

Kinnier Wilson and Wilson`s disease

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The British physician Samuel Alexander Kinnier Wilson (1878–1937) was one of the world's greatest neurologists of the first half of the 20th century. Early in his career, Wilson spent one year in Paris in 1903 where he learned from Pierre-Marie. He subsequently retained uninterrupted links with French neurology. He also visited in Leipzig the German anatomist Paul Flechsig. In 1904, Wilson returned to London, where he worked for the rest of his life at the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic (today the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery) in Queen Square, and also at Kings' College Hospital. He wrote on 'the old motor system and the new', on disorders of motility and muscle tone, on the epilepsies, on aphasia, apraxia, tics, and pathologic laughing and crying. Wilson's most important contribution was his publication in 1912 in *Brain* of a newly recognized illness he called "Progressive lenticular degeneration, a familial nervous disease associated with liver cirrhosis", which was later named hepatolenticular degeneration or Wilson's disease. Wilson analysed 12 clinical cases, four of whom he followed himself, but also four cases previously published by others and a further two that he considered in retrospect had the same disease as he was describing. The pathological profile combined necrotic damage in the lenticular nuclei of the brain and hepatic cirrhosis. When describing these patients, Wilson introduced for the first time the terms extrapyramidal syndrome and extrapyramidal system, stressing the role of the basal ganglia in motility.