

 Reprinted from www.antimicrobe.org

Hans Christian Joachim Gram (September 13, 1853-November 14, 1938) was a Danish bacteriologist. He was the son of Frederik Terkel Julius Gram, a professor of jurisprudence, and Louise Christiane Roulund.

Gram studied botany at the University of Copenhagen and was an assistant in botany to the zoologist Japetus Steenstrup. His study of plants introduced him to the basis of pharmacology and the use of the microscope.

He entered medical school in 1878 and graduated in 1883. He traveled throughout Europe between 1878 and 1885. In Berlin, in 1884, he developed a method for distinguishing between two major classes of bacteria. This work gained him an international reputation, and later played a major role in classifying bacteria. This technique, the Gram stain, continues to be a standard procedure in medical microbiology.

In 1891, Gram became a lecturer in pharmacology, and later that year was appointed professor at the University of Copenhagen. In 1900 he resigned his Chair in Pharmacology to become Professor of Medicine. After his appointment as professor of Medicine in 1900 he published four volumes of clinical lectures which became widely used in Denmark. He retired in 1923.