

Headline	Canadian giant of HIV research drowns		
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Canadian 'giant' of HIV research drowns

GENEVA: Canadian scientist Mark Wainberg - described as a "giant" of HIV science and who had recently been working on finding a cure for the condition - has died at the age of 71, UNAIDS said on Thursday.

The internationally renowned scientist, who was at the forefront of HIV research from the very beginning of the global AIDS epidemic, drowned on Wednesday while swimming off Bal Harbour in Florida, Radio Canada said.

"UNAIDS is deeply saddened by the tragic death of pioneering HIV researcher Mark Wainberg," the agency dedicated to battling the disease said in a statement.

Wainberg and his colleagues identified one of the main anti-retroviral medicines used to treat HIV infection and also contributed to the understanding of HIV drug resistance.

"Mark Wainberg was a giant in HIV science," UNAIDS chief Michel Sidibe said in a statement, stressing that the researcher's work "contributed to saving millions of lives".

Linda-Gail Bekker, head of the International AIDS Society (IAS), which Wainberg lead from 1998, said the HIV/AIDS research community had "lost one of our fiercest champions".

"He was the epitome of dedication from the earliest days of the response," she said. —AFP