

Antony van Leeuwenhoek – microscope inventor

Related amongst great Medicine inventions, the microscope, created at the beginning of 17th century, made possible the advance of Biology study and a new perception of medical science.

The microscope invention, attributed to Galileo, was in fact result of the improvement of Antony van Leeuwenhoek, the Dutch naturalist, who used it in the observation of living creatures. Endowed with only one glass lens, the primitive microscope invented by the researcher allowed the increase of visual perception from up to 300 times, with reasonable clearness. Therefore, everything what was invisible to eyes became

sufficiently visible to be researched. With this primitive microscope, constructed in 1674, was possible to observe a bacterium of 1-2 μ (measurement equivalent to the thousandth of a millimeter). The naturalist, with this simple instrument, studied red blood cells, evidenced the existence of sperm cells and unmasked microorganisms world.

The primitive microscope of Leeuwenhoek was improved by Robert Hooke years later, earning one more lens and the possibility of amplifying such bigger images. The first comments of Hooke and the studies of Antony van Leeuwenhoek had led to cells discovery. However only in 1839, with the botanical Matthias Jacob Schleiden (1804-1841) and the zoologist and physiologist Theodor Schwann (1810-1882), both from Germany, the cell was recognized as fundamental unit of life.