry, yet to be published posthumously by Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica - in mid- or late-2010) "Were we asleep at the switch?" [See below] was written from his home, but how can such a transformative life be encapsulated in a BRIEF memoir?

Humor

Among his friends and professional colleagues, Leon Eisenberg was known for his humor and friendly wit which he shared in lectures, publications, and even as Recording Secretary for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences ^[18] (sometimes in the forum of haiku). ^[19]

Collecting his humor is difficult (often it was in personal e-mails), but many agree that a few typical scenarios recurred:

- Several persons of different social backgrounds involved in a difficult, odd, or even humorous situation, usually with a Jewish psychiatrist or a rabbi [often exploring social nuances and varying perceptions].
- A very wise person involved with something very unusual [e.g. Chinese mathematician sipping tea (about moral outrage)].
- A well-known historical event [e.g. The last survivor of the Johnstown Flood (about humility before esteemed colleagues)].
- Poetry (often haiku)

Close friends (and fans) described his stories as customized for each occasion (so they never tired of hearing the same stories repeated because, with customization, they never were the same story or joke).

Death

Leon Eisenberg died of prostate cancer at his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts on September 15, 2009.^[20]

Memorial Services were held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in September 2009, and in Boston, Massachusetts, at the Harvard Medical School, on March 12, 2010.

Timeline - chronology of Leon Eisenberg's life and achievements

This needs some 'period' work to show the shifting themes of his professional and social interests and the periods of his various contributions.

- 1922 - Born in Philadelphia, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants
- 1934-1939 Attended Olney High School, Philadelphia PA.
- 1938-1939 - Editor of Olney High School newspaper
- 1939 - Graduation from Olney High School, Philadelphia PA; won a Mayor's Scholarship to College (based on the College Entrance Board Examinations).
- 1942 - Leo Kanner identified 11 boys with unusual constellation of traits—extreme social isolation, an inability to look people in the eye, a preoccupation with objects and ritual, and hand-flicking and other repetitive movements.
- 1944 - AB - College of University of Pennsylvania (nearly straight As)
- 1944 - Applied to medical schools with nearly straight A's in college; turned down by all those schools; University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine accepts him after intervention by Pennsylvania legislator on behalf of outstanding student Leon Eisenberg.
- 1946 - Graduated valedictorian of his medical school class but denied (along with the seven other Jews who applied) an internship at the University of Pennsylvania hospital; went to Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City instead
- 1946 - MD - University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
- 1946-1947 - Rotating Intern, Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York City (discovered psychiatry)
- 1947-1948 - Instructor in Physiology, University of Pennsylvania
- 1948-1950 - Instructor in Basic Science Program, Walter Reed Hospital
- 1948-1950 - Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Army
- 1950-1952 - Psychiatric Resident, Sheppard Pratt Hospital ^[21], Towson, MD.
- 1952-1954 - Fellow in Child Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, MD - works with the great psychiatrist, Leo Kanner. Eisenberg would join him in his exploration of the newly identified psychiatric disorder, autism, paying special attention to the social, and especially, the family setting of the children in which it appeared. Becomes Kanner's protégé: his doubts about psychoanalysis were encouraged by Leo Kanner
- 1953-1955 - Instructor in Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University
- 1955 (Dec) - Certified in Psychiatry, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
- 1958-1961 - Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University (Became Chief of Child Psychiatry 2 years before actual promotion to full Professor)
- 1959 - Became Chief of Child Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins upon the retirement of Leo Kanner (became Full Professor 2 years later, in 1961)
- 1959-1967 - Chief of Child Psychiatry, The Johns Hopkins Hospital
- 1960 (May) - Certified in Child Psychiatry, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology



Eisenberg in 2007

- 1961-1967 - Professor of Child Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University
- 1962 - Eisenberg launched the first randomized clinical trial of a psychiatric medicine (childhood clinical psychopharmacology)
- 1967 - AM (Hon) Harvard University
- 1967-1974 - Chief ^[22], Psychiatric Services ^[23], Massachusetts General Hospital
- 1967 - only months after arriving to chair the Psychiatry Department at Massachusetts General Hospital, Eisenberg was asked to join a small committee, including HMS Professors Jon Beckwith, Ed Kravitz, and David Potter, that was pushing to increase the number of African-American students at the Medical School.
- 1967-1993 - Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School
- 1969 - first HMS entering class to include black students, who had been recruited through the efforts of Eisenberg and his colleagues
- 1973 - DSc (Hon) University of Manchester, England
- 1973-1980 - Chairman, Executive Committee, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School
- 1974-1977 - Member, Board of Consultation, Massachusetts General Hospital
- 1974-1980 - Maude and Lillian Presley Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School
- 1974-1992 - Senior Associate in Psychiatry, Children's Hospital Medical Center
- 1977-2009 - Honorary Psychiatrist, Massachusetts General Hospital
- 1980-1991 - Chairman, Department of Social Medicine and Health Policy, Harvard Medical School (invited by then HMS Dean Daniel Tosteson)
- 1980-1993 - Maude and Lillian Presley Professor of Social Medicine
- 1987 - Named Senior Fellow of the Harvard Program in Ethics and the Professions ^[24], later to become the Edmond J. Safra Foundation Center for Ethics ^[25] at Harvard University, for which a partial history ^[26] is outlined on their website.
- 1991 - DSc (Hon) - University of Massachusetts
- 1992-2009 - Honorary Senior Staff Psychiatrist, Children's Hospital, Boston
- 1993 - Retirement from Harvard Medical School (then mandatory); becomes Professor Emeritus; continues to serve actively
- 1993-2009 - Maude and Lillian Presley Professor of Social Medicine and Professor of Psychiatry, Emeritus, Harvard Medical School
- 2009 - Leon Eisenberg Chair of Child Psychiatry named at Children's Hospital Boston ^[27].
- 2009 - Death at home (September 15)

Memberships, offices, and committee assignments in professional societies

- American Association for the Advancement of Science (1947–2009)
- American Federation for Clinical Research ^[28] (1949–1966)
- Baltimore City Medical Society (1950–1967)
- American Psychiatric Association (1952–2009); Chair, Child Psychiatry Section '63-'65 Trustee, '73-'76
- Sigma Xi (1952–2009)
- Maryland Psychiatric Society (1952–1967); President, '59-'60
- American Association of University Professors (1954); President, John Hopkins Chapter '60-'61
- Federation of American Scientists (1955–1970)
- Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Diseases (1955–2009)
- Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) (1956–2009)
- American Public Health Association (1956–1972)
- American Orthopsychiatric Association ^[29] (1957–2009)
- Council Member, Federation of American Scientists (1957–1968)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (1958–2009)

- American Psychopathological Association (1958–2009)
- Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP) (1959–1962)
- American Academy of Child Psychiatry (1961–1971)
- Psychiatric Research Society (1963–2009)
- American Pediatric Society (1966–2009)
- Massachusetts Medical Society (1967–2009)
- American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1968–2009); Chair, Section II-5 Nominating Committee, 1993–95; Communications Secretary 1995-2002
- Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (1973—2009); Council, Institute of Medicine, '75-'77; Advisory Committee, Strategies for the Prevention of Disease and the Promotion of Health, '77; Membership Committee, '78-'82; Program Committee, '79-'81; Speaker, 1980 Annual Meeting; Research Panel, '86-'89; Steering Committee, National Strategy for Aids, '86-'89; Board on Health Sciences Policy, '88-'91; Chair, Committee on Unintended Pregnancy and the Well-Being of Children and Families, '93-'95; Chair, Committee on Building Bridges in the Brain, Behavioral and Clinical Sciences 1999-2000; Chair, Interdisciplinary/Bridging Work In Health Disparities—Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health and Society Scholars, October 13, 2008, at IOM Annual Meeting in Boston, MA.
- Member, Advisory Committee to the Director, National Institutes of Health (1977–1980)
- Advisory Board, General Academic Pediatrics Development Program, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (1981–1987)
- Member, Rosalynn Carter Mental Health Task Force, Carter Presidential Center of Emory University (1990–2002)
- Communications Secretary, American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1995–2002)
- Member, Committee for DSM V and ICD XII, American Psychiatric Association (2006–2009)
- Member, Organizing Committee for Women and Medicine Conference, Bahamas, November 29 - December 3, 2006, Josiah Macy Foundation (2006)

Editorial boards

- *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* (1960–1983)
- *Journal of Psychiatric Research* (1962–1993)
- *Child Development* (1962–2009)
- *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (1963–1973)
- *Communications in Behavioral Biology* (1967–1972)
- *Comprehensive Psychiatry* (1971)
- *Social Psychiatry* (1971–1982)
- *Psychosomatic Medicine* (1972–1976)
- *Journal of Pediatrics* (1974–1980)
- *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* (1977)
- *Psychological Medicine* (1977–1990)
- *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacology Research* (1981–2000)
- *The Future of Children* (1991–2009) [or was it 2004?]
- *American Journal of Psychiatry* (2005–2009)

Academic committees

Leon Eisenberg served on seemingly countless academic and other committees at Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Children's Hospital Boston. He was typically among the first thought and invited to such committees because of his breadth.

Attempts to identify a full set of such committees are proceeding.

Themes of most recent writing

Leon Eisenberg is credited by numerous colleagues with "simple and direct" prose (Arthur Kleinman, Norma Ware^[30], etc.). He will be remembered most for his writings in these areas, though his encyclopedic comprehension reached much more broadly:

- Evidence-based medicine
 - Capacity of academics to accept ideas that are absurd and later rejected
- Why and how did psychoanalysis come to be so dominant for so long (the triumph of psychopharmacology over psychotherapy and changes in the way care was financed) has been explored repeatedly, but outlined here in two papers for different Josiah Macy Conferences:
 - "Modern Psychiatry: Challenges in Educating Health Professionals to Meet New Needs"
 - "The Challenge of Neuroscience: Behavioral Science, Neurology, and Psychiatry"
- Diagnostic classifications (see below) - a theme continued from the very beginning of his career
- Human rights of patients
- Overdiagnosis of ADHD^[31]
- Conflict of Interest (COI) in the Practice of Psychiatry and Medicine
 - Issues in rewriting the entire psychiatric taxonomy at one time (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders = DSM): COI, empirical evidence to support DSM changes, timing of revisions
 - Complicity of the medical and psychiatric professionals in torture.
 - Criticizing the replacement of patient interests with the profit motive in healthcare.^[32]
 - The relationship between the pharmaceutical industry and medical education through sponsorship and educational programs.

Later autobiographical reflections: "Were We Asleep at the Switch?"

Leon Eisenberg had written from his home a 38-page 'mini-autobiography' which he named "Were We Asleep at the Switch?" Eisenberg argued that, while medical scientists were worrying about the tedious science at the base of medical practice and healthcare decisions for the general public, money was making de facto decisions for the populace about how things were going to be done. In this view, the overwhelming impact of economic considerations over emerging bodies of expert knowledge may have rendered and might continue to render futile the professional contributions of many brilliant, timely, and concerned working scientists.

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Many of Leon Eisenberg's books and papers have been translated into both European and non-European languages and have been widely-cited.

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- Translated into Spanish as: *Salud Mental en el Mundo* by I. Levav ^[43] and R. Gonzalez and published by Organizacion Pan Americana del Salud, Washington, 1997.
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- Translated into Ukrainian 2001.

Awards

- Sc. D. (Hon), University of Manchester in the UK (1973)
- Sc. D. (Hon), University of Massachusetts in the U.S (1991)
- Theobald Smith Award, Albany Medical College (1979)
- Aldrich Richmond Award, American Academy of Pediatrics (1980)
- Dale Richmond Awards, American Academy of Pediatrics (1989)
- Samuel T. Orton Award ^[44], Orton Society (1980)
- Special Presidential Commendation, American Psychiatric Association (1992)
- Agnes Purcell McGavin Award for Prevention ^[45], American Psychiatric Association (1994)
- Distinguished Alumnus Award, University of Pennsylvania (1992)
- Camille Cosby Award, Judge Baker Children's Center ^[46] (1994)
- Thomas W. Salmon Medal, New York Academy of Medicine (1995)
- Blanche F. Ittleson Memorial Award, American Orthopsychiatric Association (1996)
- Mumford Award, Columbia University School of Public Health (1996)
- Rhoda and Bernard Sarnat Prize for Outstanding Contributions to Mental Health, Institute of Medicine (1996)
- Award for Distinguished Contribution to Public Policy, SRCD (Society for Research in Child Development) (2003)
- Distinguished Service Award, American Psychiatric Association
- Walsh McDermott Medal, Institute of Medicine and the National Academies
- Benjamin Rush Medal and Lecture, American Psychiatric Institute (2006)
- Epidemiology Award, Harvard School of Public Health (2007)
- Harold Amos Diversity Award, Harvard Medical School (2008)
- Juan José López Ibor Award ^[47], Juan José López Ibor Foundation ^[48], World Psychiatric Association (WPA), granted at the World Congress of Psychiatry in Prague, The Czech Republic (2008)
- Honorary Fellow, Greek Society of Neurology and Psychiatry
- Honorary Fellow, Ecuadorian Academy of Neuroscience
- Honorary Fellow, Royal College of Psychiatrists (UK)

Awards Named for Leon Eisenberg

- Leon Eisenberg Chair in Child Psychiatry, Children's Hospital Boston ^[49] (named June 22, 2009); noted in 6/25/2009 Harvard Gazette story ^[50]
- Leon Eisenberg Award, conferred annually (in the Spring) by the Program in Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (MH/DD) ^[51], Children's Hospital Boston, beginning April 28, 2010
- The Leon Eisenberg Scholarship (given to one deserving medical student at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine)
- The Leon and Carola Eisenberg Award from Physicians for Human Rights

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External links

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- History of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics. Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: February 2003 - Volume 24 - Issue - pp S1-S18, by Robert J. Haggerty, MD, and Stanford B. Friedman, MD (http://journals.lww.com/jrnldb/Citation/2003/02001/History_of_Developmental_Behavioral_Pediatrics.1.aspx)
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- HarvardScience 08/28/2008 online story about Leon Eisenberg's winning the first Juan José López Ibor Award from the WPA, the World Psychiatric Association (<http://www.harvardscience.harvard.edu/culture-society/articles/leon-eisenberg-receive-juan-jose-lobes-ibor-award>)
- <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/bostonglobe/obituary-print.aspx?n=leon-eisenberg&pid=132925441>
- Dr. Alan Guttmacher, Acting Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, Leon Eisenberg's stepson, defines autism (<http://genome.gov/Glossary/index.cfm?id=11>)
- Leon Eisenberg's immediate family (<http://www.edu-cyberpg.com/IEC/Leon-Eisenberg.html>)
- The Hopkins Years: Alejandro Rodriguez takes charge after Eisenberg leaves for Boston (<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2012/jan/25/palm-city-man-known-for-child-psychology-studies/>)

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