



# Royal College of Physicians

## Professor John Wass Biography

John Wass is the Professor of Endocrinology at Oxford University and was Head of the Department of Endocrinology at the Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism, Churchill Hospital Oxford, UK until 2012. His research interests include all pituitary tumours, especially acromegaly, adrenal disease, angiogenesis in endocrinology, and the genetics of osteoporosis and thyroid disease.

Since 1975 he has published over 385 articles in scientific journals and as well as written many reviews and chapters in textbooks including the Oxford Textbook of Medicine and DeGroot's Textbook of Endocrinology. He has also edited a number of different textbooks including the Oxford Textbook of Endocrinology, Clinical Endocrine Oncology and the Oxford Handbook of Endocrinology (3 editions). He was President of the European Federation of Endocrine Societies from 2001-2003 and was Chairman of the Society for Endocrinology (2006-2009). He has also served as President of the Pituitary Society.

This year he received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Pituitary Society in the USA. He has won a number of prizes and given named lectures including the Jubilee Prize of the Society for Endocrinology. He was recently in June 2015 awarded the Distinguished Physician of the Year Award by the American Endocrine Society; the first non American to ever receive this award. Amongst his charitable activities, he is Patron of the St. Pauls Way School (with Professor Brian Cox) and he founded the Pituitary Foundation.

He was Academic Vice President of the Royal College of Physicians in London, from August 2012 until August 2015. He chaired the Royal College of Physicians Working Party 'Action on Obesity: Comprehensive Care for All' published in January 2013, and has been involved improving services for patients with obesity. Recently he presented the acclaimed documentary 'The Fantastical World of Hormones' on BBC4.

## Presentation Summary

### **Topic:** Obesity

Obesity is a significant problem in our society and around a quarter of the population is significantly obese entailing huge (5 billion) NHS costs. Obesity levels are rising and in the UK we have some of the highest prevalence in Europe.

It is important to de-stigmatise this disease. 40%-75% of it is heritable. It is associated with a number of important conditions. Obviously these include cardiovascular disease and diabetes but cancer in various sites is recognised to be associated with obesity, most particularly of the bowel and the breast but also the uterus.

Obesity merits prevention. Equally well there are large numbers of patients who are already obese and we know that multidisciplinary teams looking at weight reduction (so-called tier 3 services) are only available in a small proportion of the locations that they are needed, roughly around 50%.

What is needed is a greater understanding of these patients and improved care for those that already have a weight and obesity problem. The development of such facilities requires leadership both locally and nationally.