

Paul Zimmet citation

Friday 5th of May 2017

11:00am – Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences

Deputy Chancellor, I present to you, Paul Zimmet.

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University is being awarded to Professor Paul Zimmet, in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the global diabetes community. A graduate of the University of Adelaide, he has an outstanding international clinical record in diabetes and obesity, and in research covering epidemiology, public health and genetics. His research predicted and continues to chart the evolving global type 2 diabetes epidemic, and he is widely recognised as one of the most influential diabetes experts in the world.

Professor Zimmet graduated from the University of Adelaide in 1965 in Medicine, followed by a PhD from Monash University in 1973. He also completed his Doctor of Medicine with the University of Adelaide in 1989.

Following a position as resident medical officer at the Royal Adelaide Hospital he moved to Melbourne, undertaking specialist training in Medicine. He quickly discovered his professional passions were in the fields of metabolic medicine and endocrinology and spent time as a postgraduate research scholar at Monash University, and then as a Research Fellow at Guy's Hospital in London, before returning to Australia as a Fellow in Medicine. He subsequently held a number of senior medical and academic positions in Melbourne.

In 1984, Professor Zimmet played a founding role in the International Diabetes Institute, which later merged with the Baker Heart Research Institute and became one of the largest facilities for cardiometabolic research in the world. Through his research, Professor Zimmet defined the condition of latent auto immune diabetes in adults, which was central to understanding Type 1 Diabetes in adults and differentiating it from Type 2.

Between 1984 and 1987, he designed and conducted the Diabetes Education and Control program for Victoria, establishing optimal strategies for managing diabetes and its complications. He is credited internationally for providing the major descriptive epidemiology of the world diabetes epidemic and raising awareness in the community. This had a major impact on the UN General Assembly on declaring diabetes as an international health disaster.

Professor Zimmet has made an immense contribution to our current understanding of how lifestyle can have an impact on diabetes and strategies for prevention. He also co-discovered a potential new therapy for Type 2 Diabetes, which has completed phase 1 clinical trials in human subjects.

Professor Zimmet is highly cited, with almost 900 publications to his name. He has been listed twice in the Thomson Reuter's "*World's most influential scientific minds*".

His eminence in the study of diabetes has been recognised with a string of accolades. These include the Professor AM Cohen Memorial Award and Lecture, the Kellion Diabetes Medal, the Banting Award, Novartis Global Diabetes Prize Awards, the Grand Hamdan International Award for Medical Sciences and the Peter Wills Medal.

In 1993, he became a Member of the Order of Australia and then in 2001, an Officer of the Order of Australia. He has received Honorary Doctorates from institutions across the world including Tel Aviv University in Israel and Complutense University in Madrid.

It gives me great pleasure to present to you Professor Paul Zimmet, Officer of Order of Australia, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, PhD, MD – a worthy recipient for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of the University (honoris causa).